Examining the Legitimation Strategies of Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurs

This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), National University of Ireland Galway.

Name: Orlagh Reynolds

Student No: 13233198

Supervisor Names: Professor Maura Sheehan, Dr. Rachel Hilliard

School: J.E. Cairnes School of Business and Economics

Department: Management

Submission date: 29/4/2018
Abstract
The idea that business plays a crucial role in the sustainable development of our world has grown within the corporate sustainability literature and in global sustainability discourse generally. There is also a growing focus in entrepreneurship literature on entrepreneurs being future-oriented by balancing efforts in making contributions to the triple bottom line of people, planet, profit (Tilley & Young, 2009). The purpose of this research is to provide an examination of how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs pursue legitimacy. Specifically, this research explores a) how multiple sustainability pillars manifest as field logics which shape the legitimation strategies of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, and b) how individual constructs of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention manifest as factors of entrepreneurial agency in legitimation, influencing sustainability-oriented entrepreneur responses to these multiple field logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field. This research utilises a qualitative research design involving interviews and documentation analysis with award-winning sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs who have successfully gained legitimacy, as well as several context interviews with awarding bodies and stakeholders. Using a neo-institutional framework, this research provides a number of contributions to the emergent sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field, legitimacy theory and organisational field theory. It finds that the individual constructs of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention play an important role in shaping legitimation behaviour in response to sustainability field logics. In particular, sustainability intention as a construct embodies the ‘paradox’ of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, and learning to successfully overcome this paradox to strategically utilise intention in legitimation is crucial for these entrepreneurs. Knowledge of the role of these constructs in legitimation could assist sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in strategically utilizing individual constructs as agency when dealing with diverse stakeholder expectations to achieve their enterprising goals. Strengthening knowledge on factors important for legitimacy is pertinent in supporting this shared value approach to entrepreneurship.
Acknowledgements

The last four and a half years, from the initial decision to undertake this PhD, to the submission of the hardbound thesis, have been extremely rewarding. The completion of this process would not have been possible without the encouragement, support and expertise of those around me. I want to acknowledge these people here, and offer each my sincere gratitude for helping me achieve this professional and personal goal.

Firstly, I must thank my supervisor Prof. Maura Sheehan and the Department of Management at NUI Galway for giving me the chance to undertake this funded PhD. None of this would have been possible without this funding support. Beyond this, I wish to thank Prof. Maura Sheehan and Dr. Rachel Hilliard, who became my co-supervisor half way through, for their expertise, their patience and their generosity with time. Extensive feedback inspired much of the final product. I would also like to thank the staff of the Management discipline, past and present, who provided me with many opportunities for further learning, continuous encouragement throughout the journey, and a cemented passion for academia. Thank you to my internal examiner Dr. Majella Giblin and my external examiner Dr. Ewald Kibler for taking the time to provide a stimulating and enjoyable viva. I wish to thank my fellow PhD colleagues, as shared experience and friendship made the impossible moments possible. I extend gratitude to the participants of my research who were very generous with their valuable time and knowledge which made the research what it is. I am especially grateful for an extremely supportive mother, father and brother. This journey was not flawless but you each made me feel like I’d achieve something great in the end. Finally, thank you Brian for your understanding, patience, advice, and for supporting me in a way that I can only hope to ever emulate.
Table of Contents

Chapter One Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1
  1.1 Research Objective ............................................................................................................. 2
  1.2 The Context of Sustainability ............................................................................................. 2
  1.3 Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship ......................................................................... 4
  1.4 The Importance of Understanding Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship .......... 5
  1.5 Logics and Agency in Legitimation ..................................................................................... 7
  1.6 Research Questions .......................................................................................................... 9
  1.7 Thesis Structure Overview .............................................................................................. 10

Chapter Two: Literature Review I Towards a Paradox Approach to Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship ................................................................. 12
  2.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 12
  2.2 Multi-Pillar Sustainability ................................................................................................. 14
    2.2.1 Economic Sustainability .............................................................................................. 17
    2.2.2 Environmental Sustainability .................................................................................... 19
    2.2.3 Social Sustainability .................................................................................................. 21
    2.2.4 Sustainability Tensions ............................................................................................. 23
  2.3 Sustainability and Entrepreneurship .................................................................................. 31
    2.3.1 Factors Shaping Environmental Entrepreneurship .................................................. 32
    2.3.2 Factors Shaping Social Entrepreneurship ................................................................. 35
    2.3.3 Factors Shaping Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship .................................... 38
  2.4 Internal Constructs of Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship and Legitimacy ........ 41
    2.4.1 Prior Sustainability Knowledge .................................................................................. 43
    2.4.2 Sustainability Orientation ........................................................................................... 45
    2.4.3 Sustainability Intention ............................................................................................... 48
  2.5 Conclusion ......................................................................................................................... 50

Chapter Three: Literature Review II The Institutional Context: Factors Shaping Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneur Legitimation ......................................................... 52
  3.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 52
  3.2 An Institutional Approach to Entrepreneurship ............................................................... 54
    3.2.1 Emergence of Neo-institutional Theory ..................................................................... 54
    3.2.2 Neo Institutionalism and Organisational Behaviour ............................................... 55
    3.2.3 Institutionalism and Entrepreneurship ...................................................................... 61
    3.2.4 Institutionalism and Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship ................................ 64
  3.3 Legitimacy: Forms, Stages and Sources ........................................................................... 66
    3.3.1 Defining Legitimacy ................................................................................................... 67
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.6.3 Purposive Sampling Strategy</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.4 Overview of Participants</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7 Data Collection</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.1 Interview Schedule</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.2 Pilot Interviews</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.3 Semi-Structured Interviews</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.4 Documentation</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8 Data Analysis</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9 Validity and Reliability</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10 Limitations</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11 Conclusion</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Five: Findings I Logics of the Sustainability-Oriented</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entrepreneurship Field</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1 Introduction</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Mainstream-Economic-Oriented Logic</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Organising Principles</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Perceived Dominant Sources</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.3 Means</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.4 Challenges</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Logic</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.1 Organising Principles</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.2 Perceived Dominant Sources</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.3 Means</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3.4 Challenges</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4 Sustainability Logic Multiplicity</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5 Conclusion</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Six Findings II: The Role of Agency in Legitimation</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Introduction</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Prior Sustainability Knowledge</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1 Logic Alliance</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.2 Conformance</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.3 Condition</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3 Sustainability Orientation</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.1 Defiance</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3.2 Condition</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4 Sustainability Intention</td>
<td>257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.4.1 Acquiesce ..................................................................................................................... 257
6.4.2 Anchoring .................................................................................................................... 259
6.5 Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 267

Chapter 7 Discussion and Conclusion .................................................................................. 270
7.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 270
7.2 Sustainability Pillars as Field Logics in Legitimation ...................................................... 272
  7.2.1. Identifying logics through examining legitimation ....................................................... 272
  7.2.2 The Emergence of a Mainstream-Economic-Oriented Logic ...................................... 273
  7.2.3 The Emergence of a Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Logic ...................................... 278
  7.2.4 Logic Multiplicity in Legitimation ............................................................................... 281
7.3 Internal Constructs as Agency in Legitimation ................................................................ 285
  7.3.1 Prior Sustainability Knowledge .................................................................................... 286
  7.3.3 Sustainability Intention ................................................................................................ 292
  7.3.4 Individual Agency in Legitimation ................................................................................. 294
7.4 Legitimation in the Organisational Field of Sustainability-Oriented Enterprise ........... 295
7.5 Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurs and a Paradox Approach to Sustainability ....... 298
7.6 Implications for Practice .................................................................................................. 300
7.7 Directions for Future Research ....................................................................................... 303
7.8 Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 304

References ............................................................................................................................. 324

List of Tables
Table 2.1 Tensions in Corporate Sustainability ................................................................. 27
Table 2.2 Typology of Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship ........................................ 32
Table 3.1 Types of Isomorphism ........................................................................................... 56
Table 3.2 Three Pillars of Institutions .................................................................................. 58
Table 3.3 Streams of Legitimacy Research ......................................................................... 69
Table 3.4 Theoretical Perspectives on Organisational Fields ............................................. 77
Table 4.1 Positivism versus Social Constructionism ............................................................ 104
Table 4.2 SEAI Award Categories ......................................................................................... 119
Table 4.3 SEAI Entrepreneur Interviewees ........................................................................ 127
Table 4.4 SEI Entrepreneur Interviewees .......................................................................... 129
Table 4.5 Other Interviewees .............................................................................................. 130
Table 4.6 Data Analysis Process ................................................................. 137
Table 5.1 Mainstream-Economic –Oriented Organising Principles .............. 156
Table 5.2 Mainstream-Economic –Oriented Perceived Dominant Sources .... 165
Table 5.3 Mainstream-Economic- Oriented Means .................................... 175
Table 5.4 Mainstream-Economic- Oriented Challenges ............................... 182
Table 5.5 Mainstream-Economic-Oriented Logic Frequency ....................... 185
Table 5.6 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Organising Principles ............... 192
Table 5.7 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Perceived Dominant Sources .... 197
Table 5.8 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Means .................................... 206
Table 5.9 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Challenges ............................... 213
Table 5.10 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Logic Frequency ..................... 216
Table 5.11 Logic Multiplicity .................................................................... 220
Table 6.1 Prior Sustainability Knowledge .................................................. 238
Table 6.2 Sustainability Orientation ........................................................... 253
Table 6.3 Sustainability Intention ............................................................... 263

List of Figures
Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model.................................................................... 101
Figure 4.1 Data Structure RQ1 .................................................................. 141
Figure 4.2 Data Structure RQ2 .................................................................. 144
Figure 5.1 NVivo Word Cloud ‘Mainstream-Economic-Oriented Logic’ .... 151
Figure 5.2. NVivo Word Cloud Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Logic ...... 188
Figure 5.3 SEAI Sustainability NVivo Tree Map ...................................... 220
Figure 5.4 SEI Sustainability NVivo Tree Map ......................................... 220
Figure 7.1 Conceptual Model ................................................................. 273
Figure 7.2 Framework............................................................................. 300

List of Appendices
Appendix A ............................................................................................ 309
Appendix B ............................................................................................. 310
Appendix C ............................................................................................. 314
Appendix D ............................................................................................. 320
Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment is entirely my own work and has not been taken from the work of others save to the extent that such work has been cited and acknowledged within the text of my own work.

Signed:

Date:
Chapter One Introduction

Increasingly, it is understood that current production and consumption rates cannot be sustained. In line with Irish, European and international policies and research, Ireland needs to transition towards a more resource-efficient economy in which protecting our environment and enhancing the wellbeing of our citizens is a strategic focus. The collective responsibility to address these issues falls to many such as state bodies, large corporations, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and individual consumers. Among these stakeholders, research is growing on the role of individual entrepreneurs in providing creative and innovative solutions for sustainability challenges. Hahn et al., (2010, p. 7) point out that despite having received very little attention in the literature, “eventually organisational behaviour with regard to sustainable development depends on the perceptions, motives, values and decisions of single actors.” Individual efforts towards sustainability require further examination in Ireland and internationally, including those efforts of entrepreneurs for whom the pursuit of sustainability goals is a defining feature.

Research on these entrepreneurs, known as sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, is emerging and currently consists of mostly conceptual work engaged in attempts to tease out definitions and boundaries, providing a starting point for empirical research (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015). Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship has been defined in several ways in the literature, and is defined in the current study as “a process of venture creation that links the activities of entrepreneurs to the emergence of value-creating enterprises that aim to contribute to the sustainable development of the social-ecological system” (O'Neill et al., 2009, p. 35). There is significant scope to further knowledge on the role of these entrepreneurs in sustainability, including the processes and mechanisms through which they pursue their entrepreneurial and sustainability goals. One crucial mechanism through which entrepreneurs can pursue these goals is legitimization, meaning the actions taken by entrepreneurs in pursuit of legitimacy in the field, such as applying for awards. An entity is seen as legitimate when it is considered “desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of values, beliefs and definitions” (Suchman, 1995, p. 574). Many authors emphasise legitimacy as concerning social judgements that have the power to facilitate organisations in meeting their performance goals in a number of ways, such as a source of status and reputation (Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002) and better stakeholder engagement (Clarke, 2011).
As of yet, there has been little focus on their legitimation behaviour, despite it being acknowledged as an important resource for entrepreneurs generally (Suddaby et al., 2017). Given the sequence of issues which should stand as moral catalysts for sustainable change, namely climate change, food demand versus carbon footprint, waste management etc., this study is driven by an interest in understanding the role of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in enacting this change. Specifically, this research aims to present an understanding of the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs as a mechanism for the achievement of their entrepreneurial and sustainability goals. The focus of this research is on post-legitimation, meaning that it focuses mainly on the activity of entrepreneurs after they have achieved a degree of legitimacy. This chapter presents the overall research objective, followed by the context and rationale for the current study. It then introduces how this study addresses the issue presented in the rationale through addressing two research questions, concluding with an overview of the thesis structure.

1.1 Research Objective
The overall objective of this research is to present a critical understanding of how both field-level and individual-level factors specific to sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs shape their legitimation behaviour. Two research questions were developed with the aim of addressing a number of important gaps in the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature concerning entrepreneurial legitimation. These questions are presented in section 1.5. A neo-institutional approach was adopted as the theoretical lens due to both its inherent concern with how field-level factors condition entrepreneurial behaviour, and its interest in mechanisms which can account for individual level responses to these field-level factors. The context and rationale for the use of this approach in addressing the selected research questions are presented in the next sections.

1.2 The Context of Sustainability
The unfolding ecological crisis has always been accompanied by less steady, but nonetheless recurring economic and social crises (Foster and Magdoff, 2009). Against this backdrop, governments of developed and emerging economies, international organisations, civil society and multiple academic disciplines began to build a case for ‘sustainable development’ and a move towards ‘sustainability’ as a way to address simultaneous crises (Bina, 2013). These two terms have been used interchangeably (Faber et al., 2005; Toman, 2006; Vos, 2007) and
refer to a range of ideas and actions, from the narrow frame of environmentally-friendly production (Barbier, 2012) to a redefinition of a country or a region’s entire economy (Bina, 2013). The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) Brundtland Commission’s 1987 Report is the most commonly cited definition in discussions of sustainability (Faber et al., 2005; Vos, 2007). Defining sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p43), this definition is adopted in the current study as it captures a number of key elements of sustainability which will be elaborated on in Chapter Two.

The current climate is a rousing point at which to study sustainability as notable steps have recently been taken towards progress. In January of 2016, the United Nations’ new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, hereafter) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development were officially adopted by world leaders. These goals aim to build on the success of the Millennium Development Goals, and highlight that a move towards sustainability is a shared goal for many world leaders today. Despite this step towards progress, within academic literature, opinion is divided on the extent to which, and even whether or not empirical evidence supports policy maker claims that these goals will be feasible across different sectors and economies (Benn et al., 2014; Murphy, 2013). This has largely been attributed to issues of definition, measurement and inherent trade-offs between these goals. Definitional issues with the SDGs have been attributed to the fact that the conceptual framework of the goals are based on the concept of sustainability, which suffers from the same definitional flaws (Hak et al., 2016). Issues of impact and progress measurement have also been traced to the difficulty with measuring the underlying concept of sustainability (Bell & Morse, 2013). In addition, it has been suggested that the SDGs do not consider how to deal with the possible trade-offs between goals and targets. As asserted by Costanza (2016) “an increase in agricultural land use to end hunger (SDG2) may cause biodiversity loss (SDG15), overuse and pollution of water resources (SDG6), and adverse effects on marine resources (SDG14), and thus lead to food security concerns (SDG2)” (p.59). This issue is also mirrored in the concepts of sustainability itself, with literature raising the question of whether or not trade-offs between different elements of sustainability are inevitable (Hahn et al., 2010). This question is central to this study and will be addressed in Chapter Two.
The global field of sustainability is an engaging context as it presents a number of contradictions and challenges which require enhanced understanding. Also, the collective buy-in of diverse international stakeholders regarding the need to enact a sustainability agenda (and the destructive effects of not doing so), as well as the ambitious range of goals make sustainability a compelling context of study. The Irish government asserts that the field of sustainability is “one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing markets in the world” and one that “presents a major opportunity for growth, competitiveness and employment creation for Ireland” (DJEI, 2013, p. 1). Chapter Four elaborates on the Irish context and how Ireland’s sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs have an important role in shaping this field for Ireland’s future (SEAI, 2017). Faber et al., (2005), in a review of the conceptual foundations of sustainability, discuss how sustainability often implies an element of change, innovation or adjustment, which subsequently requires action and raises the question of who is responsible for carrying out sustainability. The current study aims to develop our limited understanding of the behaviours of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in this context.

1.3 Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship
Within the entrepreneurship literature, there is a growing focus on the need for entrepreneurs to be future orientated by creating value for the triple bottom line of people, planet, profit (Tilley & Young, 2009). Research in this area focuses on any entrepreneurial activity that adds to efforts in maintaining a sustainable society and ecosystems, subsequently encompassing a broad and diverse range of environmental, social and economic-oriented activities (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011). For these entrepreneurs, pursuit of sustainability is built into their business models and is both a reason why they were initially created and their continuing raison d’être (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). This form of entrepreneurship is an embodiment of the notion of shared-value in business, which is the creation of economic value in a way that also produces value for society by addressing its social or environmental challenges (Porter & Kramer, 2011). This can be a difficult task for individual entrepreneurs and reflects the paradox approach to the conceptualisation and examination of sustainability. Paradoxes refer to contradictory yet interrelated tensions that exist between elements and persist over time (Lewis, 2000; Smith & Lewis, 2011). The paradox approach to sustainability is concerned with nonlinear, holistic ways in which actors behave towards sustainability, managing tensions between the different pillars of sustainability rather than trading-off between or attempting to achieve them all simultaneously (Van der Byl &
Slawinski, 2015). This approach to sustainability can facilitate “superior business contributions to sustainable development” as it considers environmental and social concerns as ends in themselves alongside economic concerns in a realistic way (Hahn et al., 2017, p. 1). If sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs are well placed to adopt a paradox approach to sustainability, as this study will argue in Chapter Two, they should be considered as a fundamentally important subject of research.

Despite some recent advances in understanding of the complexity of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (e.g. Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010; Muñoz and Dimov, 2015; Parrish, 2010; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011; Shepherd et al., 2013), there is still much to be explored in relation to determinants, processes and consequences of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurial action. Extant research calls for further exploration of the role of entrepreneurial action as a mechanism for sustaining our ecosystems while providing economic and non-economic gains for societies in a way that environmental and social entrepreneurship attempts fall short (Shepherd and Patzelt 2011). More specifically, literature recommends that future research explores the processes through which sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs manage the relationships and tensions between their social, economic and environmental sustainability goals and obligations, as these entrepreneurs must contend with diverse stakeholders who value these three sustainability elements differently (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013). One way in which sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs must manage these elements of sustainability is during legitimation. Currently, the literature highlights a need for further theorizing and empirical examination of how these sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs gain, maintain and defend their legitimacy, as this is a notably underdeveloped area (DeClercq & Voronov 2011; de Lang, 2016; Kibler et al., 2015; O'Neil and Ucbasaran, 2016).

### 1.4 The Importance of Understanding Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneur Legitimation

Legitimacy is a central construct of neo-institutional theory (Scott, 1991), the theoretical lens chosen as the framework for the current study. The rationale for the selection of this theoretical lens is presented in Chapter Three, but a key reason for its selection is the fact that neo-institutional theory is concerned with the processes through which rules, norms, and routines established by institutions and their actors act as guidelines for behaviour. Institutions are entities such as the market, the state or religion that instil value to a structure
or process (Selznick, 1952). As this study examines the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, it requires a theoretical approach that accounts for the socially constructed system of values, beliefs and meanings in which entrepreneurs carry out legitimation (Suchman, 1995). Actors such as sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs need to correctly adhere to rules, norms and routines of institutions in order to achieve legitimacy, making neo-institutionalism an appropriate framework in the examination of legitimacy. According to this approach, all legitimacy-seeking actors exist within what are known as organisational fields. One definition of organisational fields is that of Hoffman (1999) who believes fields are “formed around the issues that become important to the interests and objectives of a specific collective of organizations” (p. 352) and the rules of the field determine what is legitimate (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Hoffman contends that the attention of actors within a field is concentrated on an issue or theme, although actors will likely have different interest in the issue. For sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, the issue would be the multiple pillars of sustainability (economic, environmental and social). Although driven by diverse interests such as energy conservation, social inclusion, etc., they share common interest in and concern for the issue of sustainability. This conceptualisation of fields is adopted in this study, the rationale for which is provided in Chapter Three.

According to this approach, gaining legitimacy by adhering to practices or structures that are deemed acceptable within the organisational field leads to better stakeholder engagement, more successful resource acquisition and consequently increases chances of enterprise survival (Clarke, 2011; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). Gaining and maintaining legitimacy is an important yet persistently challenging task for any entrepreneur throughout the business lifecycle. For entrepreneurs who exist within a field characterised by multiple stakeholders with diverse and even contradictory expectations regarding legitimacy, such as sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs who are faced with navigating multiple sustainability interests, this task might be considered all the more challenging and merits examination (Mars & Lounsbury, 2009; Pache & Santos, 2013). Enhanced understanding of how these entrepreneurs can achieve legitimacy is not just crucial for the success of these entrepreneurs, but is important for society at large. Without the attainment of legitimacy, the creative and innovative efforts of entrepreneurial individuals towards sustainability can be hindered.

Given that little is known about the legitimation of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs despite the known benefits of legitimacy, the compelling fact that these entrepreneurs attempt to carry out legitimation in a complex arena comprised of diverse sustainability expectations,
and the potential consequences of their illegitimacy, the current study aims to provide an understanding of their legitimation, particularly their post-legitimation activity towards sustainability goals. To do this, it brings together a number of research areas, creating a framework for examining legitimation. Having outlined the context and rationale, the next section describes how this study approaches the examination of sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation.

1.5 Logics and Agency in Legitimation
In order to enhance current understanding of sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, this study examines the role of both external field-level and internal individual-level factors in shaping legitimation behaviour. Logics are frequently defined as a set of commonly held assumptions, practices, norms, and values that discipline action and thought within the organisational field (Friedland & Alford 1987; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008), and many organisational fields consist of multiple logics. The current study will argue that the pillars of sustainability that these entrepreneurs pursue in their entrepreneurial mission, namely environmental, social and economic sustainability, manifest as multiple logics in legitimation. How the nature of this multiplicity shapes legitimation strategies for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs is the first underdeveloped area of theory (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011) which this research addresses in research question one: How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal sustainability pillars as locally embedded logics of the organisational field?

However, entrepreneurs do not unquestioningly adhere to organisational field expectations communicated through logics, but also have the ability to strategically respond to logics by using their agency, meaning their capacity to act, in legitimation. A number of authors within neo-institutional theory assert that generally, it is necessary to understand the triggers or drivers of entrepreneurship in order to better understand agency and its strategic role (Battilana, 2006; Weik, 2011). In the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature, the constructs of ‘prior sustainability knowledge’, ‘sustainability orientation’ and ‘sustainability intention’ have been identified as collectively responsible for driving entrepreneurial behaviour towards sustainable development (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015). Despite this, research has not examined how these constructs may be used strategically by sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs to meet sustainability goals, such as during legitimation. Therefore, this study argues that these drivers should be understood as the constructs that characterise the
entrepreneur’s agency, and conducts a unique empirical examination of the role of these constructs in legitimation, extending limited work on this topic (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015; Pache & Santos, 2013). Although the literature acknowledges that the values and beliefs of entrepreneurs must play a role in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurial legitimation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O’Neil & Ucbasaran; 2016), we do not know exactly which factors play a role, what this role is or how these entrepreneurs can utilize these factors in responding to logic multiplicity as agency. This makes up research question two of the current study: How do ‘prior sustainability knowledge’, ‘sustainability intention’ and ‘sustainability orientation’ manifest as factors of entrepreneurial agency to shape sustainability-oriented entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field?’ While ‘prior sustainability knowledge’ refers to the entrepreneur’s knowledge of and experience in the sustainability field (Muñoz and Dimov, 2015), ‘sustainability orientation’ refers to the entrepreneur’s attitude and convictions regarding a sustainability issue (Kuckertz & Wagner, 2010), and ‘sustainability intention’ refers to the use of entrepreneurial means towards sustainability (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015).

Chapters Two and Three present the theoretical arguments on the need to examine the role of logics and agency in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, and provide a detailed review of the critical constructs of this study.

This study responds to the literature calling for multilevel research on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship by examining the interplay between field-level logics and micro-level constructs of agency in the entrepreneurial legitimation process (e.g., DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Wahga et al., 2018). Neglecting either of these influences does not provide a comprehensive understanding of why these entrepreneurs behave as they do during legitimation. This study provides an in-depth, qualitative examination of the process of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurial legitimation, consisting of interviews and the collection of documentation from two groups of sustainability award winning entrepreneurs. Chapter Four describes how these entrepreneurs are well placed to discuss legitimation as a result of having successfully pursued legitimacy through a sustainability award scheme. It also describes how selecting a sample from two different sustainability award schemes resulted in two theoretically diverse groups of entrepreneurs. As logics are embedded to varying degrees in the values, goals, interactions, and practices of organisational field actors (Thornton & Ocasio 2008), examining how they manifest differently in the legitimation behaviour of two theoretically divergent groups can provide insight to the composition of
logics across the field. Field actors often hold opposing perspectives on a field issue and it is important to capture these opposing views in order to analyse field dynamics (Hoffman, 1999). This study also examines how individual factors of agency manifest differently in legitimation behaviour for each group.

In summary, the field of sustainability is a rousing field of study both globally and in Ireland as we cannot escape the pertinence of sustainable action. However, we do not currently posses a comprehensive picture of the processes and mechanisms involved in this pursuit due to a lack of understanding of the role of individual sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. This causes an issue given the crucial role of individuals in enacting change towards sustainability (Hahn et al., 2015) as well as how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs are by definition, well placed to enact a rigorous approach to sustainability that goes beyond piecemeal attempts involving trade-offs between different sustainability elements. Fundamental to enhancing understanding of the role of these entrepreneurs is understanding their legitimation, as legitimacy can be a crucial resource for them in the face of logic multiplicity. Further, the importance of understanding their legitimation goes beyond them as their successful legitimation can lead to creative, innovative and entrepreneurial sustainability solutions which have the potential to benefit us all.

1.6 Research Questions

**Overarching Research Question:** How do both organisational field-level logics and individual-level factors of agency shape the processes of legitimation in the case of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs?

Within this, the research aims to specifically answer the following sub-questions:

**Sub-Question 1:** How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal sustainability pillars as locally embedded logics of the organisational field?

**Sub-Question 2:** How do ‘prior sustainability knowledge’, ‘sustainability intention’ and ‘sustainability orientation’ manifest as factors of entrepreneurial agency to shape
1.7 Thesis Structure Overview
The following overview provides a roadmap of how the thesis addresses the chosen topic through seven chapters.

Chapter Two presents the first part of the theoretical background of the study on the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature. It introduces the paradox approach, and explains how it is a suitable lens to conceptualise the sustainability approach enacted by these entrepreneurs. Specifically, it discusses how these entrepreneurs can manage holistic, multi-pillar sustainability as field logics through their legitimation behaviour. This section also discusses the literature on internal constructs found to facilitate engagement in this form of entrepreneurship, and explains how they can be considered as individual-level constructs of agency in legitimation.

Chapter Three presents the second part of the theoretical background of the study. The focus of this chapter is on reviewing the extant literature on the institutional perspective employed within the study. Neo-institutionalism as an analytical lens in entrepreneurship research will first be reviewed, followed by a review of the legitimacy literature and how this has been examined previously in entrepreneurship. Next, the literature on the context of organisational fields, and logic multiplicity and entrepreneurial agency as antecedent of entrepreneurial behaviour will be discussed. This chapter will conclude with an integrated framework for exploring legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs.

The focus of Chapter Four is the research methodology of the study. This chapter will describe the philosophical perspectives which underpin the methodology and discuss the rationale for the chosen perspective of social constructionism, including how this leads to the development of an interpretive, qualitative research design. Next, the context in which the empirical research was carried out is described and the background and sampling strategy for the participants is outlined. Finally, the processes of data collection and analysis, the limitations as well as validity and reliability of the study are discussed.
Chapter Five will present the research findings of the study relating to research question one. These findings concern the nature of logics present in the organisational field and how these logics manifest in legitimation behaviour. This chapter is organised into sections that correspond with the themes which emerged from the coding and analysis and these findings present the context for the findings presented in chapter six.

Chapter Six will present the research findings of the study relating to research question two. These findings concern the role of the constructs of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention in legitimation behaviour. This chapter is structured in the same way as chapter five with findings organised under themes that emerged from the analysis.

Chapter Seven is the final chapter in the thesis, and presents the discussion and conclusion of the study. This chapter will discuss the overall findings of the study for both research questions one and two in relation to extant literature and future literature in order to demonstrate the theoretical and empirical contributions of this study. It will also present a discussion on the possible implications of these findings for theory, policy and practice. Finally, this chapter will provide some recommendations for future research.
Chapter Two: Literature Review I Towards a Paradox Approach to Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship

2.1 Introduction
This chapter elaborates on the intended contributions of the current study presented in Chapter One by demonstrating the limitations of the extant literature in explaining sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation. These entrepreneurs engage in various activities in attempts to appear as ‘proper’ and ‘appropriate’ in the eyes of other field members and achieve legitimacy. Despite what is known of how important legitimacy can be for business success (Suchman, 1995), little conceptual or empirical attention has been paid to the complexity of the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. Current understandings of the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs require development regarding the type of sustainability goals they pursue, the context in which they pursue these goals, and which constructs play a role in their legitimation. Specifically, this chapter signifies a need to develop theory on how the pillars of sustainability that these entrepreneurs pursue in their entrepreneurial mission, as well as internal constructs specific to these entrepreneurs, shape their legitimation behaviour. It proposes the value of a paradox approach in conceptualising and examining sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation behaviour.

The term ‘holistic’ in philosophy refers to when the parts of something are interconnected and explicable only by reference to the whole (Auyang, 1999), and there have been a number of iterations of sustainability that adopt a holistic, multi-pillar perspective. The paradox approach examines nonlinear, holistic ways in which organisational actors behave towards sustainability and manage tensions between the three pillars (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). A paradox approach to sustainability “seeks to understand the nature of tensions along with how actors work through them, provides an opportunity to evaluate complex sustainability issues and generate creative approaches to them” (Ibid, 2015, p. 54). Moreover, this approach to conceptualising and examining sustainability facilitates “superior business contributions to sustainable development” as it considers environmental and social concerns as ends in themselves alongside economic concerns (Hahn et al., 2017, p. 1). However, extant research has not considered the value of a paradox approach in conceptualising and
examining sustainability-oriented entrepreneur behaviour. This chapter argues its utility in conceptualising constructs shaping sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, as a paradox approach fits with their organisational structure and their values, and is particularly useful in examining their legitimation. Subsequently, the purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that, a) a paradox approach to sustainability pillars should be taken as this will inform the conceptualisation of these pillars as field logics which shape legitimation, and b) internal constructs that drive sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship should be conceptualised as agency in managing these pillars paradoxically in legitimation.

In order to advance theory on sustainability-oriented entrepreneur behaviour, it is necessary to understand the sustainability goals that drive this behaviour. For this reason, section 2.2 begins with a discussion on the broader issue of sustainability and the multiple ways in which the term has been conceptualised, ultimately arguing the utility of a paradox approach to conceptualising triple pillar sustainability and how this can be managed. This will inform the argument for why these multiple sustainability pillars should be examined as multiple organisational field logics which shape legitimation. This, in turn, will highlight the proposed contribution of neo institutional theory in this regard, setting the context for the argument of Chapter Three.

Following from the discussion of the broader sustainability context, the literature on the relationship between sustainability and entrepreneurship will be reviewed in section 2.3, with a particular focus on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. This section will build an argument towards the importance of developing research on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs that does not conflict with the holistic, triple-pillar sustainability pervading the activities of these entrepreneurs, and demonstrate the need for further research on their legitimation behaviour. Additionally, it will highlight the value of a paradox approach for conceptualising the role of these entrepreneurs in responding to multiple field logics in legitimation, setting the context for the discussion of the role internal constructs in this process.

Section 2.4 presents a review of the literature on the internal constructs that drive sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, namely ‘prior sustainability knowledge’, ‘sustainability orientation’ and ‘sustainability intention’. This review will indicate how this study addresses a number of gaps in this literature, and this will highlight the value of neo-
institutional theory in conceptually framing and examining these constructs as agency in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation.

Finally, in section 2.5 the contributions offered by a paradox approach to the conceptualisation of sustainability pillars as multiple field logics and the conceptualisation of these individual constructs as agency in legitimation, will be summarised. This will set the context for Chapter Three which presents a deeper discussion on the advantages of adopting an institutional framework in this study. In particular, it will demonstrate how elements of neo-institutional theory can address the research questions of the current study regarding how both field logics and agency can shape sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation.

2.2 Multi-Pillar Sustainability
This section provides a review of the literature on the three distinct but interconnected pillars of economic, social and environmental sustainability, and ultimately demonstrates the value of a paradox approach in the conceptualisation of these pillars over a ‘win-win-win’ approach’, or one necessitating trade-offs. Some corporate sustainability scholars argue that triple-pillar sustainability is achievable and that the three pillars of sustainability should be pursued simultaneously and even equally (Baumgartner & Ebner, 2010). Such an approach argues the business case for sustainability (Orlitzky et al., 2003) and believes that the three pillars complement one another. This ‘win-win-win’ idea essentially refers to a “business approach that creates long-term shareholder value by embracing opportunities and managing risk from three dimensions: economic, environmental and social dimensions” (Lo & Sheu, 2007, p. 346). Alternatively, others argue that trade-offs between the sustainability pillars are inevitable (e.g. Young & Tilley, 2006; Winn et al., 2012). This section of the review demonstrates how there is an opportunity to conceptualise sustainability in a way that challenges both the shallow win-win-win approach to sustainability and the notion of inevitable trade-offs between pillars. Clarity on the idea that these pillars are distinct yet interdependent and imbued with tensions is crucial to this study as it examines the extent to which these pillars are competing or complementary as logics in the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship.

Elkington’s (1997, 2004) Triple-Bottom-Line (TBL) offers a definition of sustainability that aims to overcome conceptualisations of the three pillars of sustainability as competing realms (McAllister, 1982), instead viewing a win-win-win approach as possible. Elkington’s TBL
accounting framework implies that businesses have opportunities to develop in ways consistent with all three objectives (social, environment, and economic), and utilise resources in such a way as to promote abundance for current generations without sacrificing opportunities for the future ones. Despite this, Hahn et al. (2015) highlight that the TBL approach “only juxtaposes different aspects of the three sustainability dimensions; it does not systematically address the relationship between these aspects” (p. 301), whereas subsequent frameworks have sought a more comprehensive understanding of these interrelations (e.g. Baumgartner & Ebner, 2011). It does not account for how individuals such as entrepreneurs can manage the inevitable tensions between these pillars through a paradox approach.

Similarly, the Brundtland Report states that the “deepening interconnections” among the pillars is “the central justification for the establishment of the Commission” (WCED, 1987), and Jordan and Lenschow (2008) state that the Brundtland Report’s greatest contribution was to highlight the need for mutual compatibility among the pillars. Their review of EU environmental policy points to a clear requirement that environmental, social and economic imperatives be integrated in the pursuit of sustainability. The Aalborg Charter (1994), which provides a framework for the delivery of local sustainable development across many European countries, also finds that policy must seek to “integrate people’s basic social needs as well as healthcare, employment and housing programmes with environmental protection” (Murphy, 2012, p. 35). As well as this, the EU Sustainable Development Strategy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development call for the integration of economic, social and environmental considerations so that they are coherent and mutually reinforce each other (European Commission, 2016). The importance of interconnectedness among the pillars of sustainability has been emphasised throughout the policy literature, demonstrating support for the pursuit of a win-win-win approach to sustainability over an approach which recognises and address inherent tensions. This may result in an overly optimistic view of sustainability.

Further, the Brundtland Commission’s 1987 Report is the most commonly cited definition in discussions of sustainability (Faber et al., 2005; Vos, 2007). Defining sustainability as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED, 1987, p43), it contains within it, many references to holistic, triple pillar sustainability. The first is that sustainability should be concerned with the achievement of “common and mutually supportive objectives that take account of the interrelationships between people, resources, environment, and development”
Another is the assertion that economic growth should be “forceful and at the same time socially and environmentally sustainable” (p. 7). A final example is “these are not separate crises: an environmental crisis, a development crisis, an energy crisis. They are all one” (p.13). This again demonstrates a focus in the literature on the pursuit of goals orientated towards economic, environmental and social values jointly at a number of levels, as well as intergenerational equity. Despite the fact that inherent tensions of sustainability are overlooked, the Brundtland Commission Report’s definition has offered a number of crucial contributions to the field of sustainability and therefore, the current study adopts this definition as a basis for what is referred to as ‘sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship’ and ‘sustainability goals’.

Despite the trend outlined above of reporting inter-dimensional relevance among pillars, a review of key international sustainability indicators (e.g. EC, Eurostat, UNCSD, UNDESA), carried out by Murphy (2012) reveals that while some linkages are made, these are quite weakly developed. In addition, there is a body of literature which argues against the possibility of a multi-pillar, holistic sustainability approach, arguing that there are inherent trade-offs (Margolis & Walsh, 2003). Furthermore, sustainability is not always considered as a triple bottom line concept and has been defined in a number of ways, with definitions tending to emphasise those elements of sustainability that are applicable to the specific context in which the discussion is taking place (Tomen, 2006). This, along with the fact that definitions can be adapted as economic, social and environmental conditions evolve, causes contestation regarding how sustainability should be defined, measured and pursued. In order to arrive at a better understanding of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship that is theoretically grounded and that can inform practice, the challenges involved in managing tensions between the three dimensions of sustainability need to be acknowledged and explored. Section 2.2.4 elaborates on these tensions, arguing that a paradox approach which acknowledges difficulty in resolving tensions but works towards reconciling the three pillars is needed in sustainability research.

The multiple pillars of sustainability should be conceptualised as separate but interconnected, as per the paradox approach (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015). Relationships between elements may change over time, but “systemic interconnections and the idea that the elements should support, or reinforce one another in a reciprocal relationship” is central to sustainability (Vos, 2007, p. 335). Nonetheless, it is important to maintain recognition of each pillar as distinct and important in its own right. Accordingly, the following sections will
discuss each pillar separately, as this study examines the distinct yet interconnected role of these pillars as logics in legitimation.

2.2.1 Economic Sustainability

As economics is concerned with the allocation of scarce resources, economic sustainability has been described as “the need to maintain a permanent income for humankind, generated from non-declining capital stocks” (Spangenburg, 2005, p. 48). Traditionally, the top economic goal of a country has been measured and defined in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and subsequently the economic sustainability of a nation concerns steady growth in GDP (Goerner et al., 2009). However, conceptualisations of the economic pillar of sustainability go beyond GDP of a country and include multiple measures of economic success (Lang & Murphy, 2014), some of which have begun to require the consideration of social and environmental sustainability (Alhaddi, 2015; Barter & Bebbington, 2009).

Economic sustainability at the organisational level, as drawn from strategy and management, most often refers to long run competitive advantage and superior firm performance (Porter, 1996). It refers to the use of various strategies for employing existing resources optimally so as a responsible and beneficial balance can be achieved over the longer term (Porter & Kramer, 2006). Within the context of an organisation, economic sustainability therefore involves using the assets of the organisation efficiently to allow it to continue to function profitably over time. According to Shareholder Theory (Friedman, 1970), the economic dimension of sustainability is fundamental, as this perspective argues that the obligation of any business is to achieve a profit to serve the exclusive interests of its shareholders. According to this perspective, any activity that is undertaken in line with environmental or social sustainability should not undermine the economic sustainability of a company (Nidumolu et al., 2009). However, this idea has been heavily criticised as unrealistic as the interests of other stakeholders such as customers and the local community are increasingly being recognised as important to consider (Blanpain, 2011; Magill et al., 2013). Further, this perspective is obsolete in the context of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, as these entrepreneurs are defined by their pursuit of goals that also create value along environmental and social dimensions (O'Neill et al., 2009). Nonetheless, the economic pillar is one of the core elements of sustainability and one of the driving forces behind sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship.
For sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, economic sustainability is a dual goal that is pursued alongside the entrepreneur’s environmental and/or social sustainability goals (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013), and this is reflective of the growing literature on the interdependence of the economic and environmental pillars of sustainability. During the 1990s, links began to emerge between environmental issues such as climate change and pollution, and growth in the global economy (Phillis & Andriantiatsaholiniaina, 2001). This focus on the role of the economy in causing negative environmental impacts led to a realisation that such growth and scale of resource use could not continue without consequences. This ‘limits to growth’ argument gained much momentum as the constraints of limited environmental resources came to be realised (Jackson & Senker, 2011). Meadows et al., (2004) emphasise how this realisation fundamentally challenged approaches to economic growth and what economic sustainability might look like.

Contemporary iterations have been inclined to understand that sustainability in economic terms cannot be regarded as a concept independent of the ‘three-legged stool’ of economy, environment, and society (Montiel & Delgado-Ceballos, 2014). Doane & MacGillivray (2001) define economic sustainability as “the process of allocating and protecting scarce resources, while ensuring positive social and environmental outcomes” (p. 3). They argue that the economic pillar of sustainability is the most elusive of the sustainability pillars as there are few tools available to manage economic sustainability at organisational level. This is still the case, with conceptualisations of the economic pillar most commonly appearing in literature utilizing a triple bottom line approach. Perhaps the pillar of economic sustainability does not merit significant attention on an individual basis as it is taken for granted that it underpins the overall concept of sustainability. The sentiment of this stream of literature is that sustainability is fundamentally concerned with economic growth and profit in the long run, but that this should be pursued in conjunction with considerations of environmental and social sustainability (Alhaddi, 2015; Henriques & Richardson, 2013; Milne & Gray, 2013). This is reflective of the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature which views entrepreneurs as being in pursuit of some combination of economic, environmental and social sustainability goals (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011). The economic pillar is integral to sustainability, which demonstrates the importance of examining how this pillar might manifest as an economic logic in the organisational field as these entrepreneurs pursue economic sustainability in legitimation. The literature on the environmental sustainability
pillar is discussed in the following section, demonstrating that this pillar is also largely considered as part of an interconnected system.

2.2.2 Environmental Sustainability

“Modern management theory is constricted by a fractured epistemology, which separates humanity from nature.... Reintegration is necessary if organisational science is to support ecologically and socially sustainable development” (Gladwin et al. 1995, p. 874). This quote illustrates the narrative on environmental sustainability in management which emerged in the 1990s. This narrative reflects growing global concerns regarding the adverse environmental impact humans can have such as biodiversity loss and greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2007). These problems have not disappeared and have been attributed to “a multi-level failure of responsibility – from the individual and corporate level to the finance sector and entire capitalist system” (Visser, 2010, p. 2). With foreseeable limits of oil, delays in the production of alternatives and with the enormous costs that food consumption patterns impose on global eco-systems, many authors report that our energy-based, highly industrialised and globalised lifestyle is unsustainable (Karnani, 2010; Lorek & Fuchs, 2011; Visser, 2010, 2014). The literature points to the need for continued research on what the environmental pillar includes, how this aspect of sustainability can be operationalised, and the role of organisations and entrepreneurship in this (Alhaddi, 2015; Goel, 2010).

Morelli (2011) provides a comprehensive conceptualisation of the environmental pillar of sustainability, defining it as “meeting the resource and services needs of current and future generations without compromising the health of the ecosystems that provide them, …and more specifically, as a condition of balance, resilience, and interconnectedness that allows human society to satisfy its needs while neither exceeding the capacity of its supporting ecosystems to continue to regenerate the services necessary to meet those needs nor by our actions diminishing biological diversity” (p. 6). This definition imbues environmental sustainability with a concern for intergenerational equity and acknowledges the place of humans within the environment. Morelli (2011) argues that there is an important distinction between ecological and environmental conceptualisations of sustainability in this regard, and that while environmental “quite often tends to be associated with some kind of human impact on natural systems” (p. 4), in ecology, sustainability is generally about how biological
systems endure and remain productive, independent of human interference. This is an important distinction as it demonstrates that environmental, rather than ecological sustainability, acknowledges the inseparable relationship between humans and the environment, or the environmental and social pillars of sustainability. The interconnectedness of the pillars is a key focus of the current study as it examines how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs manage tensions between interconnected pillars in legitimation. Therefore, environmental as opposed to ecological sustainability is the focus of this study in relation to the examination of the three pillars of sustainability.

In the context of business, the idea that an effectively designed environmental policy or strategy could lead to the achievement of competitive advantage for a firm began to gain momentum in the literature in the 1990s. Porter and van der Linde, (1995) and Starik and Marcus (2000) were among those to have argued that heightened environmental regulation might enhance competitiveness by inducing innovation. Authors argue that the development of pollution prevention technologies as opposed to end-of-pipe technologies could allow firm’s to increase both productivity and quality of their manufacturing process and help firms generate organisational innovations that would give them a competitive edge (Kearney, 2009; Porter & van der Linde, 1995; Reindhardt, 2000). Environmentally-focused strategies could also enhance a firm’s competitive advantage by, for example, attracting environmentally aware consumers (Esty & Winston 2009; Reinhardt, 2000), by enabling firms to get ahead of competitors and become market leaders (Dangelico & Pujari, 2010), and by alleviating pressure from investors, communities and interest groups (Berns et al., 2009), among other possible benefits. The environmental and economic pillars can complement one another through both competitive advantages stemming from environmentally-oriented activities, as well as through the reduction of negative economic human impact on the environment through the creation of environmentally-friendly chemical engineering, conservation biology and green technologies (Dresner & Simon, 2002; Lorek & Fuchs, 2011). These benefits make it clear why environmental concerns became intertwined with economic, yet this shift in thinking also brought about critics of the integration of environmental strategies in business.

As well as those who see environmentally-oriented activity as damaging to the bottom line of profit pursuit, some point to the significant potential for firms to engage in ‘greenwashing’ described as “misleading consumers about their environmental performance or the environmental benefits of a product or service” (Delmas & Burbano, 2011, p. 64). Such
activity can erode the overall sustainability pursuit by undermining consumer and investor confidence in the role of environmental strategies in business (Furlow, 2009). Despite the view that there are potential issues with attempting to pursue environmental strategies in business, the literature points to a recognition and acceptance of interdependence between environment, human and economic concerns, demonstrating the importance of conceptualising and operationalising sustainability pillars holistically. For sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, pursuit of this interconnected, holistic form of sustainability is built into their business models (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014), and this study examines its role in legitimation. Specifically, it examines how the environmental pillar might manifest as an environmental logic in the organisational field alongside other sustainability logics. The next section reviews the final dimension which makes up the sustainability goals driving the behaviour of these entrepreneurs; the social pillar.

2.2.3 Social Sustainability
The social pillar of sustainability, at a societal level rather than the organisational level, pertains to improving the social well-being of individuals and societies (UNEP, 2012). Vallance et al., (2011) offer a threefold schema of social sustainability comprising: “(a) ‘development sustainability’ addressing basic needs, the creation of social capital, justice, equity and so on; (b) ‘bridge sustainability’ concerning changes in behaviour so as to achieve bio-physical environmental goals; and (c) ‘maintenance sustainability’ referring to the preservation – or what can be sustained – of socio-cultural characteristics in the face of change, and the ways in which people actively embrace or resist those changes” (p. 342). Multiple authors cite this definition as useful in overcoming some issues of previous definitions such as lack of depth and subsequently lack of clarity regarding operationalisation (Sachs, 1999), limited application to a specific context (Godschalk, 2004) and the issues associated with separating different elements of social sustainability within the concept (Chiu, 2003). This definition proposed by Vallance et al., (2011) is comprehensive and is clearly linked to the wider concept of sustainable development, which is useful for the operationalisation of a holistic, triple-pillar approach to sustainability. Overall, definitions of sustainability at a societal level tend to focus on human and community development and pertain to issues such as poverty alleviation and improving standards of living (Dempsey et al., 2011), as well as improved human well-being and social equity and equality (UNEP,
2011, UNESCO, 2012). Subsequently, these comprise some of the goals that drive sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs on their venturing path (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

Despite this, a number of issues with the social pillar of sustainability have been identified in literature such as the argument that the meaning and associated objectives of the social pillar remain vague (Dempsey et al. 2011; Casula Vifell & Soneryd, 2012) and, much like economic sustainability, it has been described as the most conceptually elusive pillar in sustainability discourse (Murphy, 2012). Hutchins and Sutherland (2008) assert that most definitions emphasized legislative or human health and safety issues rather than ethical ramifications of decisions which allow the negative social effects of business to persist. Moreover, there is less evidence to show how social sustainability is put into practice or how this has been evaluated (Cuthill, 2009; Vallance et al., 2011; Vavik & Keitsch, 2010). McKenzie (2004) discusses how economic and environmental sustainability are much more easily captured in metrics than social sustainability and how this has lead to conceptualisations of sustainability treating the social pillar as an ‘add-on’. These ambiguities suggest that a greater understanding of the social pillar is needed, providing opportunity for the progression of this concept through empirical research on how organisational actors pursue this form of sustainability. The current study examines the role of social sustainability as a logic in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation.

As is the case with the environmental pillar, the literature demonstrates that responsibility for social sustainability is most often the concern of global and national policy-makers (McKenzie, 2004). However, organisational level conceptualisations of the social pillar offer some clarity on the fundamentals of the concept. “A balance among the pillars cannot be achieved without an adequate understanding of how societal and industrial actions affect the environment or how today’s decisions may impact future generations” (Hutchins & Sutherland, 2008, p. 1688). In relation to industrial actions, one view is that business plays an important role for the community in which it exists and therefore carries a number of social responsibilities to the community and the employees of the business (Carroll, 1979). Freeman in 1984, conceptualised this as stakeholder theory, arguing that business has a responsibility to take into consideration the views of not just shareholders, but a vast array of stakeholder such as employees, customers, suppliers, community groups and trade unions (Freeman, 2010). In an article reviewing the last 30 years of the use of stakeholder theory, Parmer et al., (2010) argue that in order for sustainability to be pursued effectively at the organisational
level, it must be incorporated throughout the core operations of the organisation into its day
to-day practices, organisational goals, internal incentives evaluation systems, and
organizational decision support systems (Amini & Bienstock, 2014; Hallstedt et al. 2010;
Lauring & Thomsen, 2009). This differs from an approach in which goals related to some
aspect of sustainable development are carried out through an add-on Corporate Social
Responsibility strategy or approach in which the main concern is often how this affects
competitive advantage (Dahlsrud, 2008; Simionescu, 2015).

It can be difficult for organisations to manage the competing sustainability goals (Haigh &
Hofmann, 2014; Pache & Santos, 2013) unless they have a suitable organisational structure
and mission. Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs’ structure and mission is inherently set up
in this way and they subsequently offer significant potential to develop solutions to overcome
what some view as an inevitable trade-off when it comes to the three pillars of sustainability
(Hahn et al., 2010). The unique structure and mission of sustainability-oriented enterprise
will be discussed in section 2.3. Literature demonstrates that the pillars of sustainability are
clearly separate but interrelated, and this can lead to tensions and tradeoffs. The following
section discusses the literature on whether the tensions between the three pillars can be
managed by organisational actors such as sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, or whether
they ultimately lead to trade-offs.

2.2.4 Sustainability Tensions

‘Win-win-win’ or ‘Trade-offs’
Hahn et al. (2010, p. 218) define trade-offs in corporate sustainability as “situations where
economic, environmental and social aspects of corporate sustainability cannot be achieved
simultaneously”. Winn et al. (2012, p. 55) emphasise that while strategic management may
not be a stranger to difficult trade-offs and dilemmas, “what is different about sustainability
trade-offs is the vastly expanded scope and number of factors: long-term versus short-term at
individual, organisational, societal and environmental levels …diverse factors are being
voiced by increasingly diverse stakeholders”. Similarly, noting that trade-offs are
traditionally assumed to mean compromises between financial and non-financial
sustainability elements, Angus-Leppan et al., (2010, p. 231), focus instead on the trade-offs
occurring “between the human and ecological sustainability elements or objectives in an
organisational context”. This section addresses this literature, positioning the current study within the argument of whether a ‘win-win-win’ outcomes is possible amongst sustainability pillars or whether trade-offs are inevitable.

The ‘win-win-win’ view within the sustainability literature is that “corporate sustainable development is achieved only at the intersection of the three principles” (Bansal, 2005, p. 199). Hahn et al., (2010) point out that much research in corporate sustainability is overly optimistic and fails to address the challenges that arise as a result of what they describe as inevitable trade-offs. The win-win-win approach referred to here is the most prominent in the literature (Hahn et al., 2010; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015) and as a result, much research fails to “undertake the task of working out the principles and guidelines for managing trade-offs” (Margolis & Walsh, 2003, p. 284). In particular, the preoccupation with the business case for CSR (Calton & Payne, 2003; McWilliams et al., 2006; Orlitzky et al., 2003), is thought to have led to a focus on situations in which economic, environmental and social sustainability aspects can be achieved simultaneously while situations of conflict or tension have mostly been ignored (Hahn et al., 2010). This lack of attention presents an important gap in corporate sustainability studies regarding the management of trade-offs (Figge & Hahn, 2012; Winn et al., 2012). In order to arrive at a comprehensive theory on the pursuit of sustainability by organisational actors, the challenges involved in implementing and managing the multiple pillars of sustainability need to be acknowledged and examined.

There is, although, a small number of studies that have begun to argue against the win-win-win approach, viewing the integration of the three sustainability pillars as the “ultimate challenge” of sustainability at organisational level (Hahn & Figge, 2011, p. 326). This literature argues that trade-offs are inevitable and that there is a need to go beyond an overly ambitious win-win-win paradigm (e.g. Young & Tilley, 2006; Winn et al., 2012) as the pursuit of such an assumed optimal outcome could be limiting for the development of trade-off solutions. Margolis and Walsh (2003, p. 280) argue that organisational inquiry “must go beyond efforts to reconcile corporate responses to social misery with the neoclassical model of the firm. Rather, this social and economic tension should serve as a starting point for new theory and research”. These authors propose that conceptualisations of organisational level sustainability that consider the win-win-win approach to be possible will be limited to producing conflict-free solutions with little potential to fundamentally changing core business practices in pursuit of sustainability.
While most of these trade-off studies examine the integration of sustainability commitments on a general or conceptual level (Hahn et al., 2010), a variety of empirical studies focusing on specific trade-offs and dilemmas also exist (e.g. Holt, 2012; Wheeler et al., 2002; Illge & Preuss, 2012). For example, Illge and Preuss (2012), in a comparative case study of one large Swedish and one small German firm in the textile industry, discuss “the tensions and trade-offs that result from the efforts of the garment retailers to make the production of cotton garments more sustainable” for both firms (p. 103), such as the trade-off between focusing efforts on the development of fashionable products (good economic performance) and minimising environmental impacts as well as safeguarding decent working conditions (good environmental and social performance). Similarly, in a company-specific single case study in the Netherlands, Kolk (2012) looks at the paradoxes experienced by a multinational company related to sourcing coffee from sustainable sources. Kolk found that “emerging public purchasing guidelines seem to exclude the ‘mainstream-market’ policy of the company and instead favour the Fairtrade standard that embodies a niche approach” (p. 79). This points to how many tensions and trade-offs arise as a result of multiple and divergent stakeholders in the sustainability enterprise field. Empirical studies demonstrate that these exist across factors such as scale of operation, industry and geographical boundaries. However, empirical research on possible trade-offs is still limited and in particular, how to manage these trade-offs (Hahn et al., 2015).

Hahn et al. (2015), in building on their earlier conceptual work (Hahn et al., 2010) propose a framework for the analysis and management of tensions in corporate sustainability. The framework considers “tensions that stem from (a) different understandings of sustainability across individual, firm and systemic levels; (b) different perspectives on change processes needed to become more sustainable; (c) and different views on the relevant temporal and spatial context” (p. 301). Still, this framework works towards an integrative approach to managing sustainability tensions, which seeks to bring sustainability dimensions together and does not acknowledge the inherent complexities of sustainability tensions in the way that a paradox approach does. Nonetheless, in examining how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs manage possible tensions between sustainability pillars through legitimacy, this study draws upon Hahn et al., (2010; 2015) who argue that future research should develop tools to assess tensions in order to identify the strategies that yield returns for sustainable development.
Other studies in this literature, many of which are case studies, do not suggest explicit frameworks but offer a certain ‘approach’ or ‘way of thinking’ to make sense of complex situations and difficult decisions in corporate sustainability (e.g. Maon et al., 2008; Reynolds, 2008; White & Lee, 2009). Overall, the main purpose of these studies is to assist businesses in making choices between conflicting commitments and to help them balance differing responsibilities, as opposed to attempting to fundamentally critique the triple-pillar and holistic conceptualisations of corporate sustainability. Rather, they aim to provide practical guidance on how to manage tensions in daily decision making, as well as in developing a strategic agenda for future corporate sustainability activity (Angus-Leppan et al., 2010; Hahn et al., 2010, 2015; Maon et al., 2008). There is an opportunity to conceptualise sustainability in a way that challenges both the shallow win-win-win approach to sustainability, where each pillar can be achieved simultaneously (Hahn et al., 2010) and the notion of inherent trade-offs faced by entrepreneurs. The paradox approach to sustainability can extend the current theoretical and empirical literature on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship through providing insight on how sustainability tensions can be managed. The following section draws together the findings of the review on the pillars of sustainability presented in section 2.2 and discusses the utility of a paradox approach to triple pillar sustainability. This will inform the argument for why these multiple sustainability pillars should be examined as multiple organisational field logics which shape legitimation for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs.

**A Paradox Approach to Sustainability Pillars**

Van der Byl and Slawinski (2015) carried out a recent review of how the corporate sustainability literature has conceptualised various tensions, extending the polarised categories of ‘win-win-win’ and ‘trade-offs’ to include the ‘integrative approach’ (e.g. Aguilera et al., 2007; Hahn & Figge, 2011) and ‘paradox approach’ (e.g. Berger et al. 2007; Gao & Bansal 2013). The authors assert that an integrative approach seeks to bring balance to the three elements of sustainability and avoid trade-offs, but to a lesser extent than the win-win-win approach. This refers to how an integrative approach supports shifting focus between dimensions of sustainability when necessary, acting as a temporary solution. This is quite distinct from a paradox approach which “seeks to understand the nature of tensions along with how actors work through them” (p. 54). The authors describe the paradox approach as moving beyond the integrative approach, and argue that it consists of “acceptance and exploration of tensions rather than resolution”, as is sought by the trade-off
approach (p. 57). While the trade-off approach requires organisational actors to make decisions between dimensions of sustainability which subsequently results in at least one dimension becoming neglected, the paradox approach attempts to work through and explore tensions, working towards an interconnected, holistic form of sustainability.

Van der Byl and Slawinski (2015) also comprehensively categorise the sustainability tensions identified in the current literature, organising these tensions under the categories of strategic direction, domain and strategy implementation (see Table 2.1). Much of this literature refers to tensions that occur in corporate sustainability practices of for-profit organisations which provides an interesting avenue for research on which tensions arise in the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field, and how these entrepreneurs overcome such tensions. For example, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs might experience tensions related to how to organise their strategic direction around both economic profit versus society/environment/ethics, as per table 2.1. Additionally, they might experience tensions relating to the domain of time and space, or strategy implementation with regard to stakeholder management and economics, also categorised in table 2.1. The current study examines how these entrepreneurs manage some of these tensions in the form of field logics in legitimation, as this “provides an opportunity to evaluate complex sustainability issues and generate creative approaches to them” (Ibid, p. 54).

**Table 2.1 Tensions in Corporate Sustainability literature.**
Adapted from Van der Byl and Slawinski (2015)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tensions of Corporate Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic Direction:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural environment and competitive advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic profit versus society/environment/ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market versus nonmarket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrating sustainability into strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domain:</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

27
Paradoxes refer to contradictory yet interrelated tensions that persist over time (Lewis, 2000; Smith & Lewis, 2011). Approaching a tension between pillars of sustainability as one that requires trade-offs will require a choice between pillars, diluting the pursuit. While the pursuit of any of the three pillars of sustainability individually can contribute in part to the sustainable development of the social-ecological system, it is not conducive to a holistic, interconnected approach and ultimately more comprehensive approach. A holistic form of sustainability goes beyond piecemeal attempts at achieving sustainability goals. Further, a trade-off view is “found in theories such as the resource-based view, and takes a reductionist approach” which emphasises efficiency over sustainability (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015, p. 71). Efficiency is also more in line with the integrative approach to sustainability which at times seeks temporary reconciliation between pillars. On the other hand, conceptualisations of sustainability that argue the requirement to meet all three sustainability objectives simultaneously are overly-ambitious and could also hamper sustainability efforts by overlooking inherent tensions, causing tensions to recur (Ibid). A paradox approach offers a solution to the issues faced within the win-win-win and trade-off approaches as it enables the examination of the nonlinear, holistic ways in which organisational actors can manage tensions when making sustainability decisions, such as during legitimation.
The paradox approach to sustainability is relatively new, and literature thus far has looked at how large organisations can manage diverse corporate sustainability requirements (Iivonen, 2017; Ivory & Brooks, 2017), how individual managers approach corporate sustainability tensions (Carollo & Guerci, 2017; Sharma & Jaiswal, 2017), how organisations manage paradoxes between CSR requirements (Wong & Dhanesh, 2017) as well as how entire countries manage societal-level paradoxes, namely the “poverty-CO2 reduction paradox” (Collins & Zheng, 2015, p. 355). There has been little work done as of yet on individual entrepreneurs in managing sustainability paradoxically, although the individual’s role in sustainability is acknowledged as an important area of future research (Carollo & Guerci, 2017; Hahn et al., 2015; Sharma & Jaiswal, 2017).

This study points to a paradox approach as a valuable lens for conceptualising and examining sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs’ legitimisation for a number of reasons. Firstly, authors in this field argue that a paradox approach moves beyond previous thinking on sustainability decision making at organisational level and offers the more rigorous approach required for the complex issue of sustainability (Hahn et al., 2017; Van der Byl and Slawinski, 2015). “A paradox perspective does not emphasize business considerations over concerns for environmental protection and social well-being at the societal level” (Hahn et al., 2017, p. 1). This is reflective of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs for whom sustainability goals are built into their enterprise models and are both a reason why they were initially created and their continuing raison d’être (Haigh & Hoffman, 2014). Despite the fact that many of these are small enterprises and may face resultant resource challenges, these entrepreneurs structure their enterprises around the pursuit of sustainability as well as build partnerships and alliances with like-minded sustainability field members in attempts to build consensus for their sustainability missions (Hoffman, 2001). All of this suggests that they may be in a position to enact this rigorous approach to sustainability which goes beyond piecemeal sustainability decision making at organisational level.

Secondly, referring to studies such as those carried out by Aguilera et al., (2007), Anastasiadis (2014) and Nga and Shamuganathan (2010), Van der Byl and Slawinski (2015) state that researchers contend that “a cognitive shift or expansion in mindset is required to more effectively integrate the contradictory and complex aspects of sustainability” (p.64). Martinez (2017) examined how the personal faith of organisational leaders played a role in managing sustainability paradoxes, regarding faith as fundamental in shaping approaches to
sustainability as faith is similarly concerned with a better future. Since sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs are characterised as having a number of unique traits which have been deemed responsible for driving entrepreneurial activity towards sustainable development (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015), this might imbue them with the mindset required to enact a paradox approach. Therefore, the current study argues that these entrepreneurs can use, for example, their prior sustainability knowledge, their strong sustainability values (orientation) and their entrepreneurial mindset (intention) to engage in a paradox approach as opposed to a less rigorous trade-off approach in managing tensions between the different pillars of sustainability, including during legitimation.

Thirdly, sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation requires the entrepreneur to manage tensions between different stakeholder expectations of sustainability in the organisational field (O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011). As will be discussed in Chapter Three, this organisational field is made up of multiple stakeholders with diverse expectations regarding sustainability, and these diverse expectations are communicated through multiple field logics (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011). For this reason, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs must have the ability to recognise which sustainability pillar the interests of each stakeholder they encounter align with, they must be able to manage tensions between different stakeholder expectations, and the correct balance must be achieved amongst sustainability pillars in the pursuit of legitimacy in the field. This task requires a paradox approach as opposed to a trade-off approach which would see a segment of the stakeholders unsatisfied if the pillar they adhere to was ‘traded-off’. Further, paradoxical tensions arise as actors socially construct their reality (Smith & Lewis, 2011). As legitimacy is a socially constructed phenomenon (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002), there is ample opportunity for paradoxical tensions to arise between the diverse stakeholder expectations of what is legitimate, and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs must overcome these tensions through legitimation. A paradox approach to sustainability is crucial for legitimacy in the field.

For these reasons, this study responds to calls for further research utilising a paradox approach to sustainability (Iivonen, 2017; Panagiotakopoulos et al., 2016; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015) by adopting a paradox approach to the conceptualisation of sustainability that pervades the activities of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. Specifically, a paradox approach sets the context for the use of an institutional framework in this study to examine how these entrepreneurs manage the tensions that exist between multiple pillars of
sustainability in the form of multiple field logics in legitimation. It also sets the context for examining how internal constructs specific to these entrepreneurs, such as prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention can be used as agency to paradoxically manage tensions between logics in legitimation. The next section positions this research aim within the literature on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship and demonstrates the proposed contribution of this study to this literature.

### 2.3 Sustainability and Entrepreneurship

Awareness and acceptance is growing of the idea that a fundamental transformation in the way society consumes natural resources and produces energy may be needed if we are to make progress on pressing environmental issues such as ecosystem degradation and global climate change (Hoffman & Jennings, 2012). With this as context, entrepreneurship is increasingly being cited as a significant conduit for bringing about a transformation to sustainable products and processes (Hall et al., 2010). Through innovation, entrepreneurial activity might create positive synergies between pillars of sustainability and help off-set trade-offs.

A recent body of literature has been specifically concerned with entrepreneurship driven by the different goals of the triple bottom line and sustainable development, variously termed environmental or green entrepreneurship, eco or enviro-preneurship (Isaak, 2002; Schaper, 2002; Walley and Taylor, 2002; Dixon and Clifford, 2005), social entrepreneurship (Choi & Majumdar, 2014; Peredo & McLean, 2006), sustainable entrepreneurship (Dean & McMullan, 2007) sustainability entrepreneurship (DeClercq & Voronov 2011; Tilley & Young, 2009) and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011). The literature largely examine these types of entrepreneurial activities separately, although a number of authors categorise social and environmental entrepreneurship as types of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (Dean and McMullen, 2007; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011; Tilley & Young, 2009), recognising the interconnectedness amongst these fields. The following sections review the separate but related literatures of environmental, social and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, demonstrating the overlap between these literatures and arguing that over-delineating between these fields is counterproductive to the pursuit of holistic, multi-pillar sustainability. ‘Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship’ will be shown as a valuable term for capturing the range of entrepreneurial activities in which individuals
engage in to pursue sustainability, as well as a term that accounts for how these entrepreneurs can manage tensions between sustainability pillars paradoxically.

2.3.1. Factors Shaping Environmental Entrepreneurship

The ambiguity surrounding the terms used to describe an environmentally-focused form of entrepreneurship is reminiscent of the struggles in the traditional field of entrepreneurship in defining its space (Thompson, 2013). The academic literature on environmental entrepreneurship has evolved from a variety of disciplines and methodologies, with economists, management scholars and ecologists commonly focusing on how business activity results in market failures in the form of externalities (Thompson et al., 2011). Early work, although largely descriptive and conceptual in its first attempts at developing theory, present a number of ways in which to consider how environmentally sound business practices could be incorporated into operations and how this might affect competitive advantage (e.g. Anderson & Leal, 1997; Berle, 1991; Blue, 1990; Staber, 1997). However, much of this literature was focused at the level of the organisation rather than the individual entrepreneur, and it did not see organisational actors as driven by anything other than achieving economic benefit. Still, it has helped to develop the field now known as environmental entrepreneurship, as the idea that opportunities for environmental entrepreneurship are largely due to the existence of environmental degradation from business is one avenue the literature has taken (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Hostager et al., 1998). For example, Dean and McMullen (2007) argue that it is a “process of defining, evaluating, and exploiting economic opportunities that are present in environmentally relevant market failures” (p. 58). This definition suggests that market failures such as negative externalities, monopoly power, and government intervention (Thompson, 2013) result in environmental issues that provide economic opportunities for entrepreneurial individuals who know how recognise, exploit and create them. This conceptualisation assumes that environmental entrepreneurs are driven by economic opportunities, much like traditional entrepreneurial opportunity pursuit, rather than environmental goals.

Table 2.2 Typology of Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environmental Entrepreneurship</th>
<th>Social Entrepreneur</th>
<th>Sustainability-driven entrepreneur</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

32
In contrast, as can be seen from Table 2.2, according to Schaltegger and Wagner (2011), the core motivation and main goals of environmental entrepreneurship are to make money and to solve environmental problems. This portrays these entrepreneurs as driven by both environmental and economic goals such as those who seek to reduce carbon emissions through creating an energy efficient technology that customers will value. The literature began to move towards empirical examinations of how individuals recognise, exploit and create economic growth through entrepreneurial activities that also create environmental benefits (e.g. Meek et al., 2010; Shepherd et al., 2013; Sine & Lee, 2009; York & Venkataraman, 2010). Using a range of methodologies, from rich, qualitative case studies to quantitative regression methods on large datasets, a significant body of literature now supports the pursuit of both economic and environmental goals through entrepreneurship, recognising both the economic and environmental drivers and benefits. York et al., (2016) offer a useful definition for this form of entrepreneurship which captures the possibility for the simultaneous creation of economic and ecological benefits. They define it as “the use of
both commercial and ecological logics to address environmental degradation through the creation of financially profitable organizations, products, services, and markets” (p. 695). This idea of jointly pursuing economic and environmental benefits distinguishes environmental entrepreneurship from traditional entrepreneurship, yet it retains the underlying goal of economic sustainability. There has also been a move towards examining how environmental entrepreneurs can pursue social opportunities as well as environmental (Corbet & Montgomery, 2017; Gutberlet et al., 2016; Markman et al., 2016). These studies discuss the simultaneous pursuit of multiple sustainability goals, which also characterises sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. This demonstrates recognition within the environmental entrepreneurship literature of the possibility for an approach to value-creating entrepreneurship that does not over delineate between types of sustainability goals and activities.

Many external motivations for engagement in environmentally focused business practices at the organisational level have been highlighted by researchers within the institutional theory paradigm (Bronn & Vidaver-Cohen, 2009; Muñoz & Kibler, 2013; Zhu et al., 2013). Regarding the relationship between economic activity and the natural environment, empirical work finds that firms implement environmental management systems in response to institutional forces such as market competitiveness and investor and regulatory pressures (Ervin et al., 2012; Zhu et al., 2013). Adding to the above is growing customer intolerance for corporate practices that damage the environment or neglect human rights (Aguilera et al., 2007), increasing public scrutiny of corporate governance practices that lack transparency (Marshall et al., 2005), and demands from local constituents that companies invest in improving community infrastructure (Vidaver-Cohen, 2007). Researchers have also documented organisational actors’ beliefs that responding to these forces is critical for preserving company image, generating goodwill among stakeholders, or enhancing the legitimacy of the industry to which the company belongs, in turn enhancing overall performance (Arseculeratne & Yazdanifard, 2014; Peloza, 2006). In general, motives for engaging in environmental firm activity tend to cluster around either external, strategic justifications concerned with performance, or moral and value-driven justifications (Bronn & Vidaver-Cohen, 2009). However, these studies are mostly either concerned with ‘add-on’ green or sustainability-oriented practices that established firms implement in order to reduce their environmental impacts and attain competitive advantage. They are also focused at the organisational level rather than that of the individual entrepreneur.
Some authors have sought to develop a more nuanced understanding of the behaviours and drivers of individual environmental entrepreneurs (Vickers & Lyon, 2014) and as a result, a number of typologies exist. Post and Altman (1994) identify environmental entrepreneurs as: Compliance-based, with environmental improvement emerging as an outcome of government regulation and legislation; Market-driven, with environmentally beneficial behaviour coming through positive incentive, and Value-driven, with environmental change coming in response to consumer demands as they act on their environmental values. Additionally, Walley and Taylor (2002) focus on the ‘mutually producing’ relationship between social structure and entrepreneurial action. They utilise existing typologies of entrepreneurs to propose a typology of environmental or ‘green’ entrepreneurs who seek to occupy new niches and reconfigure existing business models and practices: Innovative opportunists - primarily financially oriented having spotted a green niche; Visionary champions - embracing a transformative, sustainability orientation; Ethical mavericks - sustainable orientation, influenced by friends, networks and past experiences, and Ad hoc or accidental green/enviro-preneurs. Yet this and similar typologies have been criticised for being “highly speculative and supported by limited empirical evidence”, as they are largely the result of a small number of case studies (Gibbs, 2009, p. 79). Further criticism of these typologies is that they fail to account for changes over time as they are based on data collected in a short amount of time (de Bruin and Lewis 2005). Still, they demonstrate that environmental entrepreneurship is the result of a variety of drivers, both external environmental drivers and internal drivers such as values, experience and knowledge. The current study recognises the role of both external and internal factors in shaping entrepreneur legitimation behaviour, and the following sections show that there is much overlap between activities and drivers of environmental, social entrepreneurs and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs regarding these factors.

2.3.2 Factors Shaping Social Entrepreneurship

There have been multiple definitions and interpretations of social entrepreneurship, from broad, overarching definitions that could encompass many organisational structures across different sectors to context-specific definitions. Schaltegger and Wagner (2011) define social entrepreneurship simply as “the application of the entrepreneurial approach towards the primary aim of meeting societal goals” (p. 222). Similarly, Tracey and Phillips (2007) state that “social entrepreneurship is concerned with enterprise for a social purpose and involves
building organizations that have the capacity to be both commercially viable and socially constructive” (p. 265). These authors view this form of entrepreneurship as having the same theoretical base as traditional or environmental entrepreneurship, with a ‘social’ focus being the key modifier. In the same way as environmental entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship has been conceptualised as being ultimately concerned with the recognition, evaluation, exploitation and creation of opportunities that yield multiple returns in the form of both economic and social benefits.

Still, the boundary of the field of social entrepreneurship is not a hard or static one with regards to its extent of overlap with the traditional or environmental entrepreneurship fields. The literature also shows social entrepreneurs are often predominantly concerned with their social goal, and that they are tasked with better integrating economic issues in their core goal of solving societal problems (see Table 2.2) (Zahra et al., 2010). As put by Tracey and Phillips (2007), the most commonly cited form of social entrepreneurship is that which “refers to the creation of positive social change, regardless of the structures or processes through which it is achieved” (p. 265). Underpinned by Dees’s (1998) approach to social entrepreneurship, this approach views social transformation as the ultimate outcome. In other words, social entrepreneurs are thought to be more driven by their values than environmental entrepreneurs.

As social entrepreneurship is often more concerned with the societal than profit goal, it has been compared to philanthropy, fund-raising initiatives or social activism (Bright et al., 2006; Lasprogata & Cotten, 2003). Mair and Martí (2006) and Thomson (2013) list some of the organisational structures and types of social enterprises as non-profits, for-profits, specialised public and private organisations, and newly emerging organisations. Because of this, Martin and Osberg (2007) assert that an important point in the social entrepreneurship field is to differentiate between social entrepreneurs and other groups in this sector. Activists and philanthropists are socially-oriented individuals who identify opportunities and social needs, and rather than putting in place structures to take direct action to address the need, they appeal to others, such as governments, NGOs, or consumers to take action or to fund the action. Without the strategic direct action, they are more influencers than entrepreneurs (Martin and Osberg, 2007).
Factors driving social entrepreneurship can largely be mapped onto what Nicholls and Cho (2006) identify as the main building blocks of social entrepreneurship: innovation, market orientation and sociality. Much like traditional and environmental entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurs can be driven by the recognition of an innovative opportunity (Martin & Osberg, 2007), an opportunity to create money for their social mission (Huybrechts & Nicholls, 2012), and their own values and goals for their social mission (Bright et al., 2006). Many cite altruistic motives and social values, such as Stevens et al., (2015) who found that social entrepreneurs’ prosocial values correlate with a stronger emphasis on social goals in their organisations. Similarly, Stephan and Drencheva (2017) in their review of drivers of social entrepreneurship found that these entrepreneurs are predominantly driven by motives and values representing prosocial concerns. Evidently, these entrepreneurs are thought to be driven more by internal constructs related to values than environmental entrepreneurs whose behaviour is shaped by both internal and external factors. However, Kibler (2012) found that entrepreneurial behaviour towards social goals is not independent of external perceptions, and that moral legitimacy accorded to entrepreneurs can have significantly positive impact on firm formation.

Overall, the social entrepreneurship field is particularly concerned with the introduction of altruistic and moral elements into entrepreneurial action. This is a powerful idea and creates a path towards innovative conceptualisations of entrepreneurship. “New value is created by pairing entrepreneurship with social issues in management structures that change the relationship between organizations and society in new ways” (Thompson, 2013, p. 28). Leading foundations such as Ashoka and the Schwab Foundation continue to actively encourage and award the activities of social entrepreneurs (Choi & Majumdar, 2014; Dacin et al., 2010) and its recognition as a promising global issue demonstrates its importance as a field of research. Still, due to “nonquantifiability, multicausality, temporal dimensions, and perceptive differences of the social impact created” (Austin et al., 2006, p.3), performance and impact measurement is much more difficult than for traditional entrepreneurship.

Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs are shaped by many of the same external and internal factors, and the following section demonstrates how this emerging field aims to address the contribution of entrepreneurial activities to sustainable development in a more inclusive and comprehensive way than viewing them separately through the lenses of environmental or social entrepreneurship.
2.3.3 Factors Shaping Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship

Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship research is cited as an important emerging area of theory (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016; Shepherd & Patzelt, 2011). These entrepreneurs aim to elevate the social and environmental components of sustainable development in ways that are not present in sustainability agendas of enterprises that are solely for profit. For this type of entrepreneur, reactive approaches to reducing negative environmental or social impact or add-on CSR strategies are not sufficient. Conversely, they are not engaged in an attempt to create some disconnected, utopian ideal (Davies, 2012) or achieve over-ambitious win-win-win sustainability success (Hahn et al., 2010). Instead, these entrepreneurs seek to be responsive to local conditions while also challenge prevailing orthodoxies in order to progress sustainably (Hockerts and Wüstenhagen, 2010; Davies et al., 2012). A number of definitions for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship exist in the literature. While some authors view this form of entrepreneurship as requiring a triple-bottom line approach (e.g. Hockerts and Wüstenhagen, 2010; Tilley and Young, 2009) others do not specify this, with some definitions subsequently also being applicable to environmental and social entrepreneurs. Shepherd and Patzelt (2011, p. 137) state that “sustainable entrepreneurship is focused on the preservation of nature, life support, and community in the pursuit of perceived opportunities to bring into existence future products, processes, and services for gain, where gain is broadly construed to include economic and non-economic gains to individuals, the economy, and society”. This definition is valuable in that it refers to ‘perceived opportunities’ which captures the important moment of opportunity recognition and the notion of sustainability as a journey rather than a fixed destination (Vos, 2007). In addition, it does not specify that all three pillars must be pursued simultaneously but views this as a possibility (Shepherd and Patzelt, 2011), which would enable these entrepreneurs to manage tensions between pillars paradoxically.

Another definition is offered O’Neill et al. (2009, p. 34), who state that “sustainability entrepreneurship is a process of venture creation that links the activities of entrepreneurs to the emergence of value-creating enterprises that contribute to the sustainable development of the social-ecological system.” Although this definition makes less reference to the opportunity recognition stage of entrepreneurship, it captures the process-orientation of entrepreneurship as a journey (Vos, 2007) in that some element of sustainability is the goal of the organisation and its entrepreneur, demonstrating an inherent inter-temporal dimension. Remaining broad in its reference to ‘value-creating enterprises’, it captures the potential of
these entrepreneurs to pursue environmental and/or social goals in the use of the term ‘social-ecological system’ but does not specify that entrepreneurs must pursue both, also facilitating a paradox approach. In addition, this definition explicitly uses the term ‘sustainable development’, which was identified during the review of the broader sustainability literature as a fundamentally important concept. For these reasons, this study utilizes the definition of sustainability-oriented entrepreneur developed by O’Neill et al., (2009).

Despite its conceptual appeal and recent surge of research interest in this field, there remains a lack of understanding of the nature of the phenomenon of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (Muñoz, 2013). A review by Hall et al. (2010) aimed to capture the types of methodologies utilised in the field and found most literature to be conceptual in nature, with few having tested their models empirically. Muñoz & Dimov (2015) in a more recent review, similarly report that much of the extant literature is descriptive and prescriptive conceptual work engaged in attempts to tease out definitions and boundaries, providing a starting point for empirical research. Extant research calls for further exploration of the role of entrepreneurial action as a mechanism for sustaining nature and ecosystems while providing economic and non-economic gains for investors, entrepreneurs and societies in a way that environmental and social entrepreneurship attempts fall short (Shepherd and Patzelt 2011). The actions of these entrepreneurs can encompass environmentally or socially-oriented activity or both, hence the need to define boundaries, connect theoretical fields and provide deeper explanations of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship beyond current approaches to environmental or social entrepreneurship. Simultaneous economic and environmental value may be achieved by the provision of products or services such as waste management and low-carbon technologies or services (Marsden, 2010). In addition, the actions of these entrepreneurs can contribute to the social dimension of sustainability, including strengthening the web of relationships and cultures that bind groups of individuals, places and communities of interest (Maclean et al., 2013; Shepherd and Patzelt, 2011). Research in this area focuses on any entrepreneurial activity that adds to efforts in maintaining a sustainable society and ecosystems, subsequently encompassing a broad and diverse range of environmental, social and economic-oriented activities (Shepherd and Patzelt, 2011). As put by Schaltegger and Wagner (2011), their core motivation is to contribute to solving societal and environmental problems through the realization of a successful business (see Table 2.2). It demonstrates that there is a natural overlap between these forms of entrepreneurship and over-delineating between them is counterproductive to the pursuit of holistic, multi-pillar sustainability.
Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship as a term and a field offers a means of conceptualising these entrepreneurial activities in a way that strives for a more holistic approach to triple-pillar sustainability; one in which entrepreneurs can acknowledge and work through tensions among pillars paradoxically (Van der Byl and Slawinski, 2015). Chapter Three will elaborate on this point, demonstrating the value of the concept of organisational fields from a neo institutional approach in examining sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship.

The emerging sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature has also begun to address which external and internal factors shape sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. Much like social, and to a lesser extent environmental entrepreneurs, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs have been found to hold several sustainability values such as freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility, which direct their goals, frame their attitudes, and shape their actions (Leiserowitz et al. 2006). “Even though the historic trajectories of these types differ, it seems that the underlying motivations for the activities are very similar and this seems to make likely a convergence of these currently rather independent literatures” (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011 p. 224). There have been a number of recent empirical advances in the understanding of the constructs that drive sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (see e.g. Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010; Muñoz and Dimov, 2015; Parrish, 2010; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011; Shepherd et al., 2013). For example, Schaltegger and Wagner (2011) and Figge et al., (2002) take the view that a desire to meet the needs of stakeholders, such as marginalised groups in the local community or customers looking for ethical products, is what drives these entrepreneurs. An inherent and altruistic interest in and desire to meet demands of environmentally and socially conscious stakeholders fundamentally differs from the exploitation of market failures as entrepreneurial opportunities solely for economic gain, as is the case with traditional economic-oriented entrepreneurship. Although, it is comparable to what has been found to drive social and to a lesser extent, environmental entrepreneurs, again demonstrating an overlap between these forms of entrepreneurship. Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs are driven by a range of factors along the spectrum from purely altruistic pursuit of a sustainability value to economic opportunity exploitation based on an existing market failure (Schaltegger and Wagner 2011).

According to a recent comprehensive review of the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature carried out by Muñoz & Dimov (2015), three individual-level constructs are
ultimately responsible for driving entrepreneurial behaviour towards sustainable development. This review considered the 17 conceptual and 16 empirical academic studies that had been published between 1998 and 2013 on the subject of what drives of sustainability venturing. The result of this review is that three internal constructs are ultimately responsible, namely prior sustainability knowledge (PSK) (Patzelt and Shepherd, 2010), sustainability intention (SI) (Linnanen, 2002; Schaltegger, 2002; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011; Schlange, 2009), and sustainability orientation (SO) (Gibbs, 2009; Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010). This comprehensive review provided the current study with an opportunity to examine the role of these three constructs in legitimation. These constructs are discussed in the following section where it can be seen that they have also been found to drive environmental and social entrepreneurship. Ultimately, viewing any individual who pursues a sustainability goal through entrepreneurial means as a sustainability-oriented entrepreneur rather than an environmental or social entrepreneurs brings these sustainability endeavours together in a way that reflects holistic, triple-pillar sustainability. This is a more comprehensive approach to conceptualising and examining this form of entrepreneurship, which is beneficial in examining how these entrepreneurs can manage sustainability tensions paradoxically (Dean & McMullen, 2007; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011). Activities and drivers overlap and arguing their differences is counterintuitive to holistic sustainability.

2.4 Internal Constructs of Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship and Legitimacy

Literature recommends that future research explores the processes through which sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs manage the relationships and tensions between their social, economic and environmental goals, as these entrepreneurs must contend with a field that values economic, environmental and social sustainability issues (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011, Pache & Santos, 2013). Hahn et al., (2010, p. 7) argue that despite having received very little attention in the literature, the individual efforts to manage sustainability tensions is a crucial point of analysis as “eventually organisational behaviour with regard to sustainable development depends on the perceptions, motives, values and decisions of single actors.” This demonstrates a need for research on the role of the individual entrepreneur in managing sustainability tensions, and furthermore, the role of internal constructs pertaining to these entrepreneurs, such as is carried out in this study.
One way in which sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs encounter these multiple pillars is during legitimation. Little conceptual or empirical attention has been paid to the complexity of the strategic legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, despite what we know of how important legitimacy can be for business success (Suchman, 1995). For entrepreneurs who exist within a field characterised by multiple audiences with contradictory expectations regarding legitimacy, such as those faced with pursuing environmental, social and profit goals, this task might be considered all the more challenging and merits examination (Mars & Lounsbury, 2009; Pache & Santos, 2013). A small number of recent papers have examined legitimacy in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (see e.g. DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; de Lange, 2016; Kibler et al., 2015; O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011, 2016), presenting it as an underdeveloped area of conceptual and empirical research. Authors have looked at, for example, the role of territorial embeddedness and place-based legitimacy (Kibler et al., 2015) and the role of legitimation in forming organisational fields (de Lange, 2016). Authors have also conceptually (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011) and empirically (O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011) examined how institutional rules that are communicated to entrepreneurs through what are known as logics, play a role in legitimation. These papers are discussed further in Chapter Three in the context of sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation.

This study utilises an institutional approach to examine different sustainability pillars as distinct organisational field logics, where the appropriate management of these logics is crucial for building legitimacy. The framing of sustainability pillars as organisational field logics and how these external factors plays a role in legitimation will be presented in Chapter Three.

This study also explores how ‘prior sustainability knowledge’, ‘sustainability orientation’ and ‘sustainability intention’ can be conceptualised as internal, individual-level constructs of agency in legitimation. These are the constructs that have ultimately been found in the literature to drive entrepreneurial behaviour towards sustainable development (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015). These constructs are normally considered as separate and individually important, yet Muñoz and Dimov (2015) found that they are not actually sufficient conditions by themselves in explaining entrepreneurial outcomes. Specifically, ‘sustainability intention’ is dependent on ‘prior sustainability knowledge’ and ‘sustainability orientation’, as research shows that these entrepreneurs are often simultaneously acting on their ‘sustainability orientation’ and ‘prior sustainability knowledge’ in enacting ‘sustainability intention’. In this regard, the authors suggest that future research must consider these constructs collectively as
holistic configurations which taken together can explain the pursuit of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. The current study heeds this advice and considers these constructs as collectively responsible for driving this form of entrepreneurship. However, research has not examined how these constructs may be used strategically by sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs to meet sustainability goals, such as during legitimation. This study examines how together, these constructs may play a role in the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs in the form of agency by enabling these entrepreneurs to manage tensions between pillars. Although the literature acknowledges that the values and beliefs of entrepreneurs must play a role in legitimation (DeClercq and Voronov, 2011; O'Neil and Ucbasaran; 2016), we do not know exactly what this role is or how these entrepreneurs can utilize these constructs in responding to diverse sustainability expectations in the field. The current study addresses this lack of understanding, and the following subsections provide a review of the literature on the constructs of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention.

2.4.1 Prior Sustainability Knowledge
Prior sustainability knowledge refers to “prior knowledge of ecological and social environments and the perceived threats to such environments” (Muñoz and Dimov, 2015, p. 640). There is not one type of sustainability that is valued over another but rather, it is recognised that sustainability is a complex, multidimensional concept (Dresner, 2008) and individuals can have prior knowledge of many sustainability issues, environmental or social. Prior knowledge has been measured using a 5-point Likert scale survey consisting of questions about the extent to which entrepreneurs understood the economic, social, environmental problems of society (Muñoz and Dimov, 2015). Authors have found that items did not reflect separable aspects of the concept of sustainability, “but rather intertwined components that respond to the systemic nature of sustainability problems” (Ibid, p. 643). Authors found prior sustainability knowledge does not by itself lead to entrepreneurial behaviour towards sustainable development. It is a “necessary condition at best” and one that “needs to be complemented by other factors in driving the entrepreneurial process forward” (Ibid, p. 649). For this reason, the authors argue that this construct should be considered holistically with sustainability orientation and sustainability intention in examining entrepreneurial behaviour towards sustainable development.
Prior knowledge has also been examined conceptually in relation to opportunity recognition in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, with authors concluding that it is prior knowledge of market imperfections and environmental challenges that lead to entrepreneurial innovations (Cohen and Winn, 2007). Research has argued that enhancing the sustainability knowledge of entrepreneurial individuals will enable entrepreneurial action to resolve some of the environmental challenges that arise from inefficient functioning of markets (Dean and McMullen, 2007). Despite these studies purporting to relate to sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, they do not offer much discussion on the social pillar of sustainability. This places a limit on the range of sustainability issues these entrepreneurs might have prior knowledge on. Conversely, Choi and Gray (2008) in their examination of prior knowledge see sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship as inclusive of a social pillar, defining these individuals as entrepreneurs who “create profitable enterprises but also achieve certain social and/or environmental objectives” (p. 559). The authors see this holistic, multi-pillar approach to sustainability as necessary to account for the varied backgrounds and knowledge of these entrepreneurs. They found that these entrepreneurs are “an unusual breed with unconventional backgrounds” (p. 558), usually referring to limited business backgrounds. The current study supports this view and examines the role of prior environmental and social sustainability knowledge in legitimation.

Unlike the studies mentioned thus far, Patzelt and Shepherd (2010) explicitly refer to prior knowledge as a construct and should be credited with drawing together the literature on this topic. They argue that individuals are more likely to discover sustainability venturing opportunities the greater their prior knowledge or experience in the sustainability field, and the more they perceive this field as being threatened. “Differences in prior knowledge may explain variance in entrepreneurs’ direction of attention toward aspects of the natural and communal environment, and thus their recognition of sustainable development opportunities” (p. 636). As was the case with Choi and Gray (2008), a holistic, triple pillar approach is taken to the conceptualisation of sustainability and the subsequently broad range of sustainability values that can assist the entrepreneurial process. However, none of these studies focused on how prior sustainability might manifest in the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs.

DeClercq and Voronov (2011) have been cited throughout this chapter as they have explicitly recommended that research empirically examine sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation. Further, their own paper conceptually considers how both field-level factors
and entrepreneur constructs, including prior sustainability knowledge, might influence legitimation. They hypothesise that prior knowledge of how to balance contesting field logics may help with the balancing process during legitimation. This translates as entrepreneurs who are more familiar with the expectations and norms of the sustainability field finding it easier and having more success in legitimation. Prior knowledge has also been found to positively relate to opportunity recognition in traditional entrepreneurship literature (Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Shane, 2000) and its role in establishing legitimacy in traditional organisations has been explored (Mitteness et al., 2013). It can be seen from this review of the literature on prior sustainability knowledge that this literature has not empirically examined the role of this construct in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation. This has, however, been a recommendation of recent studies that contemplate whether prior knowledge might benefit the entrepreneur in speeding up legitimation and enable the entrepreneur to encounter less dissonance from diverse stakeholders (DeClercq and Voronov, 2011; O'Neil and Ucbasaran, 2016). This provides an opportunity for this study to make an important contribution to the extant literature by empirically examining prior sustainability knowledge as agency in the legitimation process.

2.4.2 Sustainability Orientation

In the literature on traditional forms of entrepreneurship in which entrepreneurs are economically-driven, orientation is an important construct (Schlange, 2006). Many studies in the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship also include some discussion of orientation as a possible driver of the pursuit of this form of entrepreneurship (e.g. DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Katsikis & Kyrgidou, 2007; Larson, 2000; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2009; Schlange, 2006; Spence et al., 2010; Tilley & Young, 2009; Walley & Taylor, 2002). Sustainability orientation is defined as “underlying attitudes and convictions” about issues of “environmental protection and social responsibility”, and how this links to “entrepreneurial intention focused on sustainable development” (Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010, p. 531). This literature points to sustainability orientation as crucial in facilitating the intent to pursue a sustainability-oriented venture (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015).

There have been a number of conceptual studies carried out in relation to sustainability orientation which have argued the importance of understanding this construct as a means of engendering a sustainability-oriented shift in industry and commerce (Gibbs, 2009). Hockerts
and Wüstenhagen (2010) find that it is the compounded impact of the sustainability orientation of incumbents and new ventures that creates the potential for sustainable transformation of industries. The authors view the sustainability orientation of nascent entrepreneurs, in the form of intent to effect social and environmental change across society, as particularly strong. Sustainability orientation is theorized as powerful enough to cause a reaction in incumbents who will subsequently engage in corporate sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship activities. While conceptual studies have helped to further the development of concepts and encourage further research on orientation, much of the literature in the field is empirical, recognizing the importance of substantively investigating this construct in practice, such as in this study.

Muñoz and Dimov (2015) measure sustainability orientation using a 6-item Likert scale adapted from Kuckertz and Wagner (2010). The authors measure this construct by asking questions about the entrepreneurs' "attitudes and convictions about sustainability as reflected in their perceptions of the venture they were creating" (p. 643) and found that while orientation is present to varying degrees throughout venturing, it should be considered holistically with other constructs in examining what drives this form of entrepreneurship forward. Orientation has also been measured using survey data collected from engineering and business students and alumni, with authors reporting that measuring sustainability orientation of entrepreneurial individuals can help to explain their entrepreneurial intention as these individuals also exhibit high intention. (Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010). Nonetheless, this positive relationship between sustainability orientation and intention vanishes as individuals gain more business experience due to both individual and external factors. This reflects the argument of Hockerts and Wüstenhagen (2010) who theorized that nascent start-ups will exhibit the strongest orientation.

Further empirical work based on a single case study in the UK found that “the entrepreneurial flair of the CEO enables the pursuit of environmental, social and economic goals” (Dixon and Clifford, 2007, p. 327). This suggests that individuals with much business experience in the field exhibit strong orientation, which contradicts Kuckertz and Wagner (2010) who found that orientation diminishes with business experience. However, it does reflect the argument of Hockerts and Wüstenhagen (2010) that strong orientation of nascent entrepreneurs in the field may encourage corporate sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship activities throughout the organisation. Further, Shepherd et al. (2013) investigates what conditions influence
entrepreneurs to make decisions inconsistent with their sustainability values. They argue that “entrepreneurs’ assessments of the attractiveness of opportunities that harm the natural environment depend on the simultaneous impact of values and personal agency” and that they have the ability to “cognitively disengaging their pro-environmental values (p. 1251). This study is interesting as it demonstrates how, rather than orientation ‘wearing down’ over time (Kuckertz & Wagner 2010), entrepreneurs can strategically tailor their orientation to suit opportunity exploitation. This mirrors the strategic legitimation literature that will be discussed in Chapter Three.

One theme that emerged in the literature focusing on sustainability orientation in entrepreneurship is that many of these authors view orientation as based on a holistic conceptualisation of sustainability. They argue for example, that these entrepreneurs are distinguished by an orientation that combines economic, ecological and social–ethical sustainability principles (Walley and Taylor, 2002), and that sustainability-oriented ventures must result from individuals with an orientation that reflects a desire to balance social, environmental and economic dimensions of sustainability (Parrish, 2010). Further, Shepherd et al., (2009), draw on the values underlying the Millennium Declaration of the United Nations (2000), namely freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility, to develop a scale for each value with the aim of overcoming the lack of knowledge on the nature of sustainability values (Mabogunje, 2004). Authors attribute this lack of knowledge in part to the confusion around conceptualisations of sustainability and argue for the holistic, triple pillar conceptualisation of sustainable development. The current study follows this line of reasoning.

Sustainability orientation is evidently a well-researched topic in the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature as many researchers aim to uncover the role of sustainability values in entrepreneurial opportunity recognition and pursuit. However, with the exception of DeClercq and Voronov (2011) and O’Neil and Ucbasaran (2016), the literature does not offer much discussion or evidence of the potential role of orientation in legitimation for these entrepreneurs. DeClercq and Voronov (2011) hypothesis that the orientation of nascent entrepreneurs should match the orientation of incumbents in order to successfully achieve legitimacy. Orientation differs amongst different stakeholders and nascent entrepreneurs are tasked with uncovering what is appropriate to demonstrate for legitimacy. O’Neil and Ucbasaran (2016), through qualitative case study research, develop a model to explain how
sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs enact their values and beliefs during the new venture legitimization process. They find that these entrepreneurs learn how to balance “what matters to me” (entrepreneur) with “what matters to them” (stakeholders) to achieve legitimacy (p. 133). This study aims to extend the limited conceptual and empirical literature on the role of sustainability orientation in legitimization by conceptualising it as a construct of individual agency. Further, the current study takes the recommendation of Muñoz and Dimov (2015) to consider this construct alongside prior sustainability knowledge as well as sustainability intention.

2.4.3 Sustainability Intention
Sustainability intention is defined as “the intention to contribute to solving societal and environmental problems through entrepreneurial means” (Muñoz and Dimov, 2015, p. 640). While orientation refers to values and passion, intention essentially refers to the entrepreneur’s intent to succeed at pursuing the goals relating to their sustainability orientation in a way that results in a successful business venture (Keskin et al., 2013; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011). It requires the entrepreneur to pursue and enact an entrepreneurial and professional approach to sustainable development, demonstrating entrepreneurialism and professionalism to stakeholders in pursuit of legitimacy. Like prior knowledge and orientation, intention as a construct is not unique to the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature but has also been examined in traditional entrepreneurship in a number of ways (e.g. Bird, 1988; Boyd & Vozikis, 1994; Dimov, 2007; Fitzsimmons & Douglas, 2011). Several studies in the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature have considered how to conceptualise and measure sustainability intention, and have examined the factors that affect or are affected by sustainability intention.

Muñoz and Dimov (2015) measured sustainability intention by assessing how respondents are inclined to engage in entrepreneurial activities as the means to solve societal and environmental problems. This was measured using a 5-item Likert scale based on dimensions of Schaltegger and Wagner’s (2011) ‘ideal type of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship’. The scale is designed to “capture the entrepreneur's core motivation to contribute to solving societal and ecological problems through the realization of a successful business (p. 643)”. This is as opposed to pursuing their sustainability values through another means such as through advocacy or charity work. They find that entrepreneurial intentions are intertwined
with the entrepreneur's prior knowledge and sustainability orientation, “channelling them towards an entrepreneurial approach” (p. 643). Similarly, Patzelt and Shepherd (2010) assert that sustainability-oriented opportunities are recognized based on the individual's prior knowledge and motivations (orientation), and how this develops into entrepreneurial intention. These constructs have been found to be interrelated and will be examined together in this study.

Research has also considered how sustainability intent is specifically born out of the ability of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs to recognise sustainability opportunity in environmentally relevant market failures (Dean & McMullen, 2007, York & Venkataraman, 2010). These authors conceptualise market failures as proving opportunity for both achieving economic goals and sustainability goals for these entrepreneurs, thus creating opportunity for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. They argue that “the issue of resolving our current crisis is not one of regulation, but of innovation and motivation” (York & Venkataraman, 2010, p. 461). The research highlights the potential role of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in creating shared-value from market failures due to their ethical motivations which create sustainability intention, again suggesting that orientation and intention are interrelated.

There have also been a number of empirical contributions. Parrish and Foxon’s (2009) work confirms the hypotheses of many studies that the primary intention of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs is to contribute to improved environmental quality and social well-being through the realisation of a successful business in ways that are mutually supportive. They examine the mechanisms that underlie a sustainability-oriented entrepreneur’s role as a “catalyst to larger-scale structural transformations towards sustainability” (p. 47). However, this paper is based on the findings of a single case study in the US and therefore, as acknowledged by the authors, might not be generalisable beyond this context. Research has also analysed which business actors are most likely to bring about sustainability innovation (Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011) arguing that it is those business actors whose intent is to contribute to solving societal and environmental problems through entrepreneurial means that produce the best sustainability innovations. These are sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs for whom sustainability goals are central to their venture as opposed to large business or those engaged in CSR or strategic sustainability practices in traditional entrepreneurship. Sustainability intention is an important construct in entrepreneurship, connecting
explanations of constructs that motivate entrepreneurs to engage in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (i.e. prior knowledge and orientation) with the resulting ventures. One area still that has not received conceptual or empirical attention is the role of sustainability intention in entrepreneurial legitimation. The current study aims to examine how the intent to pursue sustainability values specifically through entrepreneurial means might help entrepreneurs achieve legitimacy in the field, and examines the role of this construct as agency. This study therefore offers a contribution to the fields of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship and legitimation in this way.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a review of the literature as it relates to the research aims of this study. In doing so, it has first shown that by conceptualising the pillars of sustainability as separate but interrelated, and by conceptualising sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs as well placed to manage sustainability tensions in nonlinear, holistic ways, the current study argues the suitability of a paradox approach to this form of entrepreneurship. This study will examine how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs can manage tensions between the multiple sustainability pillars in the form of sustainability logics in the organisational field. By doing so paradoxically, these entrepreneurs should be able to achieve their sustainability goals in a way that overcomes the requirement to ‘trade-off’ between goals (Hahn et al., 2015; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015).

Additionally, in relation to the role of internal constructs in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, O'Neil and Ucbasaran (2016) highlight that the values, beliefs, judgements and meaning system of the legitimacy seeker, (i.e. the entrepreneur), have received little attention in the literature, despite there being a stream of literature on those of the actors who grant legitimacy within the field (see e.g. Huy et al., 2014; Navis and Glyn, 2011). This is true of the entrepreneurship literature generally as well as for the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature. This chapter argued for the potential role of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention in managing tensions between sustainability pillars paradoxically in legitimation. As these constructs have individually and holistically been found to be fundamentally important to connecting the pursuit of sustainability goals to entrepreneurship, this study will examine the
utility of these constructs as agency in managing multiple, diverse sustainability logics in the organisational field.

In the following chapter, a framework which applies a neo-institutional perspective to the factors that shape legitimation will be presented. In the process, the argument presented in this chapter that the multiple pillars of sustainability should be considered as organisational field logics and the internal constructs should be considered as agency, both of which shape legitimation behaviour, will be illustrated. This will demonstrate the value of an institutional approach to examining sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation.
Chapter Three: Literature Review II The Institutional Context: Factors Shaping Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneur Legitimation

3.1 Introduction

Having provided a review of the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature as it relates to the research aims of this study in the previous chapter, this chapter will present a review of the literature on the institutional framework of the current study, and argue the value of this framework in conceptualising and examining sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation. Specifically, this chapter demonstrates how this study extends current research on sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation through using a neo-institutional framework. This chapter discusses the core concepts of legitimation, organisational fields, logics and agency from neo-institutionalism. It will discuss how legitimation can be carried out by individual entrepreneurs in attempting to pursue legitimacy within an organisational field, how the rules and norms of the organisational field are communicated via logics, and subsequently, how these logics shape entrepreneur legitimation. In addition, it will discuss how entrepreneurs can strategically respond to logics by using their agency, meaning their capacity to act, in legitimation.

This chapter demonstrates the value of neo-institutional theory in providing a conceptual basis for exploring the connections among fields, actors and legitimacy, such as is required for this study. For example, as the current study examines the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, it requires a theoretical approach that accounts for the socially constructed system of values, beliefs and meanings in which entrepreneurs carry out legitimation (Suchman, 1995). This chapter demonstrates that neo-institutional theory considers legitimacy as a central construct (Scott, 2001), and is concerned with the processes through which rules, norms, and routines are established as guidelines for behaviour. Essentially, legitimacy is the achievement of a perfect state in that if an entity such as an organisation was considered entirely legitimate, the organisation would be in constant receipt of desired resources which would facilitate desired performance (Scott & Myer, 1983).
Further, this study examines both the societal field-level and individual conditions that support or hinder entrepreneurial legitimation behaviour. Accordingly, this chapter shows how a neo-institutional approach offers a means of conceptualising these field-level rules as logics (Scott, 2008) and these individual factors as agency (Dacin et al., 2002), providing a valuable approach to the current study. It shows how this study develops the sustainability-oriented entrepreneur literature by extending currently limited research on how they form strategies to manage institutional factors during legitimation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011).

As was seen in Chapter Two, a paradox approach to sustainability views these entrepreneurs as capable of responding to multiple sustainability pillars in the field by using certain individual constructs to manage tensions (prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation, sustainability intention). Therefore, the current study also requires an approach that accounts for the diversity of legitimacy judgements that entrepreneurs face beyond economic judgements, as sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs often face conflicting legitimacy demands from diverse field members (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011). Subsequently, this chapter demonstrates the value of the concepts of organisational fields and logics from neo-institutional theory in accounting for diverse legitimacy judgements. It demonstrates how this study extends theory on the organisational field of sustainability (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Hoffman, 1999) and how the pillars of sustainability can be examined as multiple field logics in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013). Additionally, it discusses the role of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability intention and sustainability orientation as agency, extending the very limited literature on the role of goals, values and beliefs of the legitimacy-seeker in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur behaviour, specifically legitimation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016).

First, the contribution of neo-institutional theory generally to the study of organisational behaviour, entrepreneurship and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship will be reviewed in section 3.2, demonstrating the value of this approach to the current study. Following this, section 3.3 provides a review of the literature on the concepts of legitimacy, introducing the concept of legitimation and clarifying the position of this study within this literature. Next, section 3.4 reviews the literature on the concept of organisational fields and demonstrates how fields are conceptualised in the current study as an arena of meaning and entrepreneurial
action such as legitimation. The literature reviewed here provides the context for the discussion of how multiple field logics shape legitimation, as the field determines which logics are present. This field logics literature is discussed in section 3.5. This section begins to build the conceptual framework on the role of sustainability pillars as multiple logics in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation and how legitimation can reveal the logics present in the organisational field, which is research question one of the current study. Section 3.6 adds to the framework by reviewing the literature on agency in the institutional perspective and subsequently explaining how factors pertaining to sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs can be utilised as agency in legitimation, which is research question two. Next, the extant literature on legitimation strategies is discussed in section 3.7, highlighting the contribution of the this study in conceptualising how logic multiplicity is managed in legitimation, as well as the role of agency in this process. This is followed by the presentation of the conceptual framework for the current study before the chapter is concluded in section 3.8.

3.2 An Institutional Approach to Entrepreneurship

3.2.1 Emergence of Neo-institutional Theory
Institutions have been defined in many ways, for example, as entities that instil value to a structure or process (Selznick, 1952), as a product of a historical processes of interaction among actors (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), and as distinct societal spheres (Friedland and Alford, 1987; Hertzler, 1961; Hughes, 1939). There are clear distinctions amongst these early conceptualisations of institutions (Scott, 1987), but it is also evident that they share a concern for how societal structures shape the behaviour of actors and vice versa. Early institutional theory focused on how institutions are created, and how they pervade societies, organisations and their actors. It was particularly interested in the more durable aspects of social structures and the processes that establish and regulate rigidity among institutions and actors (Scott 2001). In the last 40 years, this theory has been continuously adapted, with some proposing a distinction between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ institutional theory, or neo-institutional theory (Scott, 2008). The main difference between what is considered old and new institutionalism is that new institutionalism is more concerned with the interests and agency of actors and the issue of change in institutions (Dacin et al., 2002), whereas old institutionalism has been more concerned with powerful, impermeable structures that persist over time.
Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) influential article has been recognised by other leading authors in the field as a seminal piece of literature for neo-institutional theory (Di Maggio & Powell, 1991; Scott, 1991). Meyer and Rowan embrace Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) idea of institutionalisation as a social process shaped by continuous interaction between actors who come to share a common social reality. They defined institutions as "rationalized and impersonal prescriptions that identify various social purposes" and "specify in a rule like way the appropriate means" to pursue them (Meyer and Rowan, 1977, p. 343). Scott (1995) argued that institutional environments are “those characterised by the elaboration of rules and requirements to which individual organisations and their actors must conform if they are to receive support and legitimacy” (p. 132). From these neo-institutionalist definitions, it is clear that institutions are viewed as responsible for shaping how actors identify their social purposes and the behaviours used to pursue these purposes. They demonstrate that neo-institutional theory is concerned with the processes through which rules, norms, and routines are established as guidelines for social behaviour, such as organisational behaviour (Scott 2001).

The significance of institutions to the analysis of organisations and the behaviour of their actors is that, rather than behaviour being driven by specific technical tasks that benefit the efficiency of the organisation (Thompson 1967), this behaviour is subject to what can be described as powerful institutional mechanisms which place pressure on actors to conform (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Evidently, much literature exists on the extent of influence of institutions, the mechanisms through which they exert this power and the ways in which organisational actors can respond. Given the focus of this study on how institutional mechanisms in the form of organisational field logics shape entrepreneur behaviour and how they respond to these institutions, it is necessary to understand the development of this literature on new institutionalism and organisational behaviour. The following section presents a review of this literature.

3.2.2 Neo Institutionalism and Organisational Behaviour

Neo institutional theory attempts to explain how social structures impact the actions and boundaries of the organisation, and how these structures provide stability to actions, routines and cultures, as well as define legitimacy and constrain action (Lawrence, 1999). Institutional
theory has contributed key theoretical concepts which illuminate the relationships that tie institutional structures and their logics to organisational forms and behaviours (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Greenwood & Hinings, 1996). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, seminal papers by Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) changed the course of institutional theory and the analysis of organisations and their actors. These authors essentially challenged the rational choice models of the individual organisational actor as they argue that organisations may conform to a set of institutionally prescribed actions because they will be awarded for doing so through attainment of legitimacy (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). Literature began to emphasising the power of legitimacy as opposed to efficiency in explaining success and survival of organisations (Greenwood et al. 2008, Thornton and Ocasio 2008). This provided an explanation to questions of why organisational actors might behave in ways that are contrary to the dictates of efficiency (Greenwood et al. 2008).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) theorised about the types of processes that might cause an organisation to change its structure in order to conform to institutional pressures, a phenomenon termed isomorphism (Scott, 1987), and introduced an influential classification distinguishing among coercive, mimetic, and normative drivers. DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) types of isomorphism are outlined in Table 3.1, and the researcher adds a third column to indicate how each might relate to sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Isomorphism Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example in Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coercion</td>
<td>Derived from the formal or informal pressures exerted by people or organisations that have a direct interest in or can directly be linked to the outcome of an action, such as government bodies or organisations capable of imposing standardisation procedures.</td>
<td>Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs might respond to governments issuing a mandate for a pollution control license, product safety regulation or workplace employment equality legislation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mimetic</td>
<td>Whereby organisations start</td>
<td>Contradictory institutional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to imitate each other, usually resulting from an uncertainty in which they do not resolve their own problems individually but seek success strategies by copying successful organisations. Demands from diverse sustainability stakeholders can lead to uncertainty for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs regarding how to act, and they may model their enterprise models on others.

| Normative                      | An organisation is strengthened by a knowledge base relatively focused on the professionalization of their managers. Similar prevailing forms of decision making due to the degree of professionalization, solve similar problems. | In a field characterised by competing institutional demands, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs can develop networks with similar professions to establish their enterprise position. |

Source: Adapted from Beydha et al., (2017)

Coercive isomorphism “stems from political influence and the problem with legitimacy” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 150). It is derived from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organisations by other organisations upon which they are dependent and cultural expectations of society (Scott, 1995). These can be governmental mandates, for example, governments issuing a mandate for a pollution control license to sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. They can be also be derived from contract law or financial reporting requirements and might be felt as force, persuasion or collusion (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Mimetic pressure refers to the way in which uncertainty can encourage imitation. Uncertainty in the form of ambiguous organisational goals or perhaps contradictory institutional demands from the field, as is experienced by sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, can lead organisations and their actors to imitate or ‘model’ themselves on successful or legitimised organisations in their field. Finally, normative isomorphism stems from professionalism and the associated pressures. It concerns, among other things, the collective struggle of members of an occupation to “establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 152). As is the case for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs regarding coercive and mimetic pressures, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs may also experience normative isomorphism in an organisational field comprised of diverse
occupations aimed collectively aimed towards sustainability. Authors in this area outline a number of organisational and field level predictors of isomorphism, and this has been essential to the theoretical development of explanations of organisational behaviour such as legitimation behaviour. Organisational actors engage in a number of legitimation strategies to overcome, for example, mimetic pressures by aligning themselves to successful organisations (Turcan, 2013). These legitimation strategies will be discussed in section 3.7. However, since DiMaggio and Powell’s 1983 paper, these mechanisms have been found to not only lead to organisational homogeneity, but also institutional divergence between organisations. This is due to the fact that other factors such as cultural values and political interests also play a role in decision-making on adherence to institutional pressures, causing organisational actors to, for example, imitate organisations other than financially successful organisations in their field (Beckert, 2010).

Furthermore, Scott (1995, 2001, 2008) developed an analytical framework of institutions and organisations. Scott defined institutions as “comprised of regulative, normative and cognitive elements that, together with associated activities and resources, provide stability and meaning to social life” (2008, p. 48). These pillars of institutions each provide a basis for legitimacy and Scott’s work has been central to the development of understandings of legitimacy in neo-institutional theory (see Table 3.2). The researcher adds a bottom row explaining how each pillar might manifest for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship.

**Table 3.2 Three Pillars of Institutions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regulative</th>
<th>Normative</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basis of Compliance</strong></td>
<td>Expedience</td>
<td>Social obligation</td>
<td>Taken for grantedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Shared understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basis of Order</strong></td>
<td>Regulative rules</td>
<td>Binding expectations</td>
<td>Constitutive schema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mechanisms</strong></td>
<td>Coercive</td>
<td>Normative</td>
<td>Mimetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Logics</strong></td>
<td>Instrumentality</td>
<td>Appropriateness</td>
<td>Orthodoxy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators</strong></td>
<td>Rules, laws, sanctions</td>
<td>Certification/accreditation</td>
<td>Shared logics of action Isomorphism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affect</td>
<td>Fear/guilt/innocence</td>
<td>Shame/honour</td>
<td>Certainty/confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basis of Legitimacy</td>
<td>Legally sanctioned</td>
<td>Morally governed</td>
<td>Comprehensible, recognisable, culturally supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example in Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship</td>
<td>Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs might be expected to adhere to environmental or public welfare regulation to gain legitimacy in the field.</td>
<td>Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs might be socially obliged to exercise moral governance in line with their enterprise mission and values.</td>
<td>Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs might unconsciously adopt a shared understanding of a culturally supported form of sustainability that manifests in their enterprise, against which legitimacy judgements are made.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Scott (2008)

The regulatory pillar is comprised of rigid, stable institutions, e.g. the state, and the rules and laws that exist to ensure rigidity and stability in society. Regulative organisational elements such as new policies are driven through coercive means (Palthe, 2014). Regulative legitimacy refers to the degree to which an organization complies with “explicit regulative processes—rule setting, monitoring and sanctioning activities” (Scott, 1995, p. 42). Next, the normative pillar is concerned with the prescriptive dimensions of social interaction, emphasising the role of social obligation and informal structures, with legitimacy being morally governed. The third pillar, the cultural-cognitive dimension, refers to shared conceptual beliefs and interpretations of shared meanings, drawing from the taken for grantedness of the way things are done (Scott, 1995). Scott asserts that these pillars form a continuum, “moving from the conscious to the unconscious, from the legally enforced to the taken for granted” (2008, p. 50). During periods of uncertainty, the social systems that these pillars are comprised of evolve prescribed rules (regulatory), norms (normative), and values (cognitive) which are socially reinforced. The cultural-cognitive pillar brings the focus to meaning systems and legitimacy, which is what distinguishes the neo-institutional approach to analysing organisational behaviour from early conceptualisations focused more on rigidity and stability.
(Greenwood and Hinings 1996). Within neo-institutional theory, the development of these pillars provided a useful framework for addressing variability in individual-level responses to institutional pressures (Greenwood et al. 2008), yet Scott’s work has been criticised for not going far enough in explaining change and the role of agency in institutions (Greenwood et al., 2008). The current study takes an adapted institutional approach to the conceptualisation of agency in organisational fields (Fligstein & McAdam, 2011, 2012), as is discussed in section 3.4.2. Still, Scott’s work shows that neo institutional theory provides a strong conceptual basis for exploring the connections among institutions, organisational actors and legitimacy, such as is required for this study. Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs may be subject to each of these institutional pillars in their legitimation work.

A defining point for neo-institutionalists is that organisational actors not only compete for resources and customers, but also for legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977, Scott, 2008). When organisational actors adopt practices or structures that align with institutional expectations deemed acceptable, they perform well. This is not because they are the most efficient, but because they are most effective at eliciting resources from dominant stakeholders who perceive them to be legitimate (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Friedland & Alford, 1987; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Dominant stakeholders might be, for example, existing firms, customers, suppliers or regulatory bodies. Neo-institutional theory treats legitimacy as a central construct and for this reason is a useful framework through which to examine the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. This is elaborated on in section 3.3.

In addition to its value in understanding legitimacy, neo institutional theory has been widely used across multiple streams of literature, withstanding societal changes over time. Lawrence and Suddaby (2006) in their overview of neo-institutional theory, document that there has been a large set of empirical studies that have recorded the connections among institutions, organisational fields, organisations and legitimacy. These studies have catalogued the restrictive and constraining as well as supportive impact and effects of institutional forces in a wide variety of sectors and geographic contexts, and at varying levels of analysis including intra-organizational (Zilber, 2002), interorganizational (Leblebici et al., 1991), and international (Meyer et al., 1997). Neo-institutional theory has become the dominant theory used to study organisational phenomena (Scott, 2013; Suddaby, 2010), which might lead to a belief that it is the most useful. Although, as stated by Suddaby (2010, p. 14), we begin to
“lose the variety and complexity of the empirical world of organizations when we begin to view it through a common theoretical lens”, which in a way, demonstrates theoretical isomorphism.

There have also been some strong critics of the neo-institutional approach, despite its rebirth from ‘old’ institutionalism in an attempt to overcome existing issues (DiMaggio & Powell, 1988). For one, neo-institutional theory is argued to suffer from a number of analytical difficulties. Multiple contested definitions and broad conceptualisations of constructs may cause challenges with regards to measurement. Rezende (2009) divided these challenges into five dimensions: “a) inclusion of institutional variables; b) agency and cognition; c) contextual sensitivity; d) increasing precision in the concept of institution (and institutional change); and, e) recursive interaction between agents and institutions in the process of institutional change” (p. 1). These categories, although applied specifically to neo-institutional analysis by Rezende, reflect many of the criticisms concerning conceptual weaknesses. For example, Ostrom (2008) points to the tendency for neo-institutionalists to be driven by the confidence of using a well established approach and to subsequently neglect the fundamental issue of contextual sensitivity. However, certain approaches derived from neo-institutional theory more carefully account for context such as, for example, Varieties of Capitalism (Hall, 2001) and organisational fields (Wooten & Hofmann, 2016). In addition, as neo-institutionalists sought to move beyond the notion of rigidity and stability in institutions and provide explanations of change, some question why such attention on change is needed since organisations strive for stability (Dacin et al., 2002; Suddaby, 2010). Research must be mindful of such challenges, but nonetheless, neo-institutional theory has still proven itself to be an essential framework for understanding organisational behaviour, including legitimation (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Scott, 2013; Suddaby, 2010). In addition, certain streams within from neo-institutional theory, namely organisational fields, logics and agency, are particularly useful in examining entrepreneurial behaviour, specifically sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. This will be discussed in the following sections, providing the rationale for the selection of a neo-institutional approach in the current study.

3.2.3 Institutionalism and Entrepreneurship
A number of theoretical approaches have contributed to current understandings of entrepreneurship such as psychological theories, innovation and economic theories. Given
that the economic approach sees economic incentives as the key driver of entrepreneurship (Wennekers & Thurik, 1999), and views economic success as essential for legitimacy (Turcan, 2013), it is not suitable to the research aims of this study which examines the role of wider sustainability pillars (logics) and sustainability values (orientation) in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation behaviour. The current study requires an approach that accounts for the diversity of legitimacy judgements that entrepreneurs face beyond economic judgements (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011), such as is provided by neo-institutional organisational field theory (Hofmann, 1999).

Similarly, with regards to innovation theory (Drucker, 1985; Schumpeter, 1951, 2000), although definitions of entrepreneurship often centre around innovation as well as risk-seeking (McDougall & Oviatt, 2000), the focus of this study is not on how entrepreneurs create new products, processes or services, or how they apply existing products, processes or services in a novel way. As such, it is not concerned with the points at which entrepreneurs engage in innovation to achieve success but rather, it is concerned with how entrepreneurs assess judgements of socially powerful field members in order to achieve success through legitimation. In this way, the current study requires a theoretical approach that accounts for the socially constructed system of values, beliefs and meanings in which entrepreneurs carry out legitimation (Suchman, 1995). Neo-institutional theory acknowledges the role of shared conceptual beliefs and interpretations of shared meanings in legitimation (Scott, 2008), and is an appropriate lens for this reason.

Psychological theories largely focus on individual characteristics that create conditions which foster entrepreneurial individuals. Psychological theories such as Need for Achievement (McClelland et al., 1976) and Locus of Control (Brockhaus, 1982) have argued that high levels of certain traits are often present for entrepreneurs, and these traits shape their behaviour. While useful for conceptualising the role of individual level factors in entrepreneurial behaviour such as in propensity for risk taking or vision for change (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006), they do not enable the examination of environmental factors in shaping certain entrepreneurial behaviours in the way that social theories do (Bruton et al., 2010). Specifically, examining how entrepreneurs pursue legitimacy requires consideration of both external, environmental factors, such as the rules of institutions, and individual factors. A neo-institutional approach offers a means of conceptualising these individual factors as agency (Dacin et al., 2002) and these rules as logics (Scott, 2008), providing a valuable approach to the current study.
Mole and Ram (2011) in their review of the literature connecting neo-institutional theory and entrepreneurship, point out that much of this work has been carried out by neo-institutionalists using entrepreneurship as a context to extend their theoretical focus, whereas those from the entrepreneurship side have been less keen to do so. This could be due to the early focus of neo-institutional theory on rigidity and structure which left little room to conceptualise the innovation and creativity exhibited by entrepreneurs (Dacin et al., 2002). The more recent introduction by neo-institutionalist of concepts of agency and change have provided new opportunities to connect entrepreneurship and neo-institutional theory. Specifically, literature tends to focus on how the institutional setting facilitates entrepreneurship (Bruton et al., 2010; Hwang & Powell, 2005), how individuals can act as ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ and enact ‘institutional work’ to alter institutional norms (Mole & Ram, 2011), and how entrepreneurs attempt to build legitimacy for their ventures (Bruton et al., 2010; Mole & Ram, 2011).

The first theme in the literature connecting neo-institutional theory and entrepreneurship is one in which authors explore how the institutional environment exerts a powerful influence on both entrepreneurial entry rates and on the resulting longevity and success of entrepreneurs (Bruton et al., 2010). Entrepreneurs can be enabled or constrained by the institutional environment in a number of ways. For example, entrepreneurial activity is considerably dependant on societal norms that favour this form of business activity (Scott, 2007), and a society having regulations and policies that encourage and reward their development (Baumol et al., 2009). Scholars have subsequently utilised elements of neo-institutional theory such as organisational field theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Fligstein, 2001; Scott, 2001; 2008) and theory on field logics (Thornton, 2004; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Pache & Santos, 2010) to examine how the environment shapes entrepreneurial activity, and this is the first area within neo-institutional theory that the current study aims to develop in the context of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. This is discussed in sections 3.4 and 3.5.

Secondly, authors have noted how entrepreneurs may have to work to construct new institutions which may help to promote their organisation or field (DiMaggio, 1988; Lawrence et al., 2002), subsequently working as institutional entrepreneurs. The term institutional entrepreneurship refers to the “activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones” (Maguire et al., 2004, p. 657). This concept reintroduces an
actor’s agency into institutional analysis (DiMaggio, 1988). Neo-institutionalists have become increasingly concerned with the effects of individual and organisational agency on institutions (Battilana & D’Aunno, 2009; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Lawrence, 2004; Oliver, 1991; Seo & Creed, 2002). The emergence of agentic institutionalism has given rise to a new direction for neo-institutionalism which falls under the term ‘institutional work’. Institutional work is defined as “the purposive actions of individuals and organisations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 215).

The ability of this stream of neo-institutional theory to account for the agency of entrepreneurs and the change inherent in institutional environments has lead to the increasing use of this stream of literature to explain entrepreneurial behaviour. It views entrepreneurs as capable of strategically responding to and shaping institutions themselves using creative entrepreneurial forces that bring about change (Garud et al., 2007). The current study also examines how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs utilize these creative forces and enact their agency to respond to institutional forces in the form of field logics in legitimation. The agency literature is elaborated on in section 3.6.

Finally, a majority of studies utilising a neo-institutional approach in the field of entrepreneurship do so in order to explain how actors seek, gain and maintain legitimacy for themselves as entrepreneurs, for their organisation and for their field in general (Bruton et al., 2010; Mole & Ram, 2011). Legitimacy is central to the current study as it is a key means through which entrepreneurs attain their organisational goals. The literature on this concept is elaborated on in section 3.3, demonstrating how examining the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs can enhance current theory of these entrepreneurs. Firstly, the literature on the relationship between neo-institutional theory and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship is discussed.

### 3.2.4 Institutionalism and Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship

In a review of the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature from 1998 to 2013, Muñoz & Dimov (2015) found that just one study utilised a neo-institutional approach, namely a conceptual paper by DeClercq & Voronov (2011). This paper hypothesised that these entrepreneurs could gain legitimacy from managing multiple logics of profit and sustainability by utilising their agency. In this way, this paper adopts the frequently used elements of neo-institutional theory in the study of entrepreneurship, namely logics and agency, as discussed above. Uniquely however, they combine these largely separated
elements of theory. The lack of research utilising a neo-institutional approach in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship is surprising given its growing use in the traditional entrepreneurship field (Bruton et al., 2010), yet less surprising when it is considered that sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship is an emerging area of research (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015). One study not included in the review by Muñoz & Dimov (2015) was that of O'Neil and Ucbasaran (2011), who examined how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs build legitimacy by responding to multiple, competing logics using a case study approach. Both DeClercq and Voronov (2011) and O'Neil and Ucbasaran (2011) focus on legitimacy and utilize theory on logics, yet while O'Neil and Ucbasaran (2011) uniquely do so empirically, they do not examine the role of agency. Therefore, there is scope for this study to empirically examine the role of both logics and agency in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, building on these two key studies and extending current limited research.

Despite the lack of research using a neo-institutional approach in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship research, this approach is popular among those examining why firms adopt sustainability practices. As was found in the review of the literature relating to sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in Chapter Two, much of the neo-institutional literature tends to focus on sustainability at the organisational level as opposed to the level of the individual entrepreneur. Neo-institutional theory has been widely used to analyse why organisations and their actors engage in sustainability practices (Bronn & Vidaver-Cohen, 2009; Zhu et al., 2013). For example, the ideas of institutional work and institutional change within institutional theory have been adopted by several studies in the analysis of the institutionalization processes surrounding the emergence of sustainable industries (Ball and Craig, 2010), sustainability reporting (Jensen & Berg, 2012; Smith & Lewis, 2011), green innovations (Aguilera-Caracuel & Ortiz-de-Mandojana, 2013), and environmental management (Hoffman and Ventresca, 1999, Schaefer, 2007). Nonetheless, this research does not focus on the individual-level effects of institutional dynamics.

In addition, DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) typology of isomorphic pressures has been used to show how institutions drive sustainability practices. For example, coercive drivers, which are exerted by those in powerful positions, have been found to be crucial in driving corporate sustainability due to the global sustainable development agenda (Glover et al., 2014; Kilbourne et al., 2002). Also, normative drivers exert influence because of a social obligation to comply, rooted in social necessity or what an organization or individual should be doing
(Glover et. al., 2014). Normative drivers subsequently ensure organisations conform in order to be perceived as partaking in legitimate actions. Ball and Craig (2010) found that normative pressures drive organisations to be more environmentally aware, arguing that institutional research is needed to understand new social rules (e.g., ethical values and ecological thinking) and organisational responses to environmental issues. Again, this literature is mostly concerned with ‘add-on’ green or sustainability-oriented practices that established firms implement in order to reduce their environmental impacts and attain competitive advantage rather than sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. This study provides a unique examination of how individual sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs manage these institutional pressures in the form of logics in their legitimation work.

Institutions should not just be used to explain inertia and stability, but they also should be used to conceptualise the dynamic interplay between actors and structures, technological and social (Geels, 2004). The neo-institutional perspective, with its increasing focus on agency and change, is a promising avenue to explore how the boundaries between business, society and environment are constructed in different ways and how this influences sustainability-oriented behaviour in the organisational context, but also for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. The current study utilises a neo-institutional approach to examine how field-level rules communicated through field logics shape the behaviour of these entrepreneurs in legitimation, as well as how they can enact agency to respond to these logics, building on the work of DeClercq and Voronov (2011) and O’Neil and Ucbasaran (2011). These literatures are discussed in detail throughout this chapter, beginning with the concepts of legitimacy and legitimation.

### 3.3 Legitimacy: Forms, Stages and Sources

As can be seen from the review of the neo-institutional theory literature presented above as it pertains to the research objectives of this study, legitimacy is a central construct within this theoretical approach (Scott, 2001). The extant legitimacy literature presents a diversity of definitions, measures and theoretical propositions (Bitektine, 2011; Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Scott, 2001; Suchman, 1995). Essentially, legitimacy is the achievement of a perfect state in that if an entity such as an organisation was considered entirely legitimate, the organisation would be in constant receipt of desired resources which would facilitate desired performance. “Perfect legitimation is perfect theory, complete and confronted by no...
alternatives” (Scott & Myer, 1983, p. 201). Although in practice, organisational actors are continuously in pursuit of legitimacy and thus are constantly gaining, maintaining and defending their legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). Despite the potential benefits of pursuing legitimacy, it is important to note that not all actors will pursue legitimacy consciously or strategically, and some may not engage in activities that represent attempts to gain legitimacy at all. This might be due to lack of awareness of what legitimacy means for an enterprise, or lack of resources such as time to engage in legitimation activities (Crilly et al., 2012). This section presents a review of the legitimacy literature, demonstrating the different ways in which it has been conceptualised and tested, as well as pointing to a number of gaps which the current study aims to address.

3.3.1 Defining Legitimacy
Organisational actors exist within an institutional environment, and the dominant legitimacy-granters of that environment hold resources valuable to these organisational actors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). In this way, neo-institutionalists argue that organisational actors must remain on favourable terms with their legitimacy-granting resource holders by adhering to their legitimacy judgements (Suchman, 1995). Consequently, it is crucial for organisational actors to behave accordingly so as to achieve legitimacy from others. In early work within a neo-institutional approach, legitimacy was assessed in a number of ways such as in terms of acceptability (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), taken for grantedness (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) as well as appropriateness and congruence (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). These developments informed later work attempting to define the concept of legitimacy.

According to Suchman (1995, p. 575), an entity is seen as legitimate when it is considered “desirable, proper or appropriate within some socially constructed system of values, beliefs and definitions”. This definition is the most widely adopted in the institutional literature (Suddaby et al., 2017), possibly due to its potential for broad application across a number of contexts, whereas other definitions tend to be more specific. Many authors similarly emphasise legitimacy as concerning social judgements that have the power to facilitate organisations in meeting their performance goals in a number of ways. Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) argue that legitimacy is “an important resource for gaining other resources (e.g. capital)” (p. 414), and see it as a social judgment of acceptance, appropriateness and
desirability. They also specify that legitimacy is essential for new venture growth and survival. Similarly, Deephouse & Carter (2005) point to legitimacy as a source of status and reputation, and Clarke (2011) found that the attainment of legitimacy leads to better stakeholder engagement.

Suchman (1995) also asserts that achieving legitimacy can enhance both persistence and meaning. Persistence is increased in that legitimacy encourages stakeholders to act favourably towards the entity which leads to tangible resource acquisition and survival. Legitimacy can also enhance meaning in that it improves stakeholders’ understanding of an entity when it is considered more trustworthy and predictable. Meaning is a critical concept within the legitimacy literature as actors exist within the socially constructed system of values, beliefs and meaning. Within this perspective, the origins of isomorphism in legitimacy judgements extends beyond the macro-level to the cognitive taken-for-grantedness of institutions, which is an important point for the examination of the role of agency (Scott, 2001). Suchman’s work on legitimacy has been extremely influential in the study of legitimacy, recognising it as a concept that translates into both tangible resources and enduring cognitive evaluations. Suchman’s definition of legitimacy also explicitly acknowledges the socially constructed system within which actors pursue legitimacy, making this definition is appropriate to the philosophical underpinnings of this study. For these reasons, the current study adopts the definition of legitimacy proposed by Suchman (1995).

There are also alternative approaches to legitimacy. A recent review by Suddaby et al., (2017) of the extant legitimacy literature captures how legitimacy is very much so viewed as something which translates into tangible resources as well as a concept that accounts for socio-cognitive evaluations based on meaning and understanding. Authors found that legitimacy has generally been conceptualised in three ways; as property (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975; Suchman, 1995; Ruef & Scott, 1998; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002) as a process (Golant & Sillince, 2007; Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005) and as perception (Bitektine, 2011; Bitektine & Haack, 2015; Elsbach; 1994; Tost, 2011) (See Table 3.3). Authors state that the majority of the literature views legitimacy as a property, i.e. as a resource or capacity of an entity, including Suchman (1995). Alternatively, those who view legitimacy as a process see it not as a thing, but as consisting of interactions. The third view, legitimacy as perception, presents legitimacy as a form of socio-cognitive evaluation. Suddaby et al., (2017) point to the fact that these different views of legitimacy have fundamentally confused our understanding of
the concept, with some authors not explicating which view they adhere to, possibly due to a lack of consideration of this matter.

**Table 3.3 Streams of Legitimacy Research**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is legitimacy?</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Perception</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|                      | ● A property  
|                      | ● A resource  
|                      | ● An asset  
|                      | ● A capacity  
|                      | ● A thing  | ● An interactive process of social construction  | ● A social judgement  
|                      |          |          | ● An evaluation  
|                      |          |          | ● A sociocognitive construction  |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Where does legitimacy occur?</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Between the legitimacy object (i.e. organisation) and its external environment</td>
<td>Between multiple social actors, particularly those seeking or opposing change</td>
<td>Between individual and collective evaluators (groups, organisations, society)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mostly at the organisation and field levels</td>
<td>Mostly at the field level, also at the organisation (group) levels</td>
<td>Multi-level, but leaning towards the micro</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| How does legitimacy occur? | Contingency view: Through ‘fit’ between attributes of an organisation and external audience’s expectations  | Agency view: Through purposive efforts of change agents and other social actors  | Judgement view: Through perceptions, judgements and actions of individuals under the influence of collective-level institutionalised judgments  |

Source: Suddaby et al., (2017, p. 258)

This recent review of the legitimacy literature carried out by Suddaby et al., (2017) is a crucial step in providing clarity to the conceptualisation of legitimacy. The various conceptualisations available in the literature demonstrate that resources, credibility and acceptance from legitimacy are important for successful business development as a whole.
(Bitektine, 2011). However, choosing to view legitimacy either as property, process or perception is perhaps contrived as legitimacy can take each of these forms. Legitimacy may be used as resource (property), ultimately resulting from interactions with dominant stakeholders (process) and subsequent favourable social judgements from these stakeholders (perception). The following section elaborates on how legitimacy has been categorised into different forms.

### 3.3.2 Forms of Legitimacy

Suchman (1995) argues that there are three overarching forms of legitimacy; pragmatic, moral and cognitive. In this typology, pragmatic legitimacy is concerned with the achievement of practical outcomes in an organisational actor’s immediate environment. For example, it refers to whether or not the structures and practices of the organisation are achieving intended outcomes. Pragmatic legitimacy largely differs from other conceptualisations, whereas Suchman’s other legitimacy dimensions are comparable to Scott’s (1995) pillars of institutions, each having a basis of legitimacy; regulative, normative, and cognitive. In addition, pragmatic legitimacy has been criticised as being more akin to a description of a type of organisational learning rather than a form of legitimacy (Aldrich & Ruef, 2006). Suchman’s second form, moral legitimacy, depends not on whether the activities of the organisational actor benefits the legitimacy-granter, but rather on whether an activity is considered the ‘right thing to do’. In this way, it requires organisational actors to demonstrate that they are complying with the norms and values of the organisational field. This could be, for example, through the fair treatment of employees (Elshb & Sutton, 1992) or through engaging in environmentally-focused behaviour (O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016). This form of legitimacy is comparable to both Scott’s (1995) definition of normative legitimacy and socio-political legitimacy as found in Bitektine’s (2011) typology which is derived from Aldrich and Fiol’s (1994) definition of the same. For Scott (1995), normative legitimacy is conceptualised as a degree of congruence between the actions, characteristics and structure of the organization seeking legitimacy and the beliefs and cultural values of the broader social field (Sudabby et al., 2017). The appearance of moral legitimacy across multiple conceptualisations highlights it as an important dimension of legitimacy for organisational actors. Given that sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs are characterised as having strong sustainability values, (sustainability orientation), this form of legitimacy might be significant within the organisational field of sustainability.
Finally, the cognitive pillar of legitimacy is well established, much like moral legitimacy (Scott, 2008; Suddaby et al., 2017). Cognitive legitimacy refers to “widely held beliefs and taken-for-granted assumptions that provide a framework from everyday routines, as well as the more specialized, explicit and codified knowledge and belief systems that promulgate various scientific and professional bodies” (Scott, 1994, p. 81). Suchman (1995) argues that the achievement of cognitive legitimacy is a difficult task, but that once achieved it should be more self-sustaining and impenetrable than other forms of legitimacy. Cognitive legitimacy according to Bitektine (2011) does not involve continuous scrutiny and evaluation by legitimacy-granters as it is an extension of socio-political, or moral legitimacy. This means that once moral legitimacy has been achieved, it is assumed that the degree of congruence between expectations and behaviour is accepted and taken-for-granted.

These typologies of forms of legitimacy, however, do not offer suggestions on how to remedy some of the fundamental issues in the examination of legitimacy. One criticism of legitimacy as a concept reflects broader concerns with the application of neo-institutional theory more generally in that it has been said to suffer from an issue with measurement (Low & Johnston, 2008; Suchman, 1995). In the review of the concept presented by Suddaby et al., (2017), it was found that most conceptualise legitimacy as-property: “Legitimacy is a property, an asset or a resource – a thing - possessed in measureable quantity by some legitimacy object in relation to others” (p. 258). For this reason, literature should attempt to offer explanations on how exactly to measure this concept. Nonetheless, the typologies discussed here offer useful categorisations of judgements which can serve as a conceptual basis for explaining how entrepreneurs can achieve legitimacy from diverse sources. The literature also points to a number of sources and stages of legitimacy which are necessary to consider ahead of an examination of legitimacy.

### 3.3.3 Stages of Legitimacy

In addition to considering which definition of legitimacy is most appropriate and the different forms of legitimacy that exist, it is important to acknowledge that there are multiple dimensions and stages to legitimacy and that it takes several forms. For example, a distinction is made in the literature between gaining and maintaining legitimacy (Suchman, 1995). Legitimacy must be gained but also maintained continuously throughout the business life-
cycle of entrepreneurs, beginning with the nascent phase. In this phase, entrepreneurs must overcome ‘newness’ and demonstrate congruence between the enterprise and dominant stakeholder expectations (Aldrich and Fiol, 1994; Martens et al., 2007). This nascent phase is when the entrepreneur is most vulnerable and it is considered relatively more challenging to gain legitimacy in this phase given their limited knowledge concerning how to navigate field-specific rules and incumbent expectations regarding appropriate practices (Voronov et al., 2013). For those who successfully emerge from this, the next phase, known as the start-up phase is when entrepreneurs begin to develop their understanding of what is required in the field and actively pursue legitimacy (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011). Still, entrepreneurs must continually seek to gain legitimacy from new sources as organisational fields develop and power shifts between dominant actors. Therefore, gaining should be a strategic focus of entrepreneurs throughout the business lifecycle.

The next task of the entrepreneur is to maintain legitimacy. This is regarded as a crucial yet less challenging phase (Suchman, 1995). According to Deephouse and Suchman (2008), the maintenance of legitimacy occurs after the legitimacy-seeker has already gained legitimacy from a particular source. In this phase, the legitimacy-seeker is not expected to engage in legitimation to the same extent as when attempting to gain legitimacy, “warm signals” or periodic assurances of “business-as-usual” usually suffice, and legitimacy tends to become more taken-for-granted (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990, p. 183). In this way, legitimation activities become increasingly routinised (Ashford & Fried 1988). Despite this, in the same way as gaining, the maintenance of legitimacy must continually be carried out by organisational actors, especially as their organisation develops and grows within a simultaneously developing organisational field.

Some authors also assert that legitimacy must be defended. Deephouse and Suchman (2008) discuss how key social actors can influence legitimacy through extending, maintaining or defending legitimacy. The defending stage of legitimacy only occurs when the legitimacy-seeker recognises that their existing legitimacy is threatened or challenged (Elsbach & Sutton, 1992) and is therefore not an inevitable stage in legitimation such as gaining and maintaining. Further, Kibler et al. (2017) consider how entrepreneurs can foster legitimacy following venture failure through impression management strategies. A number of empirical studies have demonstrated a variety of ways in which organisational actors can strategically gain as well as maintain and defend this legitimacy (e.g. Elsbach & Sutton, 1992; Greenwood
and Suddaby, 2006; Kibler et al. 2017), and these legitimation strategies and activities will be elaborated on in section 3.4. The current study considers how legitimation differs depending on the business lifecycle stage of the entrepreneur as well as the logics present in the field, and the presence of individual agency. The main focus of this study is on how these entrepreneurs maintain legitimacy after gaining legitimacy through achieving a sustainability award, i.e. post-legitimacy.

3.3.4 Sources of Legitimacy
A central issue for legitimacy research is identifying who has collective authority over the legitimacy of these subjects (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Ruef & Scott, 1998; Suddaby et al., 2017). It is important to consider who and what legitimation activities are targeted towards. These sources of legitimacy are defined by Ruef and Scott as “the internal and external audiences who observe organisations and make legitimacy assessments” (p. 880). Different sources are dominant in different fields and a source can refer to society in general, a specific organisational type or level, an individual organisation or an individual (Bitektine, 2011; Deephouse and Suchman, 2008).

Meyer and Scott (1983) take the view that legitimacy is broadly derived from the institutional environment and subsequently take society in general to be the source of legitimacy. Another view is taken by authors such as Clarke (2011) and Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002), who view legitimacy as socially constructed by local actors in local situations, and interpreted by legitimacy-seekers. These authors argue that legitimacy resides within the psyches of individual actors and is not directly observable. Legitimacy-seekers must interpret individual, local-level social interactions in order to identify the appropriate actions to take to achieve legitimacy. This task is complicated when legitimacy-seekers are faced with multiple, diverse and even contradictory legitimacy judgements (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011), as they must make assessments regarding the legitimacy judgements on an individual basis and make subsequent decisions regarding legitimation behaviour. In the current study, as sources of legitimacy for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs may take the form of regulatory bodies concerned with environmental protection, or suppliers concerned with economic gain (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011), entrepreneurs must often make legitimacy judgements on an individual, local level. Through examining the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs, the current study explores what the dominant sources of legitimacy are in the field of
sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship and which field logics these sources adhere to. This will enable mapping of the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in terms of which logics are dominant and what is subsequently most important for legitimacy. The following section discusses the extant literature on legitimation.

3.3.5 The Pursuit of Legitimacy: Legitimation

The legitimation behaviour engaged in by sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs is the central focus of this study, as it is an important activity for these entrepreneurs in the entrepreneurial process but an underdeveloped area of theory (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011). The term ‘legitimation’ refers to the process of socially constructing a legitimate disposition, and in order to maintain, extend or defend legitimacy, field actors must engage in this process of legitimation (Bitekine, 2011). Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) define legitimation as “the process whereby an organisation justifies to a peer its right to exist, that is to continue to import, transform and export energy, material or information” (1971, p. 361). Legitimation is not concerned with legitimacy outcomes and effects, but rather the dynamics of how actors extend, maintain or defend legitimacy (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008).

There is an important distinction in the legitimation literature between strategic and substantive legitimation. Strategic legitimacy studies depict legitimation activity as an operational resource that can be used within cultural environments by organisational actors to pursue their goals (Suchman, 1995). Many authors take this view of strategic legitimacy which sees organisational actors as having a high degree of control over legitimation (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975). This process has also been referred to as symbolic legitimation (Crilly et al., 2012), and differs from substantive legitimation which has been referred to as the “least strategic” form of legitimation (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002, p. 423). Strategic, symbolic legitimation refers to, for example, the use of language or structures which communicate certain messages to legitimacy-granting stakeholders. Strategic, symbolic legitimation should convey socially constructed meanings beyond intrinsic or obvious functional use (Zott & Huy, 2007). In this way, symbols are “concrete indicators of abstract value” (Firth, 1973, p. 54). It requires the organisational actor to strategically appear consistent with social expectations, values and norms of the field by either actually putting together structures that align with these expectations such as building sizes, or professional offices (Pfeffer, 1981), or by symbolically portraying that they are doing so (Ashforth &
Gibbs, 1990). There are a number of typologies of symbolic legitimation which will be discussed in section 3.7 in the context of legitimation as a response to logic multiplicity.

Suchman (1995), among the other early neo-institutionalists, argues that it is not possible to conceive of legitimacy as something that operates at the preconscious or subconscious level. This argument sees legitimacy as something that individual organisational actors are not aware of and are subsequently not placed to strategically manipulate. According to this view, legitimation is substantive, based on external constraint and power-dependence (Ashford & Gibbs, 1990). This least-strategic type of legitimation involves conforming to the norms and expectations of dominant field actors through coercive isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and doing so passively and unconsciously (Suchman, 1995). Substantive legitimation is also a feature of legitimation typologies, with many acknowledging that legitimation occurs both symbolically/strategically and substantively (Oliver, 1991; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002).

There is also a stream of literature that acknowledges the ability of individuals to act strategically and pursue symbolic legitimation specifically in pluralistic environments (Crilly et al., 2012). As Meyer & Scott (1983) noted, “the legitimacy of a given organization is negatively affected by the number of authorities sovereign over it and by the diversity and inconsistency of their accounts of how it is to function” (p. 202). Some entrepreneurs, such as sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, exist within an organisational field characterised by multiple logics which requires them to engage in legitimation activity that overcomes any obstacles inherent in multiplicity, such as diverse stakeholder legitimacy judgements. This multiplicity will be elaborated on in the following section, and its effect on legitimation behaviour will be discussed in section 3.7.

Gaining, maintaining and even defending legitimacy is an important yet persistently challenging task for any entrepreneur throughout the business lifecycle. For sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs who exist within a field characterised by multiple audiences with contradictory institutional expectations regarding legitimacy, and who must pursue both sustainability and profit goals, this task has been considered all the more challenging and merits examination (Mars and Lounsbury, 2009; Pache and Santos, 2013). Discussions concerning sustainability issues, ranging from local waste management to global warming and climate change, typically encompass multiple actors whose interests and priorities differ
(Lounsbury, 2001), as seen in Chapter Two. In the pursuit of legitimacy, entrepreneurs must decide who the dominant players are in the discussion and how to respond to their legitimacy requirements without appearing as uncooperative with others, managing sustainability tensions paradoxically (Hahn et al., 2015) as logics. This shows sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation to be a complex task. The following section discusses the literature on organisational fields which will set the context for this study on sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, as legitimation is a response to logic multiplicity in the field. This will inform the discussion of legitimation strategies, mechanisms and activities used to respond to multiplicity in section 3.7.

3.4 The Organisational Field of Sustainability

Organisational fields are arenas of organisational action comprising the interests of multiple actors around a central issue (Hoffman, 1999). The current study examines how the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveals the nature of sustainability logics present in the organisational field. Examining which logics are present in the field can provide clarity to the contestation surrounding the meaning of sustainability for these entrepreneurs within their organisational field and extend limited theory on the organisational field of sustainability (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Hoffman, 1999). Organisational fields are the central construct within neo-institutional theory (Scott, 1991) and have been conceptualised and examined in a number of ways in the literature. The concept emerged as a unit of analysis for the examination of the intersection of the individual, organisational and societal levels (DiMaggio, 1983). Organisational field research analyses how organisations and their actors, on the one hand, are influenced by the field, and how on the other hand they reproduce or even create field level institutions in their interactions as institutional entrepreneurs (Scott, 2001). Neo-institutionalists conceptualise the organisational field as the domain where the actions of organisational actors are structured by the network of relationships within which they are embedded (Warren, 1967) and subsequently, the institutional environment in which entrepreneurs exist shapes the set of opportunities available to them at any point in time. In this way, entrepreneurial actions are to an extent, a reflection of the perspectives of dominant institutional actors in the specific environment, reflecting the regulative, normative and cultural-cognitive systems that provide meaning for actors (Scott, 1995; 2001). As a result, there are a limited number of legitimate
options available to entrepreneurs in the organisational field and those seeking legitimacy must work to understand this and act accordingly to gain legitimacy.

3.4.1 Conceptualising Fields
Among the first to theorise about the organisational field were DiMaggio and Powell (1983, p. 148) who define the organisational field as “those organizations which, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resources and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services or products”. This is a commonly cited definition, yet since its conception, a wide ranging debate has taken place on this subject, and different meanings have been presented in the attempt to improve the concept and its operationalisation. The recognition of the multiplicity of approaches on the theme, in some cases with subtle differentiations, led Machado-da-Silva et al. (2006) to the classification of theoretical perspectives on organisational fields as shown in Table 3.4 below. They verified that from the concept originally formulated by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) to the subsequent versions, certain aspects are recurrent while others are specific to a line of investigation. The current study includes a column on the limitations of each.

Table 3.4 Theoretical Perspectives on Organisational Fields

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Perspective</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Key Elements</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Limitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Field as the totality of relevant actors</td>
<td>DiMaggio &amp; Powell (1983)</td>
<td>Signification and Relationship</td>
<td>Set of organizations sharing systems of common meanings and interacting more frequently among themselves than with actors from outside the field, thus constituting a recognized area of institutional life.</td>
<td>View fields largely as aggregative constructs. Overly focused on mimetic and regulative forces leading to isomorphism, lack of consideration for agency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field as a functionally specific arena</td>
<td>Scott (2000, 2001, 2008)</td>
<td>Social Function</td>
<td>Set of similar and different interdependent organizations that are operating in a</td>
<td>Overarching emphasis on homogeneity of organisations in a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field as a centre of dialog and discussion</td>
<td>Hoffman (1999, 2001)</td>
<td>Debate for Thematic Interest</td>
<td>Set of organizations, often with different purposes, that are recognized as participants in the same debate surrounding specific issues, plus those concerned with the reproduction of institutional practices or arrangements related to the matter.</td>
<td>Does not provide a full explanation for how organisational actors can utilise strategic agency in the field.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field as an institutional sphere of strategic action</td>
<td>Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012)</td>
<td>Power and Cognitive Structures</td>
<td>Field is dynamic, capable of change, and overlaps with other fields. Socially skilled actors seek to solidify their position by balancing power dynamics through strategic action.</td>
<td>Lacks explanation for meaning in fields, and dependence on actors to be strategic and skilled might discount the rules of the field.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Adapted from Machado-da-Silva et al., (2006)

The first perspective in Table 3.4, that of DiMaggio and Powell (1983), examines how organisational actors adapt to their environment and thus to changes in their organisational field. According to this perspective, the institutionalisation of a field happens through four parts: "an increase in the extent of interaction among organizations in the field; the emergence of sharply defined inter-organizational structures of domination and patterns of
coalition; an increase in the information load with which organizations in a field must contend; and the development of a mutual awareness among participants in a set of organizations that they are involved in a common enterprise” (DiMaggio & Powell 1983, p. 65). For these authors, rather than being considered as geographically bound, these organisations might produce complimentary services or products and these organisational actors might interact more frequently and fatefully with one another than with other organisations (Scott, 1995). In early conceptualisations of fields such as that presented by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), “the central notions of organizational field research focused on understanding the processes that guided the behaviour of field members in unconscious ways” (Wooten & Hoffman, 2016, p. 3). Essentially, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) sought to understand how a desire for collective rationality led to homogeneity amongst organisations in fields, particularly the role of the state in this process (Wooten & Hoffman, 2016).

An early focus on how mimetic and regulative forces could lead to isomorphism within organisational fields shifted to more of a focus on the cognitive (Scott, 1991). Researchers began to consider the cultural and cognitive process guiding behaviour, and how these process were formed. Scott (1991, 2001, 2008), the main proponent of the second theoretical perspective as categorised in Table 3.4, sought to address some shortcomings of DiMaggio and Powell’s perspective on organisational fields, namely the lack of attention on the cognitive pillar of institutions, the issue of a lack of reference to boundaries of fields, as well as operational difficulties. In developing a theory of organisational fields, Scott (2001) asserted that the institutionalisation of a field depends on “the extent of agreement on the institutional logics guiding activities within the field; increased isomorphism of structural forms within populations in the field; increased structural equivalence of organizational sets within the field; and increased clarity of field boundaries” (Scott, 2001, p. 117). As actors and organisations within the new bounded field interact more frequently with each other than with other kinds of organisations, field logics that guides interaction, decision making, and even perceptions of reality will develop. Thornton and Ocasio (1999, p. 804) defined logics as “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality.” Actors must cognitively interpret logics and behave accordingly so as the distinctiveness of the field is maintained over time (Scott, 2008). The introduction of the concept of logics into organisational field theory provides a link between institutional structures and individual
cognition which was missing from prior conceptualisations of organisational fields (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

Although Scott, among others, provide conceptualisations of organisational fields that are useful for the study of individual entrepreneurial action as they consider cognition, the overarching emphasis of Scott’s approach is on homogeneity of organisations in a field, with regulative, normative and cognitive influences viewed as conducive to this homogeneity (Wooten & Hoffman, 2016). The argument remains that the organisational field is largely formed around shared interest in static configurations such as common technologies or industries, and is characterised as having strong, clear boundaries (DiMaggio, 1995; Greenwood and Hinings, 1996; Marquis, 2003; Thornton, 2001). This idea has been criticised by some within the area of organisational field theory as it does not account for the notion of change within the field (Greenwood et al., 2008), nor does it account for flexibility of boundaries (Hoffman, 1999). Alternatives offered by a number of authors are more suitable to conceptualising and examining a field consisting of multiple, diverse logics such as that of sustainability in which multiple fields may naturally overlap, and these will be discussed in section 3.4.3. These alternatives also support a paradox approach to sustainability which requires flexibility, as discussed in Chapter Two. Further, while Scott (2001) does account for logics and cognition, this conceptualisation does not go far enough in considering how actors can strategically respond to logics by utilising agency in fields. Additionally, while a commonly accepted element of organisational fields is that organisations and actors of a field partake in some common meaning system (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, Hoffman, 1999; Scott, 2001; 2008), conceptualisations put forward by DiMaggio & Powell (1983) and Scott (2001) were not clear on what this meaning system is. Subsequent perspectives of fields have offered more nuanced explanations of the meaning systems that bring certain organisations and actors together beyond shared interest in static configurations of technologies or industries, and also account for the role of agency in fields.

3.4.2 Meaning and Agency in Fields

Hoffman (1999) suggests that fields form around issues rather than markets or technologies, and “fields become centres of debates in which competing interests negotiate over issue interpretation” (Hoffman, 1999, p. 351). According to this perspective, fields are a set of organisations and their actors who are participants in the same debate surrounding specific
themes or issues, as well as those concerned with the reproduction of institutional practices or arrangements related to those issues (Machado-da-Silva et. al., 2006). Issues define what the field is, drawing linkages that may not have been present previously (see Table 3.4). To Hoffman, the emphasis on themes or issues allows for a more complex approach than that of networks in the explanation of the formation and development of a field as provided by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), yet it does not compromise the conceptual logic of their original definition (Hoffman, 1999).

According to this approach, it is a shared interest in the meaning of themes or issues that brings diverse organisations and actors together. Hoffman’s theory of the field as an arena for debate and discussion, change and contestation, recognises that organisational actors often have different organisational purposes and come with diverse perspectives on an issue, which helps to develop the field around the issue (Wooten & Hoffman, 2016). This imbues organisational fields with a sense of meaning beyond shared interest in homogeneity of markets or technologies. The structure of a field becomes organised as the interactions and exchanges of information between certain organisations and their actors develop, and they begin to be recognized as participants in the same debate, even if this does not imply a tangible relationship pattern (Hoffman, 2001). This acknowledgement of heterogeneity amongst actor perspectives sparked further conceptualisations of fields as arenas for agency and strategic action.

Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012) address the lack of attention to agency and strategic action in fields (see Table 3.4). They introduced the concept of ‘strategic actions fields’ (SAF) which takes “the social constructionist aspects of institutional theory with a focused concern on how at their core, field processes are about who gets what” (Fligstein and McAdam, 2011, p. 8). Fligstein and McAdam’s definition of fields is comparable to earlier neo-institutionalist definitions outlined above in that they believe the field is a place where actors interact under common understandings and conditions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2001). It is also comparable to the definition proposed by Hoffman (1999) in that they view fields as dynamic spaces of strategic action where actors interact out of shared, although not necessarily consensual understandings of an issue (Wooten & Hoffman, 2016). However, this approach places more of an emphasis on the role of the individual actor as well as the strategic aspect of agency, reflecting the more recent developments in neo-institutionalism such as institutional work (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006) and institutional entrepreneurship.
The SAF approach introduces the concept of ‘skilled strategic action’ of individual social actors, highlighting the strategic purpose behind actions and therefore offering a more nuanced explanation of strategic agentic behaviour of individuals in organisational fields, such as occurs in legitimation. Still, it is important not to become overly reliant on an approach that is primarily concerned with the actions of self-interested agents and which emphasises the fluidity of constraints in analysing strategic agency, as the rules of the field also play a role in shaping behaviour (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011). Therefore, conceptualisations that adhere to earlier neo-institutional guidelines, such as provided by Hoffman (1999), as well as the more recent SAF theory as proposed by Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012), can offer important insights for this study into the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs within their field. Using these two approaches enables the researcher to consider the meaning of sustainability in the organisational field as it is constructed by diverse actors. It also facilitates the examination of the role of agency in legitimation in the field. Further, this facilitates a paradox approach to conceptualising sustainability as it acknowledges the role of the individual in managing diverse sustainability issues.

### 3.4.3 Boundaries and Overlaps in Fields

Fligstein and McAdam’s SAF theory also addresses a limitation of earlier conceptualisations in that these conceptualisations were overly focused on boundaries between fields and did not account for change in fields (Greenwood et al., 2008; Hoffman, 1999). Such an approach is limited for conceptualising fields characterised by multiple, diverse logics such as that of sustainability. Fligstein and McAdam "conceive of all fields as embedded in complex webs of other fields” (2012, p. 18), with clear overlap between fields. As was discussed in Chapter Two, entrepreneurship orientated towards different sustainability goals is often categorised as either environmental, social entrepreneurship or sustainability entrepreneurship (Parrish and Tilley, 2010). Alternatively, Tilley and Young (2009) argue that while environmentally-orientated, socially-orientated and traditional economic-orientated entrepreneurship can all contribute in part to the sustainable development of the social-ecological system, viewing them separately might perpetuate the problem of assuming that there is an inherent trade-off associated with the three pillars of sustainability. This is counterintuitive to the holistic triple-bottom line approach which is required to address the complex issue of sustainable development. In addition, Schaltegger and Wagner (2011), in developing a typology of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship behaviour, actually categorise social and
environmental entrepreneurship as types of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, as many of their activities and goals overlap. This idea of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship as an umbrella term is also asserted by Dean and McMullen (2007). A paradox approach, which acknowledges and works through tensions between sustainability types (Van der Byl & Sławinski, 2015) requires an acknowledgement of overlaps between sustainability fields, as suggested by Fligstein and McAdam (2012). The current study follows this line of reasoning in examining legitimation as there are clear overlaps between these fields, as was pointed to in Chapter Two regarding environmental, social and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. This further justifies the concept of fields as put forward by Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012) as appropriate for the study of the field of sustainability.

Additionally, Hofmann (1999)’s definition, in which fields centre around issues of interest, reinforces the argument that fields overlap. For sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, the issue of interest is sustainability. Hofmann’s assertion is that the specific type of sustainability being pursued is not as important as sharing in discussion and debate around the overall common goal of sustainable development. Actors can have either common or disputed interests within this issue, e.g. they might pursue different sustainability activities, but the debate and negotiation that occurs helps to shape the overall issue of sustainability and subsequently the field. Again, this reflects the paradox approach to sustainability which acknowledges the many diverse sustainability interests and subsequent tensions there can be between them (Hahn et al., 2015). Successfully navigating the diverse sustainability interests of the organisational field to achieve legitimacy requires a paradox approach. This study therefore utilises both Fligstein and McAdam (2011, 2012) and Hoffman (1999) in conceptualising the field of sustainability and examining the multiple sustainability logics in the field. The literature on field logics is discussed below, concluding with how multiple sustainability pillars representing multiple sustainability interests in the organisational field can be conceptualised as multiple sustainability logics in legitimation.

3.5 Field Logics in Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship

Logics have been conceptualised in the literature as the vehicle through which both the norms of macro-level societal institutions are communicated to actors (Scott, 2008) as well as a vehicle for communicating the norms of the meso-level organisational field (DeClercq & Voronov 2011). Therefore, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs must have the ability to
interpret and respond to logics to gain legitimacy from macro and meso-level sources in the organisational field. In relation to the institutional, macro-level, Thornton and Ocasio (1999, p. 804) defined logics as “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality.” Alternatively, they have been said to “encode the criteria of legitimacy by which role identities, strategic behaviours, organisational forms, and relationships between organisations are constructed and sustained” (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005, p. 38). Logics act as organizing principles that guide behaviour and thus embody the goals of the entrepreneur (Berente and Yoo, 2012; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Berente and Yoo (2012) assert that organising principles are a fundamental characteristic of logics as they provide some shared goals for actors operating within the same organisational field. Friedland and Alford (1987) were the first to define logics, asserting that each prevailing institutional order has a central logic that provides actors with vocabularies of motive. They described institutional logics as having the potential to constrain both the means and ends of individual behaviour. Generally, the literature discusses institutional logics as a fundamental means of describing and analysing how the norms and values of macro-level structures are communicated to and interpreted by the organisational and individual level. However, the focus of the current study is on the meso-level of the organisational field as this level of analysis provides the context for the explanation of the concentration of values and norms available to sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs specifically.

In the same way as is true for institutional logics, field logics have generally been conceptualised by various different authors as a set of commonly held assumptions, practices, norms, and values that discipline action and thought within the field (Friedland and Alford 1987). As was seen in the section 3.4, multiple organisational fields exist and overlap within society and each is formed around themes or issues (Hofmann, 1999). In this way, organisational field logics communicate the dominant norms and values relating to the issues of each field. According to organisational field theory, an organisational field has a field-prescribed balance of logics which determine how actors in the field should pursue legitimacy necessary for their survival and success (DeClercq & Voronov 2011). Every field holds expectations about how actors should adhere to different logics and consequently, the strategic actions of entrepreneurs need to signal compliance (DeClercq & Voronov,
Meyer & Rowan (1977) were among the first to suggest that the incorporation of these logics from the field imbued an organisational actor with legitimacy. Legitimation enables the organisational actor to signal tacit compliance to dominant actors. This task becomes more complex in the case of actors who occupy fields characterised by multiple, contradictory logics (Besharov & Smith, 2014).

3.5.1 Multiple Logics

Within the traditional economic-oriented entrepreneurship literature, it is frequently assumed that legitimacy is gained through adherence to an economic logic (Zott & Huy, 2007), yet there is also a stream of research recognising that “institutional environments are often pluralistic… As a result, organizations in search of external support and stability incorporate all sorts of incompatible structural elements” (Meyer & Rowan 1977, p. 356). When facing multiple logics, an organisational actor is less able to rely on an isomorphic response to one dominant logic and must interpret the dynamics of multiplicity. The extent to which logics are more salient in the field is a function of the relative power of the incumbents who are aligned with one logic or the other (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Scott, 2008). In acting to satisfy one logic, another may be violated (Lounsbury, 2007; Greenwood et al., 2010). To address this, early theorizing focused on the potential for actors to avoid such violations (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999) and authors have increasingly examined situations where multiple, often competing logics exist alongside one another in stable organisational fields and for prolonged periods of time (Besharov & Smith, 2014; Lounsbury, 2007; Reay & Hinings, 2009). The literature began to suggest that the presence of multiple logics in a particular field does not necessarily lead to tension and institutional change whereby one logic replaces another (Leca & Naccache, 2006), but instead acknowledges the likely permanent coexistence of multiple logics in many fields (Mars & Lounsbury, 2009; Purdy & Gray, 2009; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). While some view this coexistence as something that will inevitably lead to organisational demise as a result of poor performance (e.g. Tracey et al., 2011), several other studies assert that multiplicity of logics can fuel sustainable performance and innovation (Jay, 2013; Kraatz & Block, 2008).

As well as disagreement regarding the effect of multiplicity on performance, the literature on multiple logics features a number of ideas on how actors can navigate this multiplicity in diverse contexts. For example, some argue that it tends to lead to contestation and conflict...
(Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Zilber, 2002), yet others report agreeable coexistence (McPherson & Sauder, 2013) or present different means of logic blending that actors engage in (Binder, 2007; Pache & Santos, 2013). Chapter Two discussed how a paradox approach views the existence of multiple pillars of sustainability, or multiple sustainability logics, as something that leads to tensions, but that these tensions can be managed towards holistic sustainability outcomes rather than sustainability trade-offs (Hahn et al., 2015). Glynn and Lounsbury (2005) show how the clash of market and aesthetic logics in the symphonic orchestra, followed by conflict and finally strike, led to a blending of those two logics. In addition, Pache & Santos (2013) in the context of socially-oriented hybrid organisation, find that organisational actors who exist in a field characterised by multiple logics selectively couple intact elements of logics rather than decoupling (separating internal organisational activities from formal structures and thus external assessment) or compromising (bargaining and negotiating between institutional constituents), as the literature typically suggests (Oliver, 1991). Techniques such as these will be elaborated on in the following section 3.7 with regards to how multiplicity is managed in legitimation.

It is important to note that embeddedness of logics is field specific, meaning there are field-imposed preferences with respect to the relative balance between logics (Scott, 2001). The extent of agreement or conflict between logic, as well as the techniques available to actors to manage and blend these logics will therefore depend on the specific field. Whilst research on economic-oriented organisations (e.g. Glynn & Lounsbury, 2005; Reay & Hinings, 2009) and social entrepreneurship research (e.g. Dacin et al., 2010; Battilana & Dorado, 2010, Pache & Santos, 2013) has examined the presence of multiple, competing logics, the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship is as of yet, underdeveloped in this regard, and merits examination.

3.5.2 Identifying Logics

Logics have been argued as identifiable in a number of ways such as through searching for ‘ideal types’ in data. Friedland and Alford (1987), focusing on the macro-societal level, pointed to a number of key institutions which they reported to be largely common across societies: the capitalist market, the bureaucratic state, democracy, nuclear family, and Christianity. Authors asserted that each of these institutions communicates their distinct logic to societal actors, and argue that researchers seeking to identify logics empirically should utilise dominant ‘ideal types’ such as these as a starting point (Nelson, 2015). Since Friedland
and Alford’s contribution in 1987, there have been a number of developments. For example, Thornton (2004) conceptualised six institutional orders i.e., the market, the corporation, the professions, the state, the family, and religions. This was again an attempt at identifying ideal types of logics, yet this conceptualisation is more reflective of the number of ways in which logics can differ from and within ideal types. A number of empirical studies have also examined how established logic types impact organisations (e.g. Greenwood et al. 2010; Lounsbury, 2011; Thornton et al., 2012), and the study by Thornton et al., (2012) resulted in the proposed addition of a community logic.

Empirically exploring the presence of logics through the identification of ‘ideal types’ is the first of two ways in which logics have been examined in the literature (Nelson, 2015). The second method is via traditional content analysis wherein researchers code texts to identify categories and patterns representative of logics as they emerge from the data (e.g. Nigam & Ocasio, 2009; McPherson & Sauder, 2013; Rao et al., 2003). Although both methods have the potential to suffer from the typical qualitative issue of researcher bias, either through forcing data to fit within idea types or coding to suit preconceived preferences (Nelson, 2015), both are useful means of capturing which logics are present within society generally and within different organisational fields. Existing work in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, both specifically concerned with logic multiplicity and work on conceptualising their drivers and goals, has established the presence of logics that can be broadly categorised as either social, environmental or economic logics (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011; Tilley & Young, 2009). Therefore, the current study assumes these three logics to be the ‘ideal types’ that characterise the field. Although, rather than examining the presence of these ideal types across general entrepreneurial behaviour, this study specifically examines how these logics emerge from accounts and evidence of legitimation behaviour in order to determine the role of these logics in shaping legitimation. This means of identifying logics explores the degree to which these logics adhere to ideal types in this sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field. The next section discusses the logic multiplicity in the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, and demonstrates the proposed contribution of this study with regards to how sustainability pillars manifest as multiple logics.
3.5.3 Logic Multiplicity and Triple Pillar Sustainability

In the current study, the three pillars of economic, environmental and social sustainability are conceptualised as multiple field logics with regards to their role in legitimation. The review of the literature in Chapter Two revealed that it is widely acknowledged that these entrepreneurs are concerned with the pursuit of various combinations of economic, social and environmental concerns, or various sustainability pillars (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015, Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011; Tilley & Young, 2009). The literature in Chapter Two also demonstrated that there is debate both within each of these pillars and between them as a result of the fact that each sustainability issue concerns multiple actors with diverse concerns and priorities (Vos, 2007). This parallels the literature on organisational fields. Economic, social and environmental sustainability concerns characterise the organisational field of sustainability as it is the continuous negotiation of these issues which provide meaning to the field and bring interested actors together (Hoffman, 1999). Different organisational actors will have different sustainability concerns and goals, thus will adhere to different sustainability logics. The sustainability concerns of the dominant organisational actors represent the field-prescribed balance of logics that legitimacy-seekers must demonstrate adherence to in legitimation. Goals and concerns relating to sustainability translate as logics in the context of legitimation. Therefore, this study assumes that the logics of the field can be broadly categorised as economic, social and environmental logics. This reflects existing literature on logic multiplicity in the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship which has categorised them broadly into either sustainability and profit (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011), or economic and environmental (O'Neil and Ucbasaran, 2011). Conceptually, extant research is inconclusive as to whether the logics of sustainability are complementary or conflicting (DeClercq and Voronov, 2011), which parallels the discussion of trade-offs and tensions within the concept of sustainability itself, and demonstrates the need for further research. Further, Chapter Two pointed to how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs are well placed to pursue a holistic form of sustainability by managing tensions between sustainability logics through utilising a paradox approach, which “provides an opportunity to evaluate complex sustainability issues and generate creative approaches to them” (Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015, p. 54).

Conceptualising pillars as logics enables the examination of how logics shape legitimation as well as how legitimation reveals the logics present in the field, and subsequently the nature of sustainability in the field. Therefore, the current study examines how the logics of the field
shape legitimation activities of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. The current study also aims to reveal the nature of logics present in the field by examining which logics manifest in legitimation. Subsequently, the results on which logics are dominant should provide insight into what is important for sustainability in the field, as logics represent the pillars of sustainability. Research question one of this study is: *How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal sustainability pillars as locally embedded logics of the organisational field?* Examining this question can inform future practice regarding sustainability-oriented entrepreneur behaviour, as well as inform future research attempting to map the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship.

However, the previous experience of entrepreneurs, personal attitudes towards sustainability issues and their entrepreneurial motivations may also influence how they strategize for legitimacy within this organisational field. Entrepreneurs facing multiple logics might strategically tailor legitimation strategies according to their different values and beliefs (O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016), and this may affect how they respond to logics. The following section presents a review on the concept of agency according to neo institutional theory, arguing that factors that drive entrepreneurs to pursue sustainability, namely prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015), as discussed in Chapter Two, should be conceptualised as agency in legitimation for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs.

### 3.6 Agency in Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship

Battilana and D’Aunno (2009) in their detailed exploration of agency in institutional work, state that there is very little known about individual-level enabling conditions of agency, and research tends to neglect the individual level of analysis. The literature requires further examinations of what constitutes the agency of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, and what the role of this agency is in legitimation. This section demonstrates the intended contribution of the current study in addressing this shortcoming, as well as extending theory on the role of agency in legitimation.
3.6.1 From Passive Receivers to Rugged Heroes

Much of the literature on agency within the neo-institutional perspective has focused on how organisations both shape and are shaped by institutions (Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006), and is situated within the structure versus agency debate, with extremes of both sides of the debate arguing deterministically against the effect of the other in organisational action (Giddens, 1976). In this way, neo-institutionalists have endeavoured to provide a way to examine the relationship between agency and institutions while addressing the paradox of embedded agency (Battilana & D’aunno, 2009). Embedded agency refers to the broad debate within institutional theory between structure and agency (Friedland & Alford, 1987; Seo & Creed, 2002) in which the question remains: how can organisational actors be both subject to regulative, normative and cognitive processes of institutions, and yet also enact their own values, beliefs and motivations to shape institutions? (Garud et al., 2007). Neo-institutionalists have argued both sides of the debate over the years, with the lack of explanation for the role of interest and agency in influencing sources of legitimacy (Dacin et al., 2002) being a source of much critique for early institutionalists. “Institutional theorists have tended to focus on conformity rather than resistance, passivity rather than activeness, and preconscious acceptance rather than political manipulation, in response to external pressures and expectations” (Oliver, 1991, p. 149).

Institutional theory then moved from a socially embedded perspective of organisations and actors to one emphasising their strategic responses to institutional pressures. Although concerns with agency have a long tradition in institutional theory, with some arguing that the existing polarisation between ‘old’ and ‘new’ institutionalism is overstated (Greenwood et al., 2006; Suddaby, 2010), scholars tend to agree that Di Maggio’s (1988) discussion of institutional entrepreneurship was fundamental to the conceptualisation of the role of agency in institutionalism (Suddaby, 2010). The term institutional entrepreneurship refers to the “activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones” (Maguire et al., 2004, p. 657). Since DiMaggio’s work in 1988, researchers have become increasingly concerned with the role of agency in organisations (Battilana & D’Aunno, 2009; Garud et al., 2000; Greenwood & Suddaby, 2006; Rao et al., 2000). These authors argue the role of organisational characteristics in enabling responses to institutions over the potentially fatalistic implications of seeing institutions as impenetrable and unchangeable. Much of the debate on the dynamics of agency and institutions is captured under the term ‘institutional
work’, defined as “the purposive actions of individuals and organisations aimed at creating, maintaining and disrupting institutions” (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006, p. 215). Ultimately, the theoretical goals of this perspective are to explain institutional creation and change by examining the field and organisational-level conditions that enable institutional work, the social skills institutional entrepreneurs use to enact institutional work, and the interplay between these dynamics in different institutional settings (Hardy & Maguire, 2008). The concept of agency also fits with a paradox approach which acknowledges the role of individuals in managing tensions, subsequently viewing individuals as capable of responding to isomorphism in the field by using their agency to manage tensions between field logics.

More recently however, Suddaby (2010) states that institutionalist are increasingly portraying organisations and their actors as ‘hypermuscular supermen’, or as put by Powell and Colyvas (2008), ‘rugged institutional heroes’. This research positions the organisation as “single handed in their efforts to resist institutional pressure, transform organizational fields and alter institutional logics” (Suddaby, 2010, p. 15). The warning issued by Suddaby (2010) is that over reliance on the ability of organisations and their actors to disrupt and change institutions is just as deterministic and potentially fatalistic as those who over-emphasise the role of structure and stability. This reflects Scott’s (2008) critique of institutionalists who, in arguing for the ability of actors to respond strategically to institutions, risk losing sight of the fundamental properties of institutions as social facts. Despite this critique, it should be noted that institutions have alternatively been conceptualised as a product of a historical processes of interaction among actors by Berger and Luckmann (1967), who view institutionalisation as a social process shaped by continuous interaction between actors who come to share a common social reality. This means that within institutionalism, there is scope to conceptualise institutions as shaped by the actions and interactions of actors, yet also ultimately acknowledge that the outcome of this interaction is an entity which determines the social reality of actors. This study examines how both field-level and individual-level factors shape entrepreneurial action in the form of legitimitation. While the former has been discussed in relation to field logics, the latter requires a discussion of the individual-level enabling conditions of agency.

3.6.2 Individual-Level Agency

Battilana and D’Aunno (2009) point to the individual level of analysis in agency as underdeveloped in the research. In examining individual-level enabling conditions of agency,
they argue that inconsistency regarding the actual meaning of agency within institutional environments has hindered this examination. For example, Scott (2001) argues that actors display agency only when they actually alter rules and change institutions. However, as can be seen in work on strategic responses to institutional pressures, agency is also used to maintain institutions (Oliver, 1991) and is not always so transformative. Taking this into consideration, Battilana and D’Aunno (2009) develop a multi-dimensional understanding of agency that considers how agency can be both passive and transformative and includes the dimensions of habit, imagination and practical evaluation, based on prior work by Emirbayer and Mische (1998). They assert that “depending on the dimension of agency that dominates the instances of institutional work one considers” (Battilana & D’Aunno, 2009, p. 49), agency will manifest differently at different times for actors. This multidimensional conceptualisation of agency sees it as more complex than previous conceptualisations which focus on linear explanations, from highly strategic and transformative to passive and conforming or maintaining (Lawrence & Suddaby, 2006; Oliver, 1991). The current study aims to further research on multidimensional agency by examining the role of individual factors pertaining to sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs as individual-level enabling conditions of agency in legitimation, moving beyond linear explanations in agency research.

Research on individual agentic institutionalism has also taken the approach of assuming that organisational fields are heterogeneous, requiring actors to navigate logic multiplicity (Oliver, 1991; Seo & Creed, 2002). Logic multiplicity can be examined as a source of strategic resources for actors as well as constraints (Battilana, 2006), given that in the presence of multiple logics, actors can selectively draw from options depending on personal experiences and interests in the field, among other factors (Pache & Santos, 2013). As well as presenting them with the challenge of adhering to possibly conflicting expectations, “persistent logic multiplicity in a field facilitates agentic behaviour by expanding actors’ repertoires of possible actions and strategies” (DeClercq and Voronov, 2011, p. 14). Smet and Jarzabkowski (2013) develop a relational model of institutional work and institutional complexity, which they argue is needed in the literature due to a lack of understanding of individual-level agency in institutionalism. They examine how dimensions of agency interact dynamically during institutional work carried out by individual actors, specifically in situations where they encounter contradictory institutional practices and reconstruct their underlying institutional logics. This study also examines how individual entrepreneurs utilize agency in the face of logic multiplicity in the context of legitimation.
It can be seen that further research is needed on individual-level agency, and examining agency as a multidimensional concept as well as examining individual-level responses to multiple logics through agency are two promising means of furthering research. The following section elaborates on the proposed contribution of the current study by arguing that factors that drive entrepreneurs to pursue sustainability, namely prior knowledge, orientation and intention (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015), should be conceptualised as agency in legitimation for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs.

3.6.3 Individual Entrepreneur Factors as Agency
As was discussed in Chapter Two, although the literature acknowledges that the values and beliefs of entrepreneurs must play a role in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurial legitimation (DeClercq and Voronov, 2011; O'Neil and Ucbasaran; 2016), we do not know exactly which factors play a role, what this role is or how these entrepreneurs can strategically utilize these factors in responding to logic multiplicity as agency. Battilana (2006) contends that linking individual agency and societal structures requires us to “explain under which conditions individuals are enabled to act as institutional entrepreneurs” (Battilana, 2006, p. 653). Weik (2011) emphasises that within the institutional entrepreneurship literature, this is a prominent topic as theorists are hugely concerned with which conditions produce institutional entrepreneurs, i.e. what triggers individual actors to engage in institutional work. The argument is therefore that it is necessary to understand these triggers or drivers in order to better understand agency and its strategic role. In the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature, the constructs of prior knowledge, orientation and intention have been identified as responsible for driving entrepreneurial behaviour towards sustainable development. Despite this, research has not examined how these constructs may be used strategically by sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs to meet sustainability goals, such as during legitimation. Therefore, this study argues that it is these constructs that characterise the entrepreneur’s agency and thus it is through the use of these constructs that entrepreneurs have the capacity to enact institutional work and strategic action in legitimation, strategizing to legitimize themselves and their enterprises within the field. Research question two is therefore: How do prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability intention and sustainability orientation manifest as factors of entrepreneurial agency to shape sustainability-oriented entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field?
This study aims to contribute to literature on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship legitimation by examining how constructs that together drive sustainability-oriented entrepreneurial behaviour are utilized as strategic agency in legitimation. In addition, it aims to contribute to agency literature within neo-institutional theory regarding its role in legitimation. The following section presents the conceptual framework of the current study, discussing the literature on the role of logics and agency in legitimation.

3.7 Conceptual Framework
Legitimation strategies, mechanisms and activities have been conceptualised and examined extensively at different levels such as organisational (Ashforth & Gibbs, 1990; Turcan, 2013) and individual (DeLange, 2016, Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001), in different contexts such as multinational corporations (MNCs) (Kostova & Roth, 2003) and hybrid organisations (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2013), as well as through different perspectives, namely institutional, impression management and cultural entrepreneurship perspectives (Uberbacher, 2014). This section reviews the extent to which legitimation literature accounts for strategic agency of individual actors in legitimation, as well the extent to which it considers how legitimation can be used to manage multiple, diverse institutional pressures in the form of logics. Additionally, it addresses the literature on managing sustainability tensions in legitimation. A number of gaps are identified which leads to the presentation of the conceptual framework in Figure 3.1.

3.7.1 Agency in Legitimation
In order to acquire legitimacy, Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) argue that there are four basic strategies which vary in their degree to which they are strategic. The first three strategies—conformance, selection, and manipulation, were originally introduced by Suchman (1995). Zimmerman and Zeitz added a fourth strategy: creation. Conformance reflects a substantive approach to legitimation (Ashford & Gibbs, 1990) as it involves passively following the rules, for example, in the form of government regulation. Selection involves relocation to more favourable environments and subsequently involves a strategic element. A manipulation strategy involves engaging in, for example lobbying for change in regulation or other actions which attempt to alter current practices. Finally, creation is the most strategic of the four strategies identified by Zimmerman & Zeitz (2002), and involves innovating new
norms, values or beliefs to suit the organisation. These strategies are widely reproduced in the literature examining legitimation across different organisation types and contexts (Bertels & Lawrence, 2016). However, they do not account for how individual entrepreneurs respond to multiplicity of logics, or account for which factors act as agency in legitimation.

Alternatively, Zott & Huy (2007) focus solely on the highly-strategic symbolic nature of how legitimacy can be acquired, suggesting that successful entrepreneurs reinforce the legitimacy of their ventures by conducting four symbolic actions that ultimately convey; personal credibility, professional organising (e.g. appropriate offices), organisational achievement (e.g. fully functioning products/services), and the quality of stakeholder relations (e.g. prestigious stakeholders). These authors theorise how such activities provide the reassurance required by legitimacy-granters, while in turn, these different forms of legitimation tactics can represent some of the implicit assumptions that resource holders use to make decisions. This demonstrates that examining the more strategic symbolic legitimation activities of entrepreneurs could be an effective way of determining which logics they adhere to, and subsequently determining which logics are dominant in the organisational field, which is an aim of the current study.

Symbolic legitimation activities have also been identified by Glynn and Marquis (2004), who highlight how the symbolic action of organisational name changing can have significant positive legitimacy effects for organisations. In addition, Lounsbury and Glynn (2001) argue that storytelling is an important symbol for gaining legitimacy in new firms. Clarke (2011), in the context of entrepreneurship, also consider how visual symbols are utilized to acquire legitimacy, and found that storytelling alone is insufficient. Rather, visual symbols such as the organisation’s spatial design and the personal appearance of organisational actors, as well as the rhetorical impressions that visual symbols present, need to be considered and appropriately emphasised. ‘Social competence’ (Clarke, 2011) goes beyond the idea of “mere persuasion through linguistic or visual domains and encompasses the ability to correctly gauge the current moods or emotions of others, proficiency in inducing positive reactions by others by enhancing one’s own appearance and image, effectiveness in persuasion, and ability to adjust to a range of social situations with a range of individuals” (Vecchio, 2003, p. 318). Clearly such an approach requires the use of strategic agency by the entrepreneur.
Most recently, Turcan (2013) examined new international venture legitimation and found a number of novel legitimation strategies, namely technology, anchoring and alliance. In pursuing a technology strategy, firms gain recognition and credibility from large industry players and validate their innovations. In an anchoring strategy, firms can increase the likelihood of funding by intentionally misrepresenting the facts to investors, and an alliance strategy is where firms mitigate the risks of newness and small size by aligning to established, successful industry players, thus responding to mimetic institutional pressures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). There are also a number of studies which have examined how organisations pursue legitimation to restore their legitimacy after events in which legitimacy may have been damaged (e.g. Elsbach, 1994; Elsbach & Kramer, 1996, Elsbach & Sutton, 1992). While the current study does not target entrepreneurs who have recently had their legitimacy damaged, it does focus on the legitimation challenges faced by entrepreneurs in order to examine which logics manifest during legitimation challenges.

The highly strategic symbolic legitimation activities reviewed in this section have been found to facilitate successful legitimation at the level of the organisation as well as the level of the entrepreneur, highlighting their potential to manifest in the context of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. Further, the strategic focus of these studies demonstrates their acknowledgement of the importance of agency in legitimation. Despite this, these studies do not consider which individual-level factors manifest as agency during legitimation, nor do they consider the effects of logic multiplicity on the legitimation behaviour of entrepreneurs. This study addresses these gaps by examining how prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention manifest as agency in legitimation (see RQ2, Figure 3.1).

### 3.7.2 Logic Multiplicity in Legitimation

Oliver’s (1991) work on strategic responses to institutional pressures has been influential in the development of typologies of legitimation. Oliver asserted that these responses can be categorised into four types; acquiesce, involving the imitation of institutional models and obeying rules, compromise, involving balancing and bargaining between multiple institutional constituents, avoid, where actors hide non-conformance and change their practices, which is comparable to Turcan’s (2013) anchoring strategy, and finally manipulate, where actors gain control and influence institutional constituents. This typology has been
widely cited in the legitimation literature (Bertels & Lawrence, 2016), however, Paauwe (2004) criticised the typology for being too polarised as either too conforming (acquiesce/compromise), or too negative (avoid/defy/manipulate) and not presenting a comprehensive overview of organisational responses to institutional pressures. Further, Pache and Santos (2010, p. 457) argue that Oliver’s (1991) typology is limited in its treatment of organisations “as unitary actors developing strategic responses to outside pressures”, which overlooks the ways in which multiple organisational actors respond to institutional complexity collectively, such as multiple logics.

While early neo-institutional research pointed to legitimation options requiring a trade-off between logics such as decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) and compromising (Oliver, 1991), in the face of pluralistic environments, more recent work finds strategies involving logics combination, blending and coupling (Greenwood et al., 2011; Lounsbury & Crumley, 2007; Tracey et al., 2011, Pache & Santos, 2013). One stream of research that has been particularly insightful in this regard is hybrid organisations. This area of theory is also focused at the organisational level, like much of the legitimation literature. Nonetheless, it offers some insights on the management of competing goals of sustainability, i.e. social and commercial logics, whereas studies discussed thus far have not explicitly considered sustainability tensions. The term hybrid organisation refers to organisations that combine elements of for-profit and nonprofit domains, maintaining a mixture of market and mission-oriented practices, beliefs, and rationale (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Haigh & Hofmann, 2014) to address social issues (Pache & Santos, 2013). Attending to them simultaneously can create ethical dilemmas, competing demands and tensions (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2013, Tracey et al., 2010). For example, through comparative case study research, Pache & Santos (2013) found that organisations selectively coupled intact elements prescribed by both commercial logics and social welfare logics. This enables them to gain legitimacy without having to engage in negotiations between resource holders adhering to different logics or deception. In another publication, Pache and Santos (2013) discuss how organisational actors will respond to institutional plurality through either ignorance, compliance, resistance, combination or, compartmentalization. They add to extant typologies of legitimation strategies and activities by introducing ignorance, which refers to a substantive reaction in which no action is taken due to lack of awareness of a logic. They also add compartmentalization, which is comparable to compromise (Oliver, 1991) in that it involves balancing and negotiation, yet differs in that it enables organisational actors to enact
all logics fully, but separately. This literature on legitimation in the face of multiple sustainability logics most closely reflects the paradox approach, as it views organisational actors as capable of managing tensions between logics rather than succumbing to trade-offs.

It can be seen that there are many ways in which to conceptualise and categorise the responses of organisations and their actors towards logic multiplicity in the pursuit of legitimacy. Despite extant research exploring legitimation as a response to logic multiplicity, there is a need for research to also consider how factors pertaining to the legitimacy-seeker manifest as agency in response to this multiplicity during legitimation. Further, while many pluralistic environments result in complex and interesting legitimation responses, the current study argues that the organisational field of sustainability could offer further insights into individual entrepreneur responses to multiplicity as these entrepreneurs also manage multiple logics. Limited attention has been devoted to how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs pursue legitimacy in this context, with the exception of a small number of papers (DeClercq and Voronov, 2011; O’Neil and Ucbasaran, 2016).

3.7.3 Logics and Agency in Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneur Legitimation

Within sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, authors have, for example, examined the role of territorial embeddedness and place-based legitimacy (Kibler et al., 2015) and the role of legitimation in forming organisational fields (de Lange, 2016). Also, a small number of authors have conceptually (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011) and empirically (O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011) considered the effects of logic multiplicity on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, specifically in relation to legitimation. These studies call for further research to be carried out in different context and through different methods, but they themselves offer key insights. DeClercq and Voronov (2009, 2011) in their conceptual work, predict that balancing sustainability and profitability concerns will be an important aspect of entrepreneur legitimation given that sustainability concerns are intrinsically intertwined with entrepreneurial practice. DeClercq and Voronov (2011) point to the likelihood of the strategic actions of ‘selective matching’ and ‘oppositional positioning’, for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in managing these competing logics in legitimation. Selective matching is whereby the favoured logic of the dominant actor in question is highlighted and the incompatible logic is downplayed or concealed (Ibid). In this way, it extends Meyer and Rowan’s (1977) idea of decoupling. Oppositional positioning involves entrepreneurs
“emphasizing their ability to surpass others when adhering to their own preferred logic” (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011, p. 332). The preferences held by dominant actors shape perceptions regarding the appropriate relationships between economic, environmental and social concerns, even if these do not reflect the most effective way to combine them within the current environment through legitimation (Hoffman and Ventresca, 1999).

Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs build legitimacy by responding to multiple, competing logics. O'Neil and Ucbasaran (2011) found that entrepreneurs engage in three interconnected strategies, namely blending, which aims to communicate the compatibility of logics, supplementing, in which entrepreneurs attempt to introduce alternative messages whilst retaining sustainability value messages, and manoeuvring, which is comparable to selective matching (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011) and decoupling (Meyer & Rowan, 1977) in that it involves “efforts to play down (or up) the environmentalism logic of the venture by muting aspects which audiences may find contentious” (p. 685). Both DeClercq and Voronov (2011) and O'Neil and Ucbasaran (2011) focus on legitimacy and utilize theory on logics, yet while O'Neil and Ucbasaran (2011) uniquely do so empirically, they do not examine the role of agency. Therefore, there is scope for the current study to empirically examine the role of both logics and agency in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, building on these two key studies and extending current limited research. In addition, the literature has not considered which factors pertaining to individual entrepreneurs might manifest as agency in legitimation for these entrepreneurs. This is a clear gap in the area of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, and this study aims to add to this underdeveloped yet growing literature by uniquely examining how these entrepreneurs manage sustainability tensions in the form of field logics (RQ1) as well as how characteristics specific to the agency of these entrepreneurs play a role in legitimation (RQ2), as illustrated in Figure 3.1. In conceptualising these factors as agency, and sustainability pillars as logics, this study also aims to contribute to the broad debate on structure versus agency in neo-institutional theory, extending the argument in favour of the ability of organisational actors to enact agency to respond to institutional demands (Greenwood et al., 2006; Lawrence, 2004; Seo & Creed, 2002; Suddaby, 2010).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a critical review of the neo-institutional literature as it relates to the research objectives of the current study. It demonstrated the value of this theory in
understanding how multiple factors combine to shape the actions of the individual entrepreneur in legitimation, and how in turn, these actions can provide insight into the pluralistic social realities of these actors. Specifically, adopting a neo-institutional lens of analysis enables the exploration of how different field incumbents provide divergent meanings to individual entrepreneurs and how this manifests in legitimation. Goals and concerns relating to sustainability pillars translate as logics in the context of legitimation. Conceptualising pillars as logics enables the examination of how logics shape legitimation as well as how legitimation reveals the logics present in the field, and subsequently the nature of sustainability in the field. As illustrated by RQ1 in Figure 3.1, this study aims to present an empirical study of how the pillars of sustainability can be examined as multiple field logics in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation which can extend legitimation literature in the context of these entrepreneurs (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011). It also aims to provide clarity to the debate surrounding the meaning of sustainability for these entrepreneurs in their organisational field, subsequently extending literature on the organisational field of sustainability (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Hoffman, 1999).

In addition, neo-institutional theory facilitates the exploration of the factors that enable individuals to respond to this diversity through legitimation. As illustrated by RQ2 in Figure 3.1, the current study argues that the constructs of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention characterise the entrepreneur’s agency and thus it is through the use of these constructs that entrepreneurs have the capacity to enact institutional work and strategic action in legitimation. In examining the role of agency in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, this study aims to extend current understandings of the role of agency in legitimation within pluralistic institutional contexts as well as research on individual-level enabling conditions for agency (Battilana & D’Aunno, 2009; DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Oliver, 1991).

By synthesising key concepts from the field logics and agency perspectives, this study avoids determinism in favour of an exploration of social construction of reality that gives due consideration to both structure and agency. In this way, the current study responds to the literature calling for multi-level research on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship by examining the interplay between field-level logics and micro-level factors of agency in the entrepreneurial legitimation process (e.g., DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Wahga et al., 2018).
Figure 3.1 presents the conceptual framework of this study which argues for the combined role of logic multiplicity and entrepreneurial agency in shaping the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. The conceptual framework provides a platform for addressing the research questions of the current study which have been presented in this chapter.

Research question one: *How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal sustainability pillars as locally embedded logics of the organisational field?*

Research question two: *How do prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability intention and sustainability orientation manifest as factors of entrepreneurial agency to shape sustainability-oriented entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field?*

**Figure 3.1 Conceptual Model**
Chapter Four: Methodology

4.1 Introduction
Having presented the review of the literature in the previous two chapters, this chapter will describe the methodology used to address the research questions of the study. These research questions will be presented in the next section. Following this, the philosophical perspectives and paradigms that underpin the methodology of the current research will be discussed. This will be followed by a justification on the use of qualitative approach including semi-structured interviews and documentation. The next sections will detail the specifics of the current study such as the background and selection of the participants, the data collection methods used and the analytical process. Finally, the validity and reliability of the methodology and the limitations of the framework used will be considered.

4.2 Research Questions
The current study is concerned with the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. By examining the legitimation activities of these entrepreneurs, the overarching aim of this study is to shed light on how both individual agency-level factors and meso field-level factors shape legitimation behaviour and enhance understanding of what is considered valuable and important in the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. After reviewing the literature, two research questions were chosen to address the overarching research aim of the study:

1. How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal the nature of dominant, locally embedded logics of the organisational field?

2. How do factors of entrepreneurial agency influence sustainability-oriented
entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field?

These questions aim to address current gaps in our understanding of the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in a way that accounts for both micro and meso institutional factors. Together, these research questions intent to comprehensively capture these dynamics in the empirical landscape.

4.3 Research Philosophies and Paradigms

In undertaking any research study, it is appropriate to present the basis for claiming to ‘know what we know’. A paradigm is “a combination of a metaphysical theory about the nature of the objects in a certain field of interest and a consequential method which is tailor-made to acquire knowledge of those objects” (Harré, 1987, p.3). A suitable paradigm should be selected and the researcher should be able to argue the suitability of this paradigm and maintain their position within it, despite the possible alternatives (O'Gorman & MacIntosh, 2015). Research paradigms are characterised through their ontology, epistemology and methodologies. They are therefore concerned with how we view reality and what can be known about it, what our relationship is to what can be known, and how can we find out about what we believe can be known (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Subsequently, the research design selected to address the research questions of a study is underpinned by philosophical assumptions regarding reality and knowledge (Saunders et al. 2007). The following sections will discuss why this study is underpinned by a social constructionist ontological stance, working within an interpretivist epistemological position.

4.3.1 Ontological Position

An ontological position refers to researchers’ assumptions about the best way of establishing the ‘truth’ of the world (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Kant was arguably one of the first to theorise that a thing could be considered as an object of experience, i.e. phenomenon, rather than as a thing in itself. Before this, objects were considered in isolation, separate, and unchangeable (Kant, 1998). O'Gorman and MacIntosh (2015) argue that therefore, “if human faculties of representation are used to study these phenomena, a priori conceptualisations can be envisaged” (p. 53). Several conflicting paradigms have emerged which attempt to serve as
the philosophical justification for methods employed in researching these phenomena. A disconcerting truth is that these different paradigms can be equally logical but at the same time contradictory, which leads to much confusion (O’Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015; Saunders, 2007). An understanding of which paradigm best fits the research questions of the study is an important first step in scientific investigation (Johnson et al., 2006).

Ontological assumptions can be broadly divided, and possibly oversimplified, as objective or subjective. An objective perspective asserts that reality is external, can be measured and tested and that the observer is independent of this reality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). A subjective ontology assumes that the perceptions of social actors shape reality and is defined as an “ontological position which asserts that social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by social actors” (Bryman, 2012, p. 29). Two opposing paradigms which attempt to explain how reality can be viewed and what we can know about it are positivism and phenomenology, with the latter alternatively known as social constructionism (Berger and Luckman, 1967). These paradigms reflect the conflicting configurations of objectivism and subjectivism and it is worth considering what distinguishes these paradigms from each other in order to understand how one might position their research within such paradigms. The distinguishing features are outlined in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Positivism versus Social Constructionism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Positivism</th>
<th>Social Constructionism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Observer:</strong></td>
<td>Must be independent</td>
<td>Is part of what is being observed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World is external and objective</td>
<td>World is socially constructed and subjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Human Interests:</strong></td>
<td>Should be irrelevant</td>
<td>Are the main drivers of science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanations:</strong></td>
<td>Must demonstrate causality</td>
<td>Aim to increase general understanding of the situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Research Progress</strong></td>
<td>Hypotheses and deductions</td>
<td>Gathering rich data from which ideas are induced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Through:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concepts:</td>
<td>Need to be defined so that they can be measured</td>
<td>Should incorporate stakeholder perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Units of Analysis:</td>
<td>Should be reduced to simplest terms</td>
<td>May include the complexity of whole situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generalisation Through:</td>
<td>Statistical probability</td>
<td>Theoretical abstraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sampling Requires:</td>
<td>Large numbers selected randomly</td>
<td>Small numbers of cases chosen for specific reasons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Easterby-Smith et al., 2008)

Positivists adopt an ontological belief that reality is external and objective. They believe that there is only one reality and that the observer is independent of this reality (Saunders et al., 2009). Contrary to this, the social constructionists adopt an ontological assumption that reality is socially constructed and thus, this subjective ontology sees facts as subject to the behaviours, attitudes, experiences, and interpretations of both the observer and the observed (Easterby-Smith et al., 1991; O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015). This approach has its roots in the intellectual traditions of hermeneutics and phenomenology (Saunders et al, 2007) and also relates to Weber’s theory of social organisational theory which focused on understanding how actions are shaped by both individual values and social context (Weber, 2009).

Organisations and their actors “confront a world of rapid change” (Gergen, 2015, p.193) and as such, they must constantly be in a state of interpretation to appropriately react to this change. This is crucial for legitimation, as successful legitimation is dependent on accurate interpretation of institutional requirements communicated through field logics.

Legitimacy is a socially constructed phenomenon as it exists as a result of relationships and interactions between actors (Suchmann, 1995) and actor’s interpretations of the meaning behind these interactions. In an organisational field, meaning is shared and thereby constitutes a taken-for-granted reality (Andrews, 2012). The interpreted meaning, in turn, shapes legitimation behaviour. As such, individual interpretations or perceptions of legitimacy and appropriate legitimation behaviour are influenced in part by the context of the organisational field, and therefore it is important to determine the logic make-up of the field in order to understand how they construct their legitimacy beliefs. Berger and Luckmann (1991) assert that concepts are constructed, yet they maintain that concepts correspond to something real in the world, such as how logics correspond to dominant institutions in the
field. This highlights the important point that, although many social constructionist view reality as subjective, some view society as existing both as objective and subjective reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; O'Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015). In this sense, they acknowledge that there is an observable reality that exists outside of human interactions (e.g. institutions) and that “socialisation takes place through significant others in the field who mediate the objective reality of society, render it meaningful and in this way it is internalised by individuals” (Andrews, 2012, p. 41). As put by O'Gorman and MacIntosh (2015) social constructionism and other perspectives are perhaps best understood as a way in which researchers can articulate their positions in relation to the two poles of objective and subjective ontologies, and that the justification of a position against opposing perspectives should be viewed as fuel for critical thinking and research.

As was discussed in the literature reviews, the current study argues that perceptions of legitimacy and appropriate legitimation behaviour are subjective in that they are also shaped by individual factors (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011) such as prior knowledge, orientation and intention which vary from person to person. Further, given that the strategic value of these factors in legitimation is determined by diverse audience’s socially constructed value system and that each individual entrepreneur is tasked with judging and reacting to this value system, it is important to approach the study of legitimation in a way that considers this subjectivity. Exploring legitimation therefore requires a subjective, interpretive approach to fully capture the socially constructed nature of the phenomenon. This is best viewed through an ontological lens that captures the experiences, beliefs, thoughts and feelings of actors (Gergen, 2015). Extant research within the field of entrepreneurship has supported a social constructionist perspective for exploring various individual level agentic aspects of the process of entrepreneurship (e.g. Aldrich and Martinez, 2010; Downing, 2005). Such an approach is effective in providing an understanding of the ‘why’ of human behaviour, revealing details of intention, reason and purpose that exist behind entrepreneurial action. The next section elaborates on the justification for an interpretive, social constructionist epistemological position.

4.3.2 Epistemological Position
A study that situates itself closer to an objective ontology might naturally find a positivist epistemological approach most appropriate, and is also likely to utilise a quantitative
methodology (O’Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015). A positivist epistemology typically favours explanations that demonstrate causality and believes that human interests should be irrelevant in comparison to concepts that can be defined and measured (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). Many social science researchers, particularly in business, utilise a positivist approach, modelling their approach on methods of the natural sciences (Lewis & Ritchie, 2003) as there are benefits of statistical significance and generalisability of findings. Despite this, such an approach would be unsuitable in generating rich data to conceptualise the complexity of dynamics underlying legitimation behaviour, as human behaviour should not be equated with observable, measurable elements of physical sciences (Saunders et al., 2007). In attempting to build theory on a relatively unexplored aspect of human behaviour, such as the combined role of field and agency factors in legitimation for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, an interpretive approach is most appropriate.

As is the case for an objective ontology, there is a natural sequence between ontology, epistemology and methodology for a study expressing a subjective ontology, as such a study tends to lead to more of an interpretivist approach and also tends to align best with a qualitative methodology (O’Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015). Proponents of an interpretivist approach “share the goal of understanding the world of lived experience from the perspective of those who live in it” (Andrews, 2012, p. 40). Essentially, interpretivists seek to understand the social world rather than just measure it. The term interpretivism is a somewhat broader term for social constructionism as discussed in relation to the ontological position of this study. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2008), a social constructionist epistemological position views humans as the main drivers of science and asserts that the researcher should see knowledge as socially constructed and subjective. An interpretivist epistemology sees knowledge as something that is revealed through “perspectives of different individuals, the context of the phenomenon under investigation and the contextual understanding and interpretation of the collected data” (O’Gorman and MacIntosh, 2015, p.65). In the current study, knowledge is viewed as resulting from the perspective of those entrepreneurs who have carried out legitimation. It these individuals who are best placed to discuss how they respond to multiple logics in legitimation, as well as how they strategically and substantively utilize individual factors as agency in the legitimation process.

As well as involving the study of knowledge and what constitutes knowledge, epistemology is concerned with “how we explain ourselves as knowers and how we arrive at our beliefs”
Researchers need to establish where they stand in relation to what is knowable and the effect this might have on the process and outcomes of research. As was seen in Table 4.1, Easterby-Smith et al., (2008) state that with a positivist approach, the researcher must be independent, whereas with a social constructionist approach, the researcher is part of what is being observed. Positivist, quantitative research does not enable the researcher to reflect on and interpret the data during the study, only after (Stake, 1995). For interpretivist research, the first step of analysis is the data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2006) and a positivist approach falls short in this regard. In addition, a positivist approach to social science research has been criticised for overstating the level of objectivity possible in research on the part of the researcher (Lewis & Richie, 2003).

Contrastingly, interpretivist researchers acknowledge the subjectivity of the researcher and believe that the interpretive role of the researcher is crucial (Blaikie, 2009). An interpretive approach argues that socially constructed phenomenon cannot be satisfactorily measured with objective, quantitative instruments from afar and that the researcher should be present in the interpretation of the experience and insights of the actors who have experienced the phenomenon (Easterby-Smith et al., 2008). This is true for the current study as the interpretation of the data began during data collection with the observation of how different entrepreneurs construct different perspectives and how this is dependent on the social context of the organisational field as well as their individual experience, knowledge and values. The nature of this study required the researcher to get close to the actors involved and to facilitate an open and flexible environment for data to emerge.

This interpretive approach also has its critics, and Babbie (1998), argues the reason “qualitative data seem richer in meaning is partly a function of ambiguity” (Babbie, 1998, p. 37). In social science research, each approach is a way of understanding and studying what constitutes knowledge and each can be argued as most appropriate for doing so depending on the unit of analysis and purpose of the research. The current study is thus underpinned by a social constructionist ontological stance, working within an interpretivist epistemological position, and the methodology used in the study must appropriately reflect this position. In the case of socially constructed phenomena such as legitimacy, understanding the process through which phenomena become reality, how this reality is reproduced and maintained and how this can be strategically enacted requires a fine-grained, qualitative approach (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007) so as to remain sufficiently open-ended and capture unexpected findings.
The following section elaborates on rationale for the selection of a qualitative approach involving semi structured interviews and documentation.

4.4 Research Methodology: A Qualitative Approach

Ensuring that the research design is built upon the philosophical assumptions and interpretive lens that inform the conceptual framework of the study is crucial (Creswell, 2013). The methodological approach that informs the research design should fit within the research plan which links the research questions, how to collect and analyse data, and how to present the findings (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 2015). It should be clear from this chapter that the research objectives of this study, as well as the ontological and epistemological position require the next step in the research to be the selection of a qualitative methodological plan.

As was identified in the review of the literature in chapters two and three, understanding on the combined role of field and individual agency factors in legitimation in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship is limited. Those who have examined this area recommend that empirical, particularly qualitative research is needed to progress this area and extend current theory (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011). In the case of socially constructed phenomena such as legitimacy, understanding the process through which phenomena become reality, how this reality is reproduced and maintained and how this can be strategically manipulated requires a fine-grained, contextual qualitative approach (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2015). This is perhaps one of the reasons why qualitative methodologies such as the case study approach and methods such as in-depth interviews are frequently used amongst scholars studying the complexities of legitimacy for traditional entrepreneurs (see e.g. Williams-Middleton, 2013; Zott and Huy, 2007) as well as those examining the complexities of sustainability-oriented entrepreneur behaviour (see e.g. O'Neil and Ucbasaran; 2016; Parrish, 2010; Pache and Santos, 2013).

Delbridge and Edwards (2013, p. 944) suggest that qualitative approaches are necessary to explore the “deeply embedded and conditioning effects of logics”, and that a qualitative approach is effective in examining pluralistic institutional environments where “local contexts condition the space for alternative meanings and practices to emerge.” Weber (2005) also pointed to the fact that existing research rarely specifies the logics or, in his terms, ‘cultural registers’ that are available to entrepreneurs, and that identifying and distinguishing among these logics requires an in-depth qualitative approach. Qualitative approaches enable
researchers to capture how individual entrepreneurs experience institutional plurality in the form of multiple logics. In addition, extant research within the field of traditional entrepreneurship has supported a qualitative approach for exploring various individual level agentic aspects of the process of entrepreneurship (see e.g. Aldrich and Martinez, 2010; Downing, 2005). Such an approach is effective in providing an understanding of the ‘why’ of human behaviour, revealing details of intention, reason and purpose that exist behind strategic action and are therefore appropriate in exploring the role of individual factors pertaining to the entrepreneur as agency in legitimation. Therefore, the generation of rich, qualitative data which captures individual experiences appears to be the most appropriate for gaining insight into the complex dynamics of sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation behaviour. The next section discusses the value of semi-structured interviews and documentation for the current study.

4.4.1 Semi-structured Interviews and Documentation

A semi-structured design was deemed most appropriate for this study as this would guide the participants to discuss theoretically relevant information while allowing them opportunity to introduce their own insights. Much of what differentiates a structured interview from a semi-structured interview lays in the amount of freedom given to participants regarding their replies to set questions and the role of the interviewer in facilitating this freedom (Bryman 2012). Semi-structured interviews are particularly suited to social constructionist research as they foster an environment where key information conveyed by participants can be probed further so as to achieve a deeper understanding of the meaning underlying phenomenon under investigation (Kvale & Brinkmann 2009).

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), when the genre of study is the “individual lived-in experience”, and when the focus of inquiry is “individuals”, the research strategy should be “in-depth interviews” (p. 66). This is as opposed to a case study which is most suited to the genre of society and culture, where the focus of inquiry is groups or organisations (Ibid). Interviews have proven effective in capturing the subjective experiences of individuals as they are suited to rich, fine-grained analysis of the ways in which human experience is shaped by individual values and assumptions (Boeije, 2002). This is the first reason semi-structured interviews were deemed to be an appropriate method of data collection for the current study. Secondly, in-depth semi-structured interviews have been deemed important in constructing
understandings of under-developed fields of research (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), such as is required in the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship regarding legitimation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O’ Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011). Finally, as Hermanowicz (2002, p.480) asserts, semi-structured interviewing “brings us arguably closer than other methods to an intimate understanding of people and their social worlds.” Similarly, Yin (1994, 2003) argues that semi-structured interviews are the best means through which researchers can gain access to participants, both in terms of proximity so as to observe physical behaviour, as well as access their experiences. Accordingly, this method is particularly appropriate when examining a social phenomenon within its real-life context, such as the interplay between logics and individual factors in the context of sustainability-oriented legitimation activities. While semi-structured interviews facilitate the researcher in capturing diverse experience through a flexible structure, they also bring a degree of reliability to qualitative research in a way that unstructured interviews might not.

Documents were also collected and analysed in this study to provide another data source for corroboration. Documentation can enrich qualitative research and offer valuable sources of data that are more independent from researcher bias than interviews (Piekkari et al, 2009). Documents can be particularly useful in developing a timeline of events with regards to the phenomenon of study, as well as providing an additional source of data that can be used for triangulation of results (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Documentation as a source of data collection has been utilised by extant research in examining entrepreneur legitimation (O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016; Zott & Huy, 2007), and has provided evidence of legitimation to back up entrepreneur interviews, as well as proved useful in capturing legitimation attempts made by entrepreneurs which were not mentioned during interviews. The process of documentation data collection and analysis for the current study will be described in section 4.7.4 and 4.8 respectively. The use of qualitative semi-structured interviews, observation and document analysis enables the researcher to elicit specific accounts from the entrepreneur through interviews, to set this against observations, as well as to compare this with competing or complementing evidence in relevant documentation.

In addition, as will be discussed in the following section, the purposive selection of participants from two award schemes predicted to be quite diverse with regards to which logics they adhere to, and subsequently what they value for legitimacy, facilitates a comparative approach to analysis (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin 2015). The comparative dimension
of analysis can generate theoretical insights as it clarifies whether an emergent finding is a feature across the entire sample, or whether it is idiosyncratic to one theoretically distinct group of participants (Eisenhardt, 1991). As logics are specific to their local context (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008), examining how they compare at two points in the field which are theoretically divergent can provide insight to the composition of logics across the field. Field actors often hold opposing perspectives on a field issue and it is important to capture these opposing views in order to analyse field dynamics (Hoffman, 1999). This can contribute to limited understandings of logics present in the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011). The following section describes the context in which the current study takes place by describing the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. This will inform the rationale for the selection of the participants, which will be outlined in the following section on the sampling strategy.

4.5 The Organisational Field of Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship in Ireland

As was discussed in chapter three, organisational fields centre on issues of interest - in this case sustainability (Hofmann, 1999). In the organisational field of sustainability-oriented enterprise, actors might pursue different sustainability activities and entrepreneurial missions might differ, but the debate and negotiation that occurs helps to shape the overall issue of sustainability and subsequently the field. The current research takes place in the context of the organisational field of sustainability-oriented enterprise in Ireland. As is recognised in the literature, this field is characterised by many different activities, but the shared sustainability interest of the actors leads them to operate within the same field. As a result, these actors react and respond to the same institutional environment characterised by multiple field logics. This section presents an overview of the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in Ireland and outlines the sectors and activities that make up the field.

4.5.1 Development of the Field

The organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in Ireland is relatively new and emergent and has been largely shaped by international discourse. Amongst international organisations, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has played
a leading role in shaping and promoting an economy and society focused on sustainability. UNEP believe in the power of the green economy to act as an “engine for growth, generating jobs and eradicating poverty”, defining it as “one that results in improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities” (UNEP, 2011: 1). One of the most recent developments came in September 2015 which saw the intergovernmental meeting convened by the UN in which seventeen Sustainable Development Goals were agreed upon (UN, 2015). Although ambitious, these important targets position business as a vital partner to achieving sustainable development and will subsequently inform the future of the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field in Ireland.

Additionally, much of what shapes the field in Ireland comes from the level of the European Union. Within Europe, since the 1970s, successive EU Environmental Action Programmes (EAPs) have spurred policy action for environmental and sustainability issues. These include EU policies for the green economy, resource efficiency, circular economy, industrial and product regulation (EPA, 2016). It was not until the end of the 1990’s that the European Commission (EC) began to guide member states towards reduction, reuse and recycling through a series of directives (EC, 2010). However, this reconstructed government policy in Ireland focused almost exclusively on how this change could be carried out by public and private sectors (Davies, 2012) and neglected to discuss the scope for individual sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs to take action. In addition, the EU has recently set ambitious energy efficiency and renewable energy targets for Ireland. For example, up to 75,000 Irish homes and businesses require energy efficiency upgrading if Ireland is to meet its targets by 2020, Ireland needs an additional 200-250MW of wind capacity to reach these targets, and 20% of all new cars sales in the next years leading up to 2020 need to be electric vehicles (SEAI, 2016). Again, there is a shortcoming in that much of this is focused largely on the combined economic and environmental pillars of sustainability with little attention to the social pillar. “Our economy can only expand within society’s ability to support it” (EPA, 2016) and the recognition of these shortcomings has led to the development of more comprehensive policy for sustainability in Ireland.

This international discourse has shaped a move towards multi-pillar thinking with regards to sustainability in Ireland. ‘Our Sustainable Future- a framework for sustainable development for Ireland’ released in 2012 is Ireland’s joined up approach to policy making for sustainable development (DJEI, 2012). This framework aims to address current gaps in the integration of
sustainability principles into Ireland’s public policy agenda, and introduces 70 new measures of sustainable development. This report utilises the three pillars philosophy and accounts for activities aligned with social sustainability such as social inclusion, sustainable communities, public health, education, communication and behaviour change. Another example is the report *Growth and Employment in the Green Economy in Ireland* which features case studies of best practice, with one programme being commended for its approach to “social sustainability issues such as health and nutrition and community and employee well being” (DJEI, 2013).

The role of the entrepreneur for Ireland’s sustainable development has also been highlighted in the literature and across a number of policy documents. For example, research has shown small and medium scale grassroots sustainability action to have significant positive economic, environmental and social impacts on community welfare and development in Ireland (Davies, 2012; Luckin and Sharp, 2003). At a national level, policies such as the Action Plan for Jobs and entrepreneurship support initiatives have worked towards positioning Ireland as a leading location for innovation and entrepreneurship (DBES, 2014). Further, the SEAI assert that there is plenty of scope for Irish entrepreneurs to take on sustainability challenges and pursue sustainability-oriented enterprise to help develop Ireland’s economy sustainably. The next section details the specific sectors and activities this covers.

### 4.5.2 Sectors and Activities

Many studies examining sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs have included entrepreneurs who engage in a range of different entrepreneurial activities (e.g. Davies, 2012; Muñoz and Dimov, 2015; O’Neil and Ucbasaran, 2016) rather than focusing on a specific sector or activity. This enables research on behaviour towards the common goal of sustainable development such as is carried out by this study. In Ireland, one term that is currently used across many policy documents to group together activity of this nature is the ‘green economy’, which “covers a wide range of sectors that have in common the objective of providing goods and services in a sustainable way that reduces impact on the environment and contributes to the circular economy. In Ireland, this covers activities such as sustainable food production, sustainable tourism, green financial services, green products and services, waste and water management, renewable energy and energy efficiency” (DJEI, 2013). However, this focuses mostly on those activities aimed towards environmental sustainability.
The inaugural National Sustainable Development Strategy for Ireland published in 1997 attempted to provide a more inclusive approach, but the more recent Our Sustainable Future’ from 2012 best highlights Ireland’s view on which activities account for sustainability-oriented activity. As well as some of those listed above, this report lists community development, education on mental health and other public health issues, as well as any jobs which help improve social inclusion of marginalised social groups in Ireland. Therefore, it is apparent that the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in Ireland spans a wide range of sectors and involves many types of activities, but at its heart is the desire to advance the country of Ireland through sustainability.

The Irish government argues that this field is “one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing markets in the world” and one which “presents a major opportunity for growth, competitiveness and employment creation for Ireland” (DJEI, 2012). Ireland’s sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs have an important role in shaping the organisational field and Ireland’s economy and future, and the current study aims to develop our limited understanding of the behaviours of these entrepreneurs in the context of their organisational field. The context provided here is useful in understanding the justification for participant selection which is presented in the following section.

4.6 Sampling
Analysing the underlying causes of both similarities and differences among theoretically distinct groups of participants can shed light on previously unexplored phenomena and provide insight for theory building (Eisenhardt 1989). For this reason, participant selection in the current study gave due consideration to the representativeness of the sample chosen, but also the probability of underlying variation along the dimensions of theoretical interest (Seawright and Gerring 2008). Firstly, in examining sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation behaviour in Ireland, the researcher had to source entrepreneurs who fit the definition of sustainability-oriented entrepreneur presented in the literature, and who are active within the organisational field of sustainability-oriented enterprise in Ireland. In addition, these entrepreneurs had to be in a position to discuss the process of legitimation. These criteria would facilitate the identification of a representative sample of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs who have engaged in legitimation behaviour in this organisational field.
With the above criteria in mind, it was decided that two sustainability awarding bodies in Ireland would offer an appropriate sample. There were several reasons for this. The first reason was that, as discussed in chapter two, sustainability as a term is conceptualised and understood in many different ways. Entrepreneurs may be inclined to define themselves and their entrepreneurial activities as sustainability-oriented, despite exhibiting significant divergence both from definitions in the literature and amongst each other. Sustainability award schemes offer clear definitions of sustainability and award those engaged in best practice in sustainability. For this reason, the two awarding bodies in Ireland that use the term sustainability both in their award titles and throughout their judging criteria were selected for this study. These are the ‘Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland Award Scheme’ and the ‘Social Entrepreneurs Ireland- Environment and Sustainability Award Scheme’. Selecting these awarding bodies provided a means of capturing some homogeneity amongst entrepreneurs which qualified them to be representative of a sample of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs who fit the definition provided in the literature by O'Neill et al., (2009).

Previous research on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs has also targeted entrepreneurs who have entered sustainability-related competitions (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015), as well as those who are members of sustainability-related networks (Davies, 2012) and who are associated with incubators encouraging sustainable enterprise (Moolhuijsen, 2011) for this reason.

The next reason for selecting sustainability award winners was that the winning of a sustainability award is assumed to be an indicator of having achieved a certain degree of legitimacy in the field and therefore, these entrepreneurs would be suitably placed to discuss the process of legitimation. Given this study’s focus on post-legitimation, this was a crucial criterion for the sample. These are the two awarding bodies in Ireland that award best practice specifically in sustainability and therefore, the winning of an award from these nationally recognised organisations implies that the entrepreneurs are correctly adhering to the expectations of the organisational field (DeClercq and Voronov, 2011), which is necessary for legitimation. The position of these awarding bodies as nationally recognised adjudicators of best practice in sustainability shows them as having influence on the parameters for legitimation behaviour towards this end. Exploring the legitimation strategies of these entrepreneurs should reveal what is currently expected in the organisational field of sustainability-oriented enterprise and thus, what combination of logics is currently dominant.
The two reasons outlined above account for the importance of utilizing these sampling criteria to select participants that will provide a representative sample.

However, participants were also selected due to their likely variation along dimensions of theoretical significance. This criterion enabled the exploration of the underlying causes of such variation along these dimensions. The logics of an institution are embedded in the values, interactions, and practices of individual actors (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). In this way, divergence in entrepreneurial practices such as in legitimation behaviour may represent different degrees of embeddedness of logics present in the field. Field actors often hold opposing perspectives on a field issue and it is important to capture these opposing views in order to analyse field dynamics (Hoffman, 1999). The selection of the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland Award Scheme (SEAI) and the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland- Environment and Sustainability Award Scheme (SEI) facilitate this. The research questions of this study reflect the acknowledgement within the literature of the likely logic multiplicity in organisational fields of sustainability-oriented enterprise, and the significance of this for legitimation behaviour. Initial impressions of these awarding bodies suggest that they represent institutional divergence with regards to the sustainability logics that they represent, which serves as contrasting environments for entrepreneurial legitimation behaviour.

First, the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland Award Scheme winners operates under the mission of playing “a leading role in transforming Ireland into a society based on sustainable energy structures, technologies and practices” (SEAI, 2014). According to the organisation website, they award high-performance enterprises who demonstrate ‘excellence’, ‘innovation’, and ‘energy efficiency’ in the field. All of this demonstrates that SEAI award scheme represent technology and commercial logics as well as an environmental logic. In contrast, the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland- Environment and Sustainability Award Scheme winners operate under the mission of providing support to ‘high-potential social entrepreneurs’ in Ireland. According to the organisation website, they award projects at all stages of development including “early-stage ideas” that might not exist in the form of a high performance enterprise and supports entrepreneurs with the greatest potential to bring about “positive change to Ireland’s most pressing social and environmental challenges” (SEI, 2016). This suggests that the SEI award scheme represent environmental and social logics. Furthermore, while SEAI entrepreneurs seem to be required to possess extensive prior
sustainability knowledge, SEI entrepreneurs appear likely to have varying degrees of prior sustainability knowledge in the field.

From superficial analysis, it appears that these two bodies represent institutional divergence in the organisational field of sustainability-oriented enterprise in Ireland and examining the legitimation behaviour of their participants may provide evidence of logic multiplicity. These bodies represent either adherence to or divergence from the archetypal notion of high-performance, innovative sustainable enterprise in Ireland (Davies, 2012). From the analytical perspective of neo-institutionalism, this divergence is of much importance, reflecting as it does the differential embeddedness of the multiple logics. In this way, the current study examines how these two groups of entrepreneurs differ with regard to the logics they adhere to, and the role this plays in legitimation.

The participants selected for this study were subsequently chosen on the basis of both their typicality within the experience of legitimation in the organisational field of sustainability-oriented enterprise as award-winners and their divergent representativeness of experiences regarding the presence and embeddedness of logics of this field. This variation along dimensions of theoretical interest offers scope for theoretical replication (Yin 1994, Seawright and Gerring 2008), and consequently provides opportunity for the generation of theoretical insight. Despite potentially representing adherence to different logics, the award winners of both schemes are members of the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in Ireland as they are all interested in the issue of sustainability. Examining their legitimation behaviour can provide insight on which logics are present and dominant in the field (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011). It may also provide insight into how individual factors of agency manifest differently in legitimation behaviour depending on which logics are present, or depending on the extent to which logics are embedded differently for the two groups.

Having outlined the rationale which underpinned the overall selection strategy of participants, the next section will elaborate on the awarding bodies, presenting the contextual background to the selection of participants from these awarding bodies in more depth.

4.6.1 SEAI Award Winners
4.6.1.1 Background
The Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) was established as Ireland’s national energy authority under the Sustainable Energy Act 2002. The SEAI is financed by Ireland’s EU Structural Funds Programme co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Union. The organisation is organised into seven departments and operates from a head office in Dublin and two regional offices in Cork and Sligo. SEAI's mission is to “play a leading role in transforming Ireland into a society based on sustainable energy structures, technologies and practices”. SEAI's actions aim to help advance Ireland to the “vanguard of the global green technology movement, so that Ireland is recognised as a pioneer in the move to decarbonised energy systems”. They operate under three strategic objectives:

- **Energy efficiency first**: implementing strong energy efficiency actions that radically reduce energy intensity and usage
- **Low carbon energy sources**: accelerating the development and adoption of technologies to exploit renewable energy sources
- **Innovation and integration**: supporting evidence-based responses that engage all actors, supporting innovation and enterprise for our low-carbon future

The SEAI has run a sustainability awards scheme since 2003 which aims to “encourage and reward excellence in all aspects of energy efficiency and renewable energy” (SEAI, 2016). Large, small and medium firms can apply and the categories, which vary annually, capture the different types and levels of sustainability activity in the field. The following section will outline these award categories which should help inform the type of sustainability-oriented activities that this sustainability award scheme values.

### 4.6.1.2 Categories

The current study chose to focus only on the awards since 2012. This was to increase the likelihood that the entrepreneurs behind the enterprises were still active in the sustainability-oriented enterprise field, as well as to ensure that entrepreneurs could discuss their relatively recent experience of legitimation. The awards since 2012 have mostly consisted of the same nine categories. Still, they do feature some variation to capture current trends in Ireland. For example, the 2015 awards had an additional Design category as it was the Irish Year of Design. The following table outlines the nine main categories of award since 2012.

| Table 4.2 SEAI Award Categories |

119
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Category</th>
<th>Overview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buildings</td>
<td>This award recognises entrants going beyond established best practice in the use of renewable energy supply or innovation in design building fabric or operational systems to improve energy efficiency and cost savings in all types of buildings. It is open to new build or building retrofit projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>This award recognises partnerships promoting sustainable energy practices at community level, delivering energy savings and socio-economic benefits. Projects can include energy-efficiency retrofits, renewable energy upgrades or behavioural change initiatives. It is open to organisations or groups across the public, private and voluntary sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>This reward recognises the development and advancement of new smart technologies, systems and approaches which have influenced and brought tangible benefits for sustainable energy use in Ireland. Criteria include energy savings and socio-economic impacts. It is open to all organisations, individuals, academia, start-ups, researchers and inventors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>This award recognises research in the development of new systems, services, products or approaches likely to impact on future demand reduction. Eligible entries should detail the problem researched, the research outcome and solution and the potential impact. It is open to all organisations, individuals, academia, start-ups, researchers and inventors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Business</td>
<td>This award recognised large commercial or industrial businesses with an annual energy spending exceeding 0.5 million euro. Entrants should demonstrate a track record for going beyond best practice in integrated technology management through technology upgrades, process solutions or staff engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business</td>
<td>This award recognises small and medium sized businesses with an annual energy spend of less than 0.5 million. Entrants should demonstrate a capacity to go beyond best practice in integrated energy management through technology upgrades, process solutions or staff engagement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Sector</td>
<td>This award recognises public sector organisations which go beyond best practice in new or upgrade technology deployments, management solutions or staff engagement implemented in support of organisational goals. Projects including low-energy buildings and effective integration of renewable technologies are also eligible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>This award recognises collaborations between organisations which have resulted in sustainability solutions that go beyond best practice. Through sharing resources, lessons learned and best</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
practice, collaborative efforts should increase competitiveness, increase energy efficiency, benefitting the local environment and local communities. In the development of new systems, services, products or approaches likely to impact on future demand reduction.

| Leadership | This award celebrates individuals, teams or organisations nominated across the public, private or voluntary sectors. Entrants will have demonstrated leadership and ambition in advancing sustainable energy in their organisation or community over a prolonged period. Among the criteria are the degree of influence and the lasting benefits of their actions. Successful finalists will be put forward to an online public vote. |

In addition to these categories, the 2012 and 2013 awards featured the Environment category which in 2014 became the Built Environment category. This category essentially refers to how efficiency and energy savings meet the renewable energy demands of the current building regulations and has since been adapted to form the buildings category as outlined in the above table. They also featured an additional Electric Ireland sponsored Ambition category in 2014 which awarded highly ambitious and innovative energy saving solutions. In 2015 they introduced the Design category which they retained for the 2016 awards. This category awarded “something useful, useable and beautiful. It recognised products or projects which best demonstrate the vital intersection of creative design with technically sound sustainable energy solutions for maximum user appeal”. The next section will detail the overarching principles that inform the judging criteria for this sustainability award scheme which should help to describe the context in which this study takes place.

4.6.1.3 Overarching principles of judging criteria

A number of overarching principles are listed in the guidance document for applicants to the award scheme. These principles describe the qualities and aspects of the enterprise that are most important for the applicants to demonstrate in their applications. These principles are outlined below so as to enhance understanding of the type of entrepreneur and the type of activity that this organisation awards:

**Benefits**- How have the actions which led to the development of projects, systems or approaches impacted on or likely to impact on future energy use? There must be an
understanding of why the related actions occurred and of the expected energy demand reduction identified.

**Innovative and replicable** - Initiatives must have significant potential that can be followed by others and that will encourage the widespread uptake of energy efficiency.

**Energy demand reduction** - Teams or individuals should deliver programmes that can demonstrate potential for significant reduction in energy demand. How were your impacts and benefits measured and reported?

**Implementation approach** - Applicants should demonstrate how the initiatives have been carried out in an efficient and effective manner, with buy-in and support from the wider organisation.

It can be seen that the focus is specifically on innovative and ambitious solutions for energy demand reduction and that this organisation particularly awards solutions that have widespread impacts and benefits. This provides us with an insight into the judging criteria of this organisation and subsequently, the types of behaviours that could be valued for legitimacy. Entrepreneurs are expected to, for example, demonstrate highly innovative solutions to reducing inefficiencies, and the use of the term inefficiency could relate to both energy and economic efficiencies, possibly indicating the presence of environmental and economic logics. The current study examines the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs for evidence of what is valued for legitimacy in the field, and which field logics these sources of legitimacy adhere to (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). The following section will describe how the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland differs in this way.

**4.6.2 SEI Award Winners**

**4.6.2.1 Background**
Social Entrepreneurs Ireland (SEI) was founded as a programme of The One Foundation in 2004, a privately funded philanthropic organisation in Ireland. In 2007, to facilitate the continued expansion of activities, SEI was set up as an independent organisation based in Dublin. The organisation is funded by private foundations, corporate partners, and individuals, and is a registered company with a charitable status. The mission of SEI is “to
enable high potential social entrepreneurs to maximise their potential impact in addressing social issues across Ireland through a combination of directed support, developing their networks and celebration and communication of their achievements” (SEI, 2016). They operate under three guiding principles:

- **Our most important asset is our social entrepreneurs. They are best positioned to determine their own needs and priorities. Therefore, our activities and inputs will be governed by our network of social entrepreneurs and our aim will be to facilitate rather than direct the development of their projects.**

- **We will take a leadership position in promoting social entrepreneurship within Ireland while at the same time acknowledging that we are learning as we go, we do not have all the answers and we are open to advice and constructive criticism from all with an interest in this sector.**

- **We will be fully accountable for the effective use of resources given to us.**

The SEI welcome applications from entrepreneurs involved in projects at various stages of development, with a focus on those entrepreneurs who have the greatest potential to bring positive change to Ireland’s most pressing social and environmental challenges. This awarding body specifies that applicants must be the main driver and lead decision maker of the project and should act in an entrepreneurial manner. Different categories of award capture the different types of sustainability activity in the field. The following section outlines these categories, highlighting the focus on the Environment and Sustainability category, as this should help inform the type of sustainability-oriented activities that this sustainability award scheme values.

### 4.6.2.2 Categories

Whereas the SEI previously offered the separate streams of Elevator and Impact awards which reflect different stages of project development, they have now combined these and offer up to eight awards across different areas. The SEI distinguish between what they refer to as eight different sectors, and these are **Community and Active Citizenship, Disability, Education and Learning, Environment and Sustainability, Mental and Physical Health, New Communities and Travellers, Older People, and finally Young People and Children.** Each category represents an area in which individual entrepreneurs can make an impact for society in social and environmental ways. However, as the current study has a specific focus on sustainability, participants were selected only from the category of **Environment and**
Sustainability. Unlike the SEAI, the SEI do not provide descriptions to applicants of the different categories of awards but rather, applicants must indicate which sector of award they fit within, and this is verified by SEI.

The selection of the Environment and Sustainability category facilitated a comparison between entrepreneurs who have won awards from the two schemes awarding sustainability specifically. Hence comparisons could be made between how the conceptualisation of sustainability differs between these two schemes, and how this reflects similarity or divergence amongst field logics across the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. The next section will detail the judging criteria for this award which will provide more detail on the background of the participants of this study.

4.6.2.3 Judging Criteria
A number of criteria are listed in the applicant guide describing what the judges of the SEI are looking for in applicants, both in terms of their project and their qualities as entrepreneurs. These five criteria are listed below in order to demonstrate the type of entrepreneurship valued by the SEI:

- **We’re looking to support social entrepreneur-led projects** - The person applying must be the main driver and lead decision maker with a project already up and running. They should act in an entrepreneurial manner and be open to learning and developing themselves through our Awards Programme. We accept applications from individuals and two person partnerships.

- **A societal challenge** - There are a lot of problems and issues to be addressed in Ireland so we’re looking for social entrepreneurs who can clearly demonstrate why the issue they are addressing is of particular importance. The challenge that their project is addressing can be either social or environmental.

- **A new or better way** - The people we support don’t simply replicate what is already being provided but instead seek to approach issues from a different angle, improving on what is already being done or introducing a completely new solution altogether. They should be able to clearly articulate what makes their solution unique.

- **Mission driven & effective** - All of our applicants should be leading projects that are primarily focused on the mission of solving a social or environmental problem. You
should also be able to provide us with evidence that what you do actually works in addressing the problem you’ve identified, proving that it has a positive impact.

- **Desire & potential to scale their impact** - Our Awardees always think big, ultimately looking to change the way the issue they are addressing is dealt with in Ireland. *Having the desire and potential to scale is a vital aspect of our review process.*

Scaling impact can be achieved in various ways, for example scaling the reach of the organisation (geographic, demographic etc.), scaling breadth or depth, or providing a model that can be replicated.

(SEI, 2017)

In the guide for applicants, there is a strong emphasis on mission and impact that encourages entrepreneurs to describe how their own values and goals are suitable to this award competition. From the categories of award as well as the judging criteria, it can be seen that overall, the SEI values activities that fit mainly within the social pillar of sustainability, such as community development and mental health. Additionally, they clearly value many activities that fall under the environmental pillar in areas such as sustainable transport and land conservation. Despite use of the term ‘sustainability’ in the category title, the activities of previous winners within the category of Environment and Sustainability demonstrate that there is significantly more emphasis on the environmental pillar than the social pillar of sustainability within this category. Therefore, the examination of the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs is expected to reveal the presence of a dominant environmental logic. This is similar to the SEAI, however, the SEI does not appear to value high performance and efficiency in the same way as SEAI, nor an economic logic. Further, the overall emphasis of this awarding body on the social pillar of sustainability might impact on entrepreneur legitimation behaviour, and this would be in contrast to the SEAI who do not appear to value activity that falls under the pillar of social sustainability. These potential similarities and differences will be examined through a comparison of the legitimation behaviour of both groups of entrepreneurs.

### 4.6.3 Purposive Sampling Strategy

Having described the background of the awarding bodies used to target participants, the current section will elaborate on how specific participants from both awarding bodies were chosen through the sampling strategy of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest that
the sampling strategy should be relevant to both the overarching conceptual framework and the research questions of the study. They also suggest that the sample should be suitable and likely to generate rich descriptions of the phenomena under investigation. In accordance with these guidelines, a purposive research sampling strategy was pursued to capture sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation at points where it was most likely to be experienced, and in order to increase the likelihood of variation along theoretically significant dimensions, which should provide rich description of the phenomenon of legitimation. In the following section, this approach is described in more detail including the specific selection criteria that were employed.

A purposive sampling strategy is most suited to qualitative research which is informed by an existing body of theory upon which the research questions are based (Miles and Huberman 1994). The main participants of the study were the entrepreneurs who had won national sustainability awards and who had thus carried out legitimation behaviour. Suitable entrepreneurs from each awarding body were chosen using two selection criteria based on the principles of purposive sampling (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Yin, 2003). Due to the individual entrepreneur-level focus of the current study, the first criterion was that the entrepreneur fit the definition of a ‘sustainability-oriented entrepreneur’ as defined in the literature. This was assessed by explaining the definition to the potential participants and asking them to confirm that they are indeed the founders of enterprises which aim to contribute to the sustainable development of the social-ecological system. For the SEI, all 16 award winners were individual entrepreneurs as this was a requirement of the award scheme. However for the SEAI, many of the 47 award winners since 2012 were not individual award winners but instead, representatives of large national and multinational organisations. These selection criteria resulted in 18 suitable entrepreneurs from the SEAI and 16 entrepreneurs from the SEI from which a sample could be selected.

Secondly, it was important that the entrepreneurs all operated within the same organisational field and thus were all reacting and responding to the same institutional environment and subsequently the same logics. Therefore, the next selection criterion was that entrepreneurs had to be based in Ireland so as to minimize variation due to environmental factors outside those under investigation (Zott and Huy, 2007). This criterion was facilitated by the awarding bodies themselves in that an eligibility criterion was that award winners operate within the country of Ireland. In addition to interviews with entrepreneurs, two interviews were carried
out with stakeholders or legitimacy-granters. The justification for the inclusion of these interviewees will be elaborated on in section 4.7 which outlines the process of data collection. The following section provides an overview of all participants.

### 4.6.4 Overview of Participants

In total, 25 participants were interviewed. This was made up of 21 entrepreneur interviews, 2 contextual interviews with the awarding bodies, and 2 stakeholder interviews. The table below provides a more detailed breakdown of these interviewees. For example, it describes both the background of the entrepreneurs and aspects of their enterprise such as whether they are Business to Business (BtoB) or Business to Consumer (BtoC). It also includes information on whether they are a small (<50 employees), medium (between 50 and 249 employees) or large (>250 employees) enterprise (Enterprise Ireland, 2007). Pseudonyms were assigned

**Table 4.3 SEAI Entrepreneur Interviewees**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Enterprise Mission and Type</th>
<th>Year Established and Size</th>
<th>Exporting</th>
<th>Documents Analysed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.Killian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Marine renewable energy</td>
<td>2005 Medium</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Website, press articles, brochure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BtoB Products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.Eammon</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sustainable heating systems</td>
<td>1977 Medium</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Website, manuals and brochures available online, press releases available online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BtoB Products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.William</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sustainable wastewater treatment</td>
<td>2013 Small</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Website, blog, press releases, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BtoB Product</td>
<td></td>
<td>brochures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Tom</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Energy Management, BtoB Service</td>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Nick</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sustainable property development, BtoC Product</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Noel</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sustainable transport, BtoC Service</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Warren</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hydrokinetic energy, BtoB Service</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Eric</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Renewable energy, BtoB Products</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Evan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Wastewater Treatment, BtoB Products</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>Large</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Dan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Energy saving model, BtoB service</td>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.4 SEI Entrepreneur Interviewees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Enterprise Mission and Type</th>
<th>Year Established and Size</th>
<th>Exporting</th>
<th>Documents Analysed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Charlotte</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Biodiversity BtoC Service</td>
<td>2002 Small</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3 brochures, 2 leaflets, website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Frank</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Sustainable Living BtoC Service</td>
<td>2007 Small</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Website, blog, 2 leaflets, press releases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Nathan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>EcoTourism BtoC Service</td>
<td>2007 Small</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Website, blog, brochure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Nora</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Land conservation/biodiversity BtoC Service</td>
<td>2007 Small</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Website, blog, 2 leaflets, social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Dawn</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Ethical fashion BtoC Products</td>
<td>2008 Small</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Blog, magazine article, posters, social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Beth</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Sustainable transport BtoC Service</td>
<td>2008 Small</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Website, press releases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Helen</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Repurposing materials BtoC Products</td>
<td>2006 Small</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Laura</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Ethical fashion</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Website,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Awarding Body</td>
<td>Relationship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Programmes Manager</td>
<td>SEAI</td>
<td>Representative from awarding body</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultant with ENMS</td>
<td>SEAI</td>
<td>Collaborator of award winner (Stakeholder)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy and Innovation Manager</td>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>Representative from awarding body</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land owner</td>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>Client of award winner (Stakeholder)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.7 Data Collection

This section details the data collection process. Firstly the process of designing the interview schedule will be described, followed by a description of the piloting phase, the semi-structured interview phase and the documentation.

#### 4.7.1 Interview Schedule

The first step in the data collection process was designing the data collection instrument. A semi-structured interview schedule was created to capture information from interviewees that
would address the research questions of the study. A semi-structured design was deemed most appropriate for the current study as this would guide the interviewees to discuss theoretically relevant information while allowing them opportunity to introduce their own insights. Interviews took on a loosely structured format, enabling the participants to make decisions regarding which information to elaborate on. The main source of data in this study is the accounts of entrepreneurs whose legitimation behaviour is the subject of analysis, and it is assumed that “people constructing their organisational realities are knowledgeable agents, namely that people in organisations know what they are trying to do and can explain their thoughts, intentions and actions” (Gioia et al., 2013, p. 17). Although the interviews were loosely structured, an interview schedule was designed to ensure the collection of data that would address the study’s research questions.

The questions in the interview schedule consisted of both questions designed by the researcher and questions adapted from existing literature. Firstly, it was decided that questions would be ordered along the business life cycle, accounting for the initiating stage, the start-up phase and the growth/survival stage. This would enable the researcher to capture when and where factors under investigation play a role in legitimation. Specifically, it accounts for the theoretical difference between gaining and maintaining legitimacy which is an important point of distinction in the legitimacy literature (Suchman, 1995) and an important antecedent of legitimation behaviour. Next, questions were designed to address research question one: How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal the nature of locally embedded logics of the organisational field? Interview questions were somewhat based on previous literature on logics and legitimation (Moolhujsen, 2011; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002; Zott & Huy, 2007). However, questions were designed by the researcher to capture data on the logic adherence of the main stakeholders, the logic adherence of dominant institutions and evidence of logics in legitimation strategies. A similar approach was taken in designing interview questions to address research question two: How do factors of entrepreneurial agency influence sustainability-oriented entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field? Questions on the specific factors of prior knowledge, orientation and intention were largely adapted from Muñoz and Dimov (2015). Additionally, questions were also designed by the researcher to elicit responses on the strategic role of these factors in legitimation.
Following this, interview questions were mapped back to the research questions of the study to ensure that questions were not repetitive and to ensure that each research question was sufficiently represented (See Appendix D for map). Having identified the key points from the extant literature that would form the basis of the interview questions, relevant reference points for individual participants were also considered. This refers to the way in which the researcher reworded the interview questions to improve the flow, make the interview more conversational and avoided the use of theoretical terms that the participants might not be familiar with. The conversational, fluid nature of the interviews was an important aspect of capturing the meaning behind experiences described by participants. The resultant interview schedule was tested in a pilot phase and was subsequently modified. The interview schedule was also reassessed halfway through data collection and it was decided that it was still appropriate, although it was noted that additional questions on probing for examples had naturally occurred. The final interview schedule is included in the Appendix C.

4.7.2 Pilot Interviews
Before the study sample was invited to participate in the current study, the researcher carried out four pilot interviews with local sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in order to test the interview schedule. In order to effectively test the questions, it was deemed important that the pilot interviewees meet the sample selection criteria of the study as outlined in section 4.6, i.e. that they fit the definition of a sustainability-oriented entrepreneur and that they were all based in Ireland. With these criteria in mind, the researcher searched online using the key terms “sustainability”, “enterprise”, “entrepreneur” and “Ireland”. The researcher came across three websites listing sustainability-oriented organisations. A list of appropriate entrepreneurs was developed by examining individual enterprise websites and other available online information about the entrepreneur. Individuals who were the founders of sustainability-oriented enterprises operating in Ireland were selected. Potential interviewees were contacted via email (See Appendix A for email correspondence) and four pilot interviews were carried out between October 2015 and January 2016. These interviews, along with six of the interviews conducted from the main sample of award winners, were the subject of a paper published in the International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research in July 2017 titled ‘Exploring Strategic Agency in Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneur Legitimation’. This paper focused solely on research question two of the current study, and demonstrated the value of the interview questions and wider research design for the thesis.
These four pilot interviewees were all based in the Galway region, with two working in the field of conservation, one in community development and one in sustainable transport. These interviews enabled the researcher to test the understanding of interviewees regarding the use of key terms such as legitimacy and logics. The pilots demonstrated the effectiveness of the interview questions in generating data on organisational field-level factors such as who the main stakeholders are in the sustainability field and what rules and regulations exists in the field. However, the researcher noted some difficulty in eliciting responses on legitimation activity. This is perhaps due to not having a measure of their experiences with legitimacy, such as the achievement of an award. This provided justification to the researcher regarding the suitability of award winners as the main participants. Additionally, the researcher found that the individual constructs of orientation and intention required further explanation for interviewees. These adjustments were made to the interview schedule before the main data collection phase.

4.7.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

As discussed, semi-structured interviews were used as the main data collection method. Having designed the interview schedule and having tested it in the pilot phase, the next step was to contact suitable interview participants from each awarding body. Contact had been made with a representative of each awarding body during the pilot phase. The researcher decided that it would be best to contact these individuals again and ask if they would be willing to help with contacting suitable interviewees. The representative of SEAI obliged and emailed all suitable interviewees with details of the nature and background of the study, including instructions on how to get involved (see Appendix B). After several email and phone communications to elaborate further on the details of the study, 11 of the 18 suitable interviewees participated in the study. The representative of SEI did not respond and therefore, the researcher contacted suitable interviewees via email and LinkedIn with a cover letter detailing the nature and background of the study and how to get involved. As well as this, the researcher included the intended outputs of the study, the value of the participant’s contribution and reassurance with respect to anonymity. The researcher also attended a roadshow and a conference in order to recruit suitable interviewees. Following this, 10 of the 16 suitable interviewees participated in the study.

Each interview lasted between thirty minutes and one hour (45 minutes average) and all but
two interviews were recorded. At the beginning of the interviews, participants were provided with definitions of key themes in order to stimulate more in-depth responses (Saunders et al., 2009). Another technique used at the beginning was to ask a simple, open-ended question about the general activities of the participant in their capacity as entrepreneur. This proved useful in establishing a degree of comfort with the participants. In addition to these open-ended questions, directive questions, grand tour questions and prompts were used (Leech, 2002). Throughout the interview process, the researcher was conscious of the interview setting and the non-verbal communication of the participant. When possible, interviews were held on site in participant’s own work environment. This was done so as to enable the researcher to gain more context for the interview and observe how the participants interact with their work environment, and often resulted in the researcher being introduced to colleagues and shown around the site. Additionally, this facilitated a degree of comfort and thus openness for the participants (Saunders et al., 2007). Observation is also a useful means of capturing how humans construct accounts of experiences and the meaning they attribute to different aspects (Jorgensen, 1989). The researcher noted if a specific term used appeared to trigger a participant response and noted the general observed attitude of the participant in relation to different aspects of the interview schedule. Each participant was informed of their right to stop the interview or to request that their data be removed from inclusion in the study at any stage. In addition, several participants expressed a desire to remain anonymous and because of this, the researcher decided to choose pseudonyms for all participants to facilitate anonymity. Pseudonyms rather than numerical representations were chosen by the researcher using so as to maintain a degree of respect for the human, which is in line with qualitative, social constructionist research (Kaiser, 2009).

Subsequent to the key entrepreneur interviewees, it was decided during the data collection process that the study might benefit from a number of stakeholder interviews as stakeholders or legitimacy-granters have been interviewed in previous studies of both sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation (O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016) and traditional entrepreneur legitimation (Williams-Middleton, 2013; Zott & Huy, 2007), to provide more context to the entrepreneur accounts and act as a basis of triangulation of data. However, as was the case in previous studies (e.g. O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016; Stringfellow et al., 2014), the researcher faced difficulty in identifying suitable stakeholder interviewees who were willing to discuss the legitimacy of the entrepreneurs while maintaining good relationships with the entrepreneurs and the awarding bodies. In addition, as this study aims to examine the values
and beliefs of these entrepreneurs, perhaps stakeholders (i.e. customers, competitors, suppliers) would not be able to provide much insight into the role of these agency factors in legitimation. Rather than view this as an issue, the researcher acknowledged that research focusing solely on the legitimation behaviour of legitimacy-seekers also exists (Stringfellow et al., 2014) and this has been highlighted as an important yet underdeveloped area of research within the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature (O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016). It was decided that a small number of stakeholder interviews would be carried out to test whether they could add to the current study.

Several entrepreneurs from each awarding body were contacted and asked to suggest suitable stakeholders who would be in a position to discuss their legitimation behaviour in an interview. As predicted, the response rate was poor and just one stakeholder from each agreed to interview. Participants were asked questions regarding what is important for legitimacy in the field, how sustainability is defined and to assess the importance of factors under investigation in the current study. In addition, the two contextual interviews carried out with representatives of senior management from each awarding body which took place prior to the main data collection phase also provided perspective from the legitimacy-granters in the organisational field. These interviews provided context to the entrepreneur accounts and would helped to triangulate the data. Still, the predicted limitations arose which provided justification to the researcher’s decision to focus on entrepreneur interviews as the key data source. The next section outlines the process of collecting documentation from each entrepreneur participant.

**4.7.4 Documentation**

To provide another basis of data triangulation, a variety of document types were collected from each participant. Atkinson and Coffey (1997) refer to documents as “social facts”, which are “produced, shared, and used in socially organised ways” (p. 47). They are also defined as text and images that exist independent of a researcher’s intervention (Bowen, 2009). Whilst arranging interviews, the researcher would request that the interviewee provide any documentation that they use to communicate externally to stakeholders. This included brochures, leaflets and manuals. In addition, the researcher collected publicly available documentation in the form of company websites, blogs written by and documenting the activities of the entrepreneur, social network sites, media coverage, and customer testimonials. Table 4.3 includes a summary of the type of documents gathered for each
entrepreneur. Information in the documentation is not taken as fact, but as evidence of strategies for persuasion (Ruebottom, 2013). Documentation collected provided evidence of legitimization and provided a basis of triangulation for the entrepreneur interviews. The following section will describe the process of analysis undertaken in this study.

4.8 Data Analysis

“The analytic procedure entails finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesising data” (Bowen, 2009). Miles and Huberman (1994) describe data analysis as being consistent of the organisation of rendered data for the purposes of categorisation, and the drawing of conclusions relevant to the research objectives. For the current study, a social constructionist thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was carried out. The process of analysis that took place can be divided into seven phases which are based on the guidelines for thematic analysis presented by Braun and Clarke’s (2006). These authors highlight that a social constructionist approach to thematic analysis considers that meaning and experience are socially produced and reproduced and considers the institutional actors that shape and enable the entrepreneurs’ accounts. They assert that a social constructionist thematic analysis must move beyond individual psychologies and consider the “socio-cultural contexts and structural conditions that enable the individual accounts that are provided” (p. 14). Given that the strategic value of constructs pertaining to the individual entrepreneur in legitimization is determined by the audience’s socially constructed value system and the entrepreneur is tasked with judging and reacting to this value system, it is important to approach the analysis of this topic in a way that considers this audience. Further, the current study explicitly considers the role of the socio-cultural context in entrepreneurial behaviour through examining the role of logics in legitimization.

The first step in the analytical process was for the researcher to become familiar with the large quantity of data collected and to organise the data in a way that would aid analysis. Interviews were transcribed and initial impressions were noted. These transcripts were read and reread both as individual participants and as participants from either SEAI or SEI. All interview transcripts were organised using the NVivo Qualitative Data Analysis Software and a folder was created for each group of participants. Software like NVivo can provide many benefits to the researcher in data analysis if used rigorously (Bazeley, 2006; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2011). A particular benefit of NVivo to this study is its ability to efficiently
compare categories in relatively short amount of time (Bazeley, 2006). Observational notes taken during the interview process, including notes from the two non-recorded interviews, and notes taken during transcription were then manually converted into electronic form and included in both folders as ‘Memos’, a function of the software. Finally, the documents that had been collected were all read so as the researcher could become more familiar with them and also so as the researcher could condense the documents into relevant excerpts, quotations, or entire passages. As Bowen (2009) asserts, it is not enough to determine the existence and accessibility of documents but also “the authenticity and usefulness of particular documents, taking into account the original purpose of each document, the context in which it was produced, and the intended audience” (p. 38). Relevant documents were either uploaded directly or converted into electronic form and uploaded to the relevant folders in NVivo. The result of this was two separate NVivo folders representing either SEAI or SEI, containing all of the data collected for each. Table 4.6 illustrates the above as the first three phases of data analysis.

Table 4.6 Data Analysis Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Manually transcribed interviews, noting initial impressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Condensed documentation guided by questions such as “who created the source?”; “where and when was the source produced?”; “who is the intended audience?”; “what key message is the source aiming to convey?” and “how might this source assist in legitimation?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Organised interview transcripts, memos and selected documentation in NVivo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Coded across all data by reading and re-reading and noting interesting features of the data relating to the research aims, resulting in 93 first-order descriptive codes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>These codes were revisited to determine if they could be grouped together in ways that would represent theoretical divergence or similarity between the two groups. This resulting in 31 second-order analytical codes. This remained data-driven for RQ1 but became theory-driven for RQ2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Revisited the literature to determine the themes present across existing codes, resulting in eight subthemes and four overarching themes for RQ1, and seven subthemes with three overarching themes for RQ2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reviewed the themes, including reviewing of labels and how the themes join together to tell the story of the data, and decided how the findings should be presented.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next phase, according to Braun and Clarke (2006) is generating initial codes. In the current study, phase 4 of analysis was generating first-order coding which was descriptive in nature and aimed to categorise what was ‘going on’ across all sources of data. The result of this phase of analysis was 93 first order data-driven codes that systematically captured the descriptive story of the data. Although data-driven, the researcher notes that those features of the data that appeared as interesting and relevant parts of the story to the researcher are those which relate to the two research questions of the study. It should also be mentioned here that data pertaining to research question two had been previously analysed as part of a paper publication by the researcher for 6 of the 21 entrepreneur interviews from the main sample. However, when revisiting this data, the process of collectively analysing all 21 entrepreneur interviews, the comparison of the two awarding bodies, as well as considering the role of logics as per research question one resulted in a different coding approach.

Following this, an additional round of coding was carried out and the first-order codes were re-examined in order to determine if they could be further grouped together, as described in phase 5 of Table 4.6. This was a more analytical phase of coding as the researcher began to recognise ‘potential themes’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Second order codes for research question one on how logics can be identified in legitimation remained close to the data. For research question two on the role of entrepreneur constructs as agency, second order codes began to reflect concepts in extant literature. This resulted in 31 second-order codes that captured specific behaviours, drivers and outcomes of behaviours, perceived challenges and meanings relating to the constructs under investigation. In this phase, the researcher attempted to capture the ‘why’ of human behaviour, including details of intention, reason and purpose that exist behind strategic and substantive legitimation actions. These codes were compared between the two groups of participants to determine which were recurrent or contradictory, and thus which might be theoretically significant. In this way, phase 5 involved analytical coding informed by the theory.

The next phase of analysis has been referred to by Pratt (2009) as when you “find out what the literature says (e.g., enfold theory)” (p. 859). Braun and Clarke (2006) discuss how there is not one correct time to revisit the literature, but for theory-driven research in which research questions have been formed before analysis, the literature may be consulted throughout. In the current study, while research questions subtly informed the analysis from phases 1 to 5, phase 6 involved explicit integration of theory and emergent coding. The
The second-order codes were considered in relation to how they fit together within the theoretical framework of this study. For example, the first order codes of ‘future funding goals’ and ‘profit goals’ were grouped as ‘financial goals’ in the second round of analytical coding, none of which represent extant theoretical concepts. These were ultimately interpreted as being representative of the sub-theme of an ‘economic logic’ which fit within the overarching theme of a ‘mainstream-economic-oriented logic’ (see Figure 4.1). Through the iterative process of comparison both between each participants and between the two groups of participants, as well as between the potential themes and the literature, important insights emerged which constitute the overarching themes of the current study.

Braun and Clarke (2006) advise that the final step in analysis, phase 7, be the reviewing of themes in relation to coded raw data, revisiting data labels, and ultimately ‘producing the report’. Overarching themes were mapped back to the raw data in the form of a ‘data-structure’ (Gioia, 2013) (see Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.2). This illustrative technique is useful for communicating a clear progression from raw data to subsequent coding phases and resultant themes, a task which can be difficult with extensive, rich qualitative data (Langley & Abdallah, 2011). Defining and naming themes follows the reviewing of themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) view this as ongoing analysis as it involves refining the specifics of each theme and the overall story the analysis tells. In addition, Pratt (2009) asserts that this story of the data should be clear from headings, or themes, that join together coherently to tell this story. The results of the analysis should be presented to readers in a way that is consistent with the logic of the research design and analysis. For this study, themes join together to collectively inform the research questions and reflect theoretically important aspects, surprising points of the data, points common across the data and points where the two groups of participants diverge. Themes and the connections between them should reveal new knowledge about the world, from the researcher’s interpretation of the perspectives of the participants in the study.

Following Eisenhardt’s approach to the presentation of qualitative data (Brown & Eisenhardt, 1997; Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), illustrative evidence to support key findings will be presented in ‘construct tables’ in Chapters Five and Six to accompany the narrative in the text on the story of the data. Quotes from interviews with entrepreneurs as well as context descriptions (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Zott & Huy, 2007) will be presented in these construct tables under each theme and subtheme to illustrate the patterns of
meaning in the data as they relate to the research questions. Where relevant, documentation will also be referenced in these tables to further contextualise the data and provide a source of triangulation. Where no documentation is referenced, documentation analysis did not provide evidence that substantiated findings from interviews. Where documentation contradicted interview data, this is explicated in the main text of this chapter. The two stakeholder interviews and the two interviews with award scheme representatives are referred to throughout this chapter. These interviews are not treated as a key data source but rather, as an additional source of triangulation for key findings. Huberman and Miles (2002) discuss how in qualitative research, “researchers use multiple sources of evidence to build construct measures, which define the construct and distinguish it from other constructs” (p. 20). The current study utilises tables to demonstrate multiple sources of evidence supporting the existence of two overarching constructs termed ‘Mainstream-Economic-Oriented’ logic (MEO) and ‘Sustainability-Mission-Oriented’ logic (SMO) in the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. The tables build constructs which represent the mechanisms through which logics can be identified in legitimation. The body of the text presents the meaning of these constructs and the relationships between them in a way that shows the “socio-cultural context that enable the individual accounts that are provided” (Braun & Clarke, 2006. P. 81). It demonstrates the processes through which factors shaping legitimation become reality through being reproduced and maintained by these entrepreneurs. In adherence with Eisenhardt’s approach and that taken by Zott & Huy (2007) in relation to entrepreneur legitimation, the findings for both sets of participants are presented under each theme so as to make clear the points of distinction and commonalities between them (Langley & Abdallah, 2011). This provides clear recognition of how central constructs differ between two groups sampled (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).
First Order Codes | Second Order Codes | Sub-themes | Overarching Themes
--- | --- | --- | ---
Future funding | Financial Goals | → | Mainstream-Economic Organising Principle
Profit
New business
Saving money

‘Break through’ to mainstream
Sustainability mission not enough
Overcome disadvantage of orientation
Gain trust from mainstream end-users

Gain trust from sustainability-minded end-users
Deeper relationships with like-minded peers
Coming together for sustainability issue

Field longevity through self-sufficiency
Enterprise longevity through self-sufficiency

Regulatory bodies
Local government particularly important
Unwritten rules

National media
Mainstream Industry Professionals
Universities

Potential International Investors
Mainstream end-users

Fairtrade Ireland
EPA
National sustainability policy
Sustainability-minded community members

Consensus Goals
Self-sufficiency Goals

Conflict Avoidance
Image
Finance

Sustainability-Purpose-Oriented Organising Principle
Mainstream-Economic Perceived Dominant Source
Sustainability-Purpose-Oriented Perceived
Sustainability awarding bodies
Sustainability-minded community organisations

Adhering to regulatory bodies
Adhering to norms of society
Demonstrating winning of award

Attending networking events
Demonstrating business acumen
Demonstrating mainstream experience and skills
Disassociating with corruption
Appearing presentable

Showing potential investors value for money
Demonstrating cost savings to end-users
Increasing perceived value through attaching cost

Demonstrating winning of award
Use of term sustainability towards sustainability-minded peers
Demonstrating sustainability of product/service to end-users

Communicating mission statement
Showing additional sustainability activity

Corruption in building sector causes distrust
Economic political interests causes distrust

Individual interests most important
Power in hands of few at top
Difficulty with assessing individual mainstream end-users

County council value economic goals over sustainability
Energy field values economic goals over sustainability

Field not sustainable

Image

Standards and Norms

Professionism

Commercial Potential

Sustainability Offering

Sustainability Values

Distrust of Institutions

Individual Level

Incompatible Goals

Dominant Source

Mainstream-Economic-Oriented Means

Sustainability-Purpose-Oriented Means

Mainstream-Purpose-Oriented Logic

Sustainability-Purpose-Oriented Logic

Mainstream-Purpose-Oriented Logic
Figure 4.1 Data Structure RQ1
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Order Codes</th>
<th>Second Order Codes</th>
<th>Sub- themes</th>
<th>Overarching Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know-how for partnering with educational institutions</td>
<td>Mainstream-Economic-Oriented Logic Alignment</td>
<td>Prior Knowledge Alliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream experience useful in building relationships in field</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience for partnering with local sustainability community</td>
<td>Sustainability-Purpose-Oriented Logic Alignment</td>
<td>Prior Knowledge Alliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience for building relationships with ethical consumers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to demonstrate prior knowledge</td>
<td>Fitting-In</td>
<td>Prior Knowledge Conformance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience for avoiding conflict and adhering to rules</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expertise for gaining trust from end-users</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical experience most important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downplay mainstream, emphasise sustainability experience</td>
<td>Coopting</td>
<td>Prior Knowledge Conformance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Downplay sustainability, emphasise mainstream experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical know-how most important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience useful for long-term customer relationships</td>
<td>Role of Prior Knowledge Changes</td>
<td>Prior Knowledge Condition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past knowledge becomes taken-for-granted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-reliance possible barrier to change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong environmental and social values</td>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eager to demonstrate orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Defying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise and difficulty with stakeholder reactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge orientation not useful for legitimacy, continue to demonstrate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream society contradicts orientation</td>
<td>Contesting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability field needs to challenge mainstream society</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contesting status quo through orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.9 Validity and Reliability

Validity, or the extent to which the research accurately reflects and measures the phenomenon under investigation (Silverman 2006), is one of two issues that research studies need to consider. The other is reliability, which is the extent to which the instrument used to examine the phenomenon would yield the same results when applied at a future date (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991). Both of these issues were considered in this study, as outlined below.

Validity includes construct validity, internal validity and external validity. Construct validity pertains to the variables or items of the measurement instrument and their operationalisation.
(Yin, 1994). In this study, an extensive review of the major points of theoretical relevance within the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship and neo-institutional theory literature was carried out, which resulted in the operationalisation of key concepts relating to the research aims of the current study. Subsequent measurement instrument items in the form of interview questions were mapped back to the literature to ensure construct validity (see Appendix D). Internal validity was addressed during data analysis, as it is concerned with the degree to which a researcher is justified in claiming causality in a relationship (Johnson, 1997). The emergent themes of the data were examined across the two groups of participants, between data multiple sources through triangulation, and against theory to assess the credibility of emergent themes. Lastly, external validity, which is concerned with the extent of generalisability of findings beyond the current study (Miles & Huberman, 1994), was also considered. Qualitative research that examines a small sample size in depth is often criticised due to issues of external validity. However, with in-depth qualitative research, rather than statistical generalisation of findings, there is scope for generalisation of theory through the production of rigorous, meaningful knowledge that considers human contingency factors. This facilitates the development of theory that actually matters and applies across similar samples, thus making it generalisable, as opposed to claiming generalisability due to statistical significance (Winter, 2000). In addition, the comparative method used in the this study aims to produce theoretical insights generalisable beyond the current participants.

The second issue, reliability, was addressed firstly by the creation of and adherence to the interview schedule, as well as note-taking during the interviews to account for any instances of disruption to the schedule. Furthermore, the interview schedule was tested using pilot interviews to account for inconsistencies. In addition, all but two interviews were recorded in order to gain verbatim representation of participant accounts (Seale, 1999). Finally, all steps taken, from the creation of the interview schedule to the findings, were documented to produce a ‘chain of evidence’ between each step in the study (Yin, 1994).

4.10 Limitations

Despite having carefully considered the selection of the methodological approach, there are a number of limitations which must be acknowledged. Firstly, as mentioned above in relation to external validity, the current study utilised a small sample size which limits generalisability of the findings. Although the sampling strategy was chosen so as to capture heterogeneity of
theoretically relevant points in the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, the small sample size cannot be said to fully capture this heterogeneity. Further, although the sample was chosen to be representative of a particular population that is not very large itself (Davies, 2012), namely sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs who have experience of successful legitimation in Ireland, the researcher acknowledges that a different approach could have facilitated the inclusion of further participants from other regions and thus increased the generalisability of the current study. As found by Kibler et al., (2014), regional social legitimacy affects a range of entrepreneurial factors such as the relationships between individual entrepreneurial beliefs and intentions. Nonetheless, the primary focus of this study in utilising an in-depth, qualitative approach is analytical generalisability, which does not see findings as generalisable to population but rather, to a theory of the phenomenon being studied that may have wide applicability (Collingridge & Gantt, 2008).

A second limitation is related to the research focus on the socially constructed phenomenon of legitimation (Suchman, 1995). The current study acknowledges that the examination of a social process which is dependent upon the perspectives and judgements of multiple actors over time would have benefitted from a longitudinal approach. Such an approach would have enabled the researcher to capture the process of legitimation over time and document the points at which meso and micro level factors manifested, rather than relying on retrospective self-reports from participants. This approach would also have enabled the researcher to collect documentation over the course of time and analyse changes in how legitimacy is strategized for in documentation. However, in a longitudinal approach, it would not have been possible to determine a priori that these entrepreneurs would experience successful legitimation. Therefore, the researcher decided that selecting entrepreneurs from sustainability awarding bodies and eliciting responses on the legitimation experiences pre and post-award was most effective in addressing the research aims of the current study.

A third limitation is the inherent subjectivity and potential bias of qualitative research, particularly with a social constructionist approach. These issues can, for one, arise as a result of the researcher’s physical proximity to the subject of investigation in the form of interviews, which might affect participant behaviour as they are being watched (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Further, the research’s values, beliefs and assumptions may influence interpretation of the data in qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, researchers need to acknowledge these issues and establish their position as part of the
research process rather than claiming total separation. To assist in overcoming these possibly unavoidable issues in this study, the researcher adhered to the interview schedule, maintained a chain of evidence throughout data collection and analysis, and triangulated emergent findings using recorded interviews, interview notes, and documentation.

4.11 Conclusion
This chapter has described and justified the selection of the research methodology for the current study. A qualitative methodology, within an interpretivist epistemological position underpinned by a social constructionist ontological stance is used to address the research objectives of the current study. This is done using semi-structured interviews and documentation, and the data collection process was described in this chapter. This chapter also outlined the context of this study by describing the multiple sectors and activities of the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in Ireland and the policy that shapes this. Finally, this chapter describes the study’s participants, including the background of the sustainability award schemes from which they were selected.

The next chapter presents the research findings as they relate to research question one on how sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation is shaped multiple organisational field logics, as well as how legitimation behaviour can reveal what the dominant logics of the field are.
Chapter Five: Findings I Logics of the Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurship Field

5.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the empirical research findings for research question one; how does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal the pillars of sustainability as locally embedded logics of the organisational field? Using the methodology described in chapter four, analysis was conducted in the context of the conceptual framework. During analysis, the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs was found to reveal the presence of multiple logics across a number of dimensions. Findings from interviews and documentation are presented under the two overarching themes identified, namely a ‘mainstream-economic-oriented logic’ and a ‘sustainability-mission-oriented logic’. These logics reflect the economic, environmental and social pillars of sustainability, with the latter two emerging as inter-related. Themes are the result of the iterative process of comparison both between the participants and between the emergent categories of meaning and the literature. Each theme consists of four sub-themes and the connections among these sub-themes as well as the overarching themes demonstrate how logics can be identified in the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs.

This chapter is concerned with ‘telling the story’ of the data (Pratt, 2009). Accordingly, this chapter shows how the data reveals the ways in which locally embedded logics guide the strategic and substantive entrepreneurial legitimation behaviour of the participants (Suddaby and Greenwood, 2005), and how legitimation behaviour subsequently reveals which logics are present in the organisational field. Logics are embedded to varying degrees in the values, goals, interactions, and practices of organisational field actors (Thornton and Ocasio 2008), and during analysis, it emerged that field logics could be identified in the legitimation behaviour of these sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in four key ways which represent four sub-themes. Firstly, logics act as ‘organising principles’ that guide legitimation behaviour, and thus embody the legitimacy goals of the entrepreneur (Berente and Yoo, 2012; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Therefore, the legitimacy goals of the entrepreneur were the first way in which the presence of logics as organising principles of behaviour were identified. In addition, the logics of the field became clear in exploring the perceived
dominant sources of legitimacy in the field, and which logics these sources adhere to (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). Therefore, ‘perceived dominant sources’ of legitimacy is the second subtheme. Thirdly, analysis demonstrated that examining the ‘means’ through which entrepreneurs strive for legitimacy can reveal which logics manifest in those means (Berente & Yoo, 2012; Turcan, 2013) and fourthly, exploring the ‘challenges’ faced by entrepreneurs in legitimation shows which logics these challenges represent (Turcan, 2013). Each component of the process of legitimation, from organising principles, sources and means to challenges, was found to shed light on the logics that constitute the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. It should be noted that the findings presented throughout this chapter refer to entrepreneur experiences post-legitimation. These findings provide unique insight on which logics are dominant in this field and subsequently, what is important for legitimacy in the field. The findings presented here will provide the context for the findings on research question two, presented in the following chapter, in which the role of archetypal factors as agency in legitimation towards these logics is explored.

5.2 Mainstream-Economic-Oriented Logic

The first overarching logic to be identified during analysis can be termed a ‘mainstream-economic-oriented logic’. As will be shown throughout this section, this logic emerged as a distinct construct that represents the presence of rules, norms, expectations and requirements (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999) oriented towards mainstream and economic institutions and actors. Mainstream refers to rules, norms etc. representing institutions and actors in the wider traditional economic-oriented field which differs from that of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs who have a dual purpose of profit and their sustainability mission. Reference to a wider mainstream field that intersects with the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field is a prominent feature of the data. Economic refers to rules, norms etc. representative of institutions and actors concerned with finances, profit and economic sustainability, and this was also found to be a prominent feature of the data. Figure 5.1 represents the most common words coded as representative of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic across all data in NVivo for both groups, illustrating some of the keywords used in accounts of legitimation by these entrepreneurs. The following subsections demonstrate how this logic emerged as entrepreneurs discussed their legitimacy goals as organising principles, the sources of
legitimacy they perceive as dominant in the field, the means through which they pursue legitimacy, as well as the challenges they face in legitimation.

Figure 5.1. NVivo Word Cloud ‘Mainstream-Economic-Oriented Logic’ Both Groups

5.2.1 Organising Principles
In discussing legitimacy, entrepreneurs in both groups made reference to what they see as their legitimacy goals. They discussed what legitimacy means to them, and what they ultimately hope to achieve in pursuing legitimacy. The findings presented in this section are concerned with how examining the legitimacy goals of entrepreneurs revealed logics as ‘organising principles’. As explained in Chapter Four Table 4.6, this data was coded as legitimacy goals, following which the researcher revisited the literature. Upon this, as discussed in Chapter Three, the researcher found that Berente and Yoo (2012) argue that organising principles are a fundamental characteristic of logics as they provide some shared goals for actors operating within the same organisational field. The term organising principles is adapted from Thornton and Ocasio (2008) who refer to ‘basis of mission’ with regards to characterising logic types, a term also used by McPherson and Sauder (2013). The shared focus of these terms is that the goals by which organisational field actor behaviour is organised, such as legitimation goals, provide evidence of the organising principle of logics present in the field. Therefore, the data that the researcher had coded as legitimacy goals was grouped as a sub-theme ‘mainstream-economic organising principle’ under the overarching theme ‘mainstream-economic-oriented logic’.
The researcher interpreted a number of legitimacy goals as representative of the presence of an organising principle for a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. Analysis revealed significant divergence in legitimacy goals between the two sets of participants in this respect, with entrepreneurs of SEAI being much more inclined to organise their legitimation behaviour around these mainstream-economic types of legitimacy goals. In contrast, there were just three reports of goals-orientation of this nature for SEI. It emerged that financial goals and goals associated with ‘fitting-in’ to the mainstream economic-oriented entrepreneurship field are the main legitimacy goals for SEAI entrepreneurs, which reveal the presence of an organising principle for a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. For seven out of ten SEI entrepreneurs, their legitimacy goals did not align to this logic, and section 5.3 will elaborate on what constituted as the ultimate goal for these entrepreneurs in their sustainability enterprise journey. Further, it became apparent that entrepreneurs engaged in both symbolic legitimation which is considered highly strategic (Crilly, Zollo, & Hansen, 2012), as well the “least strategic” practice of substantive legitimation (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002, p. 423). Evidence of entrepreneur legitimacy goals was not observed in documentation as legitimacy goals are personally held by entrepreneurs and only emerged through discussions of what legitimacy means to them. However, the judging criteria of the award schemes as well as interviews with representatives from each awarding scheme and two stakeholder interviews were analysed in order to examine whether entrepreneur legitimacy goals were consistent with what the field values for legitimacy.

Financial Goals
Table 5.1 demonstrates how, in describing why they engage in behaviour that they think will bring them legitimacy, financial goals are of significant importance to SEAI entrepreneurs in legitimation. Specifically entrepreneurs talk about how gaining legitimacy will enable them to make a profit or ensure future funding opportunities can be secured. For example, “It’s all about saving money for our customers which allows us to make money...they know us and they know we can do that for them” (Nick, SEAI). This was true for the majority of entrepreneurs in SEAI, with ten out of eleven entrepreneurs discussing this type of legitimacy goal in some form. The entrepreneur who didn’t mention such goals (Noel, SEAI) focused more on how legitimacy can benefit the communication of his sustainability offering. As this entrepreneur revealed this enterprise was one of his many sources of income, perhaps there was not a need to consider financial growth. SEAI entrepreneurs also discussed when and
how these legitimacy goals were formed and become known to them, and it emerged that these goals are formed at the beginning of enterprise development when entrepreneurs are new to the field and might have a limited understanding of the dominant logics, as well as throughout the business lifecycle when applying for awards, certifications and deciding to engage in further training. Evidently, legitimacy is continuously seen as a valuable source of financial gain.

In addition, documentation pertaining to the award scheme from which these entrepreneurs were chosen revealed that in order to be successful in the scheme, applicants must demonstrate significant “cost-savings”, show their “energy saving expenditure” and “increase competitiveness” (SEAI, 2017). This suggests that a focus on financial goals for these entrepreneurs is in line with expectations of the field. It was found to be carried out purposefully or strategically by eight of these SEAI entrepreneurs, such as Tom who discussed how he saw an “opportunity to make money...the only way to convince them is through building our credibility up”. In contrast, Eammon mentioned that he sees the goal of legitimation as “whatever’s good for business”, demonstrating less strategic consideration.

For entrepreneurs in SEI, there was no such evidence of financial legitimacy goals. The legitimacy goals of three of these entrepreneurs did reveal the presence of an organising principle for a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in the field in an alternative way. Legitimacy goals that reveal the presence of this logic for entrepreneurs in SEI were coded as goals associated with ‘fitting-in’ (see below) to the mainstream. This is consistent with documentation from the awarding body as entrepreneurs are expected to focus on demonstrating “social or environmental impact” rather than economic.

**Fit-In Goals**
Three entrepreneurs in SEI specifically discussed how they learned of the importance of fitting-in with the norm of the mainstream, traditional entrepreneurship field activity (see Table 5.1), and that this became a legitimacy goal for them. One entrepreneur talked about goals oriented around fitting-in so as to dissociate with the sustainability image and the disadvantages that come with this. This entrepreneur discussed how, in her rural local community, she and fellow members of her enterprise are considered ‘hippies’ which she says implies negative characteristics that conflict with traditional characteristics of successful business such as professionalism. This entrepreneur mentioned that to be a hippie is to
“separate yourself from the local community” and that “you need to show the professionalism of your work to escape that image” (Charlotte, SEI). It became clear that she considered this ‘hippie’ image to have a negative effect on legitimacy, and taking measures to overcome this image by showing professionalism and fitting-in is a legitimacy goal. Similarly, Beth mentioned a desire to “avoid alienation” which she sees as achievable through fitting in to mainstream social norms. In addition, Nora acknowledged that she sees legitimacy as something that will enable her to gain a position among well established mainstream organisations, but discussed her current difficulty with communicating her sustainability mission to audiences who wanted to see her “take off that passion hat and put on that business hat when it comes to legitimacy” (Nora, SEI).

It can be seen that the legitimation of these entrepreneurs provides evidence of an organising principle for a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in the field. However, this is only true for three entrepreneurs. Further, the goal of fitting-in so as to disassociate with a perceived negative image or avoid alienation does not demonstrate a favourable valuation of the mainstream-economic-oriented logic. SEI entrepreneurs formed these goals at a later stage in the entrepreneurial process as a result of realising there is a dominant mainstream-economic-oriented logic present. The recognition that they need to orient their legitimacy goals towards a logic that clashes with their sustainability purpose represents conscious, strategic action in terms of their legitimation behaviour. This was consistent with documentation gathered from the award scheme in that they specify, for example, that applicants “should act in an entrepreneurial manner” (SEI, 2017), and subsequently fit into the role of entrepreneur.

Four entrepreneurs in SEAI also discussed how they pursue legitimacy in order to fit in with the norm of traditional economic-oriented activity, as can be seen in Table 5.1. Legitimacy goals such as “developing sincere relationships with all your competitors in the industry” (Liam, SEAI) and “bringing the work to a more mainstream audience” (Evan, SEAI) show that fitting-in with the mainstream is another dominant incentive underlying legitimacy goals for these entrepreneurs. Other entrepreneurs mentioned goals of gaining trust from competitors and end-users in the wider mainstream industry, and gaining a better position in the market. It was also discussed by one entrepreneur (Eric, SEAI) as something that helps him to overcome obstacles associated with having a niche, sustainability offering which is similar to reasons reported by SEI entrepreneurs. This desire to fit-in to the mainstream was not specific to any business lifecycle stage for these entrepreneurs and was quite an explicit
feature of the data. These entrepreneurs continuously acknowledge that they exist within a sector or market where they operate alongside businesses that do not belong to a sustainability agenda, and consider the relationships with these businesses as crucial for legitimacy. Documentation from the awarding body also revealed that these entrepreneurs are expected to focus on schemes that lead to “widespread uptake of energy efficiency” (SEAI, 2017), bringing it to the mainstream field.

Whereas reasons given by entrepreneurs in SEI all related to disassociating with negativity and misunderstanding, these SEAI entrepreneurs largely positively value the utility of adhering to organising principles of a mainstream-economic oriented logic as it provides financial gain, better relations and positioning. This positive valuation shows that there is no conflict relating to having to pursue legitimacy goals, as perhaps these legitimation goals align with organisational and personal goals for these entrepreneurs. Overall, an organising principle for a mainstream-economic-oriented logic was revealed to be present throughout the field as it informs the legitimation goals of entrepreneurs from both groups, but to differing extents and in quite different ways. This is a key finding for the conceptual framework as it demonstrates how an economic sustainability pillar manifests as a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, and that this can be identified through examining the principles towards which entrepreneurs organise their legitimacy goals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Financial Goal</th>
<th>Fit-In Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td>“business growth, technology growth”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td>“whatever’s good for business”</td>
<td>*Mainstream-economic competitors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>“financial viability”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>“make money”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>“saving money…make money”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>“reach the targets” “secure good contracts”</td>
<td>“developing sincere relationships with all your competitors in the industry”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>“grow…make money”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>“funding”</td>
<td>*Relationships with mainstream stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>“money” “create employment” “create wealth” “business success”</td>
<td>“mainstream audience”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>*Growth</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“show the professionalism of your work to escape that image”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“take off that passion hat and put on the business hat”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Engage with mainstream</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Context description*
5.2.2 Perceived Dominant Sources

In the stage of legitimation discussed above, the presence and nature of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic could be seen in the principles towards which entrepreneurs organise their legitimacy goals. However, these goals themselves independent of a target and a means of achieving this target do not sufficiently explain the nature of logics present in a given field. In forming their legitimacy goals, entrepreneurs had to consider who holds the power to grant them the achievement of these legitimacy goals, and consider who they perceive to be the dominant sources of legitimacy in the field. Accordingly, the researcher found that the logic adherence of perceived dominant sources of legitimacy reveals the logics of the field, and grouped this data as the subtheme ‘perceived dominant sources’. In revisiting the literature during data analysis, this was found to be a prominent theme. As was seen in chapter Three, sources of legitimacy can refer to society in general, a specific organisational type or level, an individual organisation or an individual (Bitektine, 2011; Deephouse and Suchman, 2008), and each field has different dominant sources. Entrepreneurs were explicitly asked about who or what they perceive as the dominant sources of legitimacy in the field, and a number of sources of legitimacy were identified which can predominantly be characterised as mainstream-economic-oriented. As was found in relation to organising principles, entrepreneurs in this field tend to discuss their legitimation behaviour as relative to the traditional mainstream-economic oriented field as opposed to being conducted in an isolated sustainability-oriented field. This corresponds with findings presented in this section on the clear presence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in perceived dominant sources of legitimacy. A mainstream-economic-oriented logic manifested in two ways, as demonstrated below. In the following subsections, the findings show that many similarities were found across SEAI and SEI entrepreneurs in relation to which sources of legitimacy they see as dominant in the field.

Conflict Avoidance

The first way in which evidence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic emerged was when entrepreneurs discussed the importance of following the rules of the field so as to avoid conflict. Table 5.2 demonstrates that conflict avoidance through adherence to rules was mentioned by seven of the eleven SEAI entrepreneurs in relation to perceived sources of legitimacy. The four entrepreneurs who did not mention conflict avoidance as a source of legitimacy did, however, mention other sources that also align to a mainstream-economic
oriented logic, and this will be presented in the following sections. Quotes from and descriptions of interviews and documentation show that this conflict avoidance manifests in two key ways; in the form of abiding by sources of formal regulation and legislation, as well as informal rules of society. In relation to the necessity of adhering to formal rules for legitimacy, one entrepreneur outlined the impossibility of succeeding independent of adhering to buildings regulation: “no shortcuts because you will get caught” (Eammon, SEAI). A further example of conflict avoidance through adherence to formal rules was given by William: “Regulation is huge, absolutely huge. The market doesn’t allow for mistakes...you’ll just end up suffering the consequences before you even realise what’s happening. So my advice is don’t even go there” (William, SEAI).

The other way in which adherence to rules so as to avoid conflict featured as a source of legitimacy for SEAI entrepreneurs was through compliance with ‘unwritten rules’ or informal rules and norms of society. One entrepreneur pointed, for example, to the importance of knowing who holds the most power and having an awareness of a culture of ‘scratching each others’ backs’ in the mainstream industry. Another discussed how it is crucial to “get on with everybody...or at least appear like you do...it just doesn’t look good [otherwise]” (Dan, SEAI). Formal regulation and adhering to norms to avoid conflict were both strong features of the data across entrepreneurs with a variety of organisational structures and sizes and was discussed as important throughout multiple business lifecycle stages. It emerged as particularly important in the start-up phase when entrepreneurs’ legitimacy is not established. For example, one entrepreneur mentioned that as a new enterprise, he believes his legitimacy will depend on not getting in the way of “the business community because if we don’t have the support of them...your life is not going to be nice!” (Warren, SEAI)

The frequency with which this point of following the rules so as to avoid conflict within the wider industry was a feature of the analysis shows that SEAI entrepreneurs operate within a highly regulated field. Those responsible for setting and enforcing regulation, such as the Central Bank, the City and County Councils and government departments, are all perceived dominant sources of legitimacy that exhibit adherence to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. It emerged that these bodies hold huge power with regards to legitimacy in the field. In addition, SEAI entrepreneurs were found to be very aware of these bodies as dominant sources of legitimacy and throughout the analysis, it emerged that entrepreneurs are highly conscious of the fact that these rules need to be followed in the pursuit of legitimacy,
suggestive of a more strategic approach to legitimation. This is as opposed to entrepreneurs following the rules because they believe it to be the right thing to do or that they would behave in the same way if legitimacy was not at stake.

Adherence to rules also emerged as a findings for four SEI entrepreneurs, and table 5.2 illustrates that the responses of these entrepreneurs regarding examples of dominant mainstream-economic-oriented bodies are very similar to those of SEAI entrepreneurs. City and county councils were mentioned continuously in interviews with SEI entrepreneurs, as well as pleasing the local community who are not generally interested in their sustainability mission. These entrepreneurs also discussed an awareness of the need to comply with societal rules or norms and behave correctly so as to avoid conflict, as was the case for SEAI entrepreneurs. For example, one entrepreneur discussed how she learned over time that to be considered legitimate, people want to know that you do not try to get around rules:

“There's questions now more so than ever about what happens to the proceeds and who monitors that so we'd have strict rules in place around this. But unwritten rules, you want to balance the radical ideas and 'change the world' mentality with not doing anything too 'riskee' because then you've insurance issues and all the rest and you're really trying to play by the rules” (Helen, SEI).

Another discussed how she knows he must maintain relationships with mainstream-oriented sources of legitimacy so as to avoid conflict: “We try to get on with the council as much as humanly possible because...we are really dependant on them...but more importantly I know how aggressive they can be if you don't [get on]” (Nathan, SEI). Analysis revealed that those entrepreneurs who discussed sources of legitimacy that adhere to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic were all well experienced in the field and had reluctantly learned of the importance of these legitimacy sources through this experience. They presented their sustainability mission as something that can conflict with what is expected from legitimacy sources and to that end, legitimation carried out towards these perceived dominant sources is very much so strategic in nature:

“Don't bite the hand that feeds you...if we talk about the city council for example, we get support and resources but...we will always challenge the council to be more progressive and to be more positive but being aware that we actually are extremely vulnerable to them as
well...ultimately what they say goes for us” (Beth, SEI).

Entrepreneurs across both groups were shown to operate within a highly regulated and rule bound field, and entrepreneurs frequently assert that these rules need to be adhered to in order to avoid any possible conflict and achieve legitimacy from perceived dominant sources. For both groups, the source of compliance with these rules is most often national and local government bodies that adhere to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic, and both groups strategically pursue legitimacy towards these sources. This was found to be consistent with documentation from both award schemes which revealed that entrepreneurs are expected to engage in governance and the management of accountability in the field so as to uphold standards. Where the groups differ is with regard to how they value these sources of legitimacy.

**Image**
The next way in which a mainstream-economic oriented logic became evident throughout entrepreneur accounts of legitimation was in how they discussed the importance of having a positive image in the eyes of key mainstream legitimacy sources they perceive as dominant. In the evidence presented in Tables 5.2, it can be seen that six of eleven SEAI entrepreneurs revealed the importance of developing good relationships with certain highly regarded members of the wider mainstream field and society in general so as to maintain a favourable image. Throughout analysis, it was revealed that for SEAI entrepreneurs, this is often done through ‘playing up’ the mainstream image of their enterprises, which can sometimes compromise the communication of their sustainability offering:

“I actually end up telling them [the media] about my family business and my background with business so they’ll give me the time of day” (Noel, SEAI).

“To get into papers you kind of have to ‘play up’ to what they want to hear so you end up leaving out the crux of the mission and it becomes a sales pitch” (Liam, SEAI).

Entrepreneurs also discussed the power that their commercial counterparts have over their legitimacy as well as the fact that many customers are not sustainability-oriented and they must find ways to appear favourable and gain legitimacy from these sources. This is particularly important for larger enterprises and even more so for those who export, as they
have a vast array of mainstream stakeholders and must try to maintain a image with all of them: “We export to over 30 different countries worldwide, sector wise we supply domestic, commercial, municipal and industrial, so we’ve a fairly broad range of people to appeal to” (Evan, SEAI).

Pursuing legitimacy towards these perceived dominant sources emerged as valuable for SEAI entrepreneurs. This is not surprising as it would be unusual for entrepreneurs who have chosen to pursue their sustainability mission through entrepreneurial means to opt out of image building given that a positive image is known to be crucial for legitimacy throughout the business lifecycle. Image was found to be important to entrepreneurs of both long-established enterprises and those who are new to the field, demonstrating its value over time. Despite this, three of these entrepreneurs expressed an issue with the necessity to emphasise their mainstream image over their sustainability image in order to gain legitimacy. Legitimation towards these sources was found to be carried out with some consideration and was subsequently found to be strategic rather than substantive.

Interviews and documentation from SEI entrepreneurs revealed that these entrepreneurs also engage in legitimation towards perceived dominant sources that adhere to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. In particular, Table 5.2 presents quotes from interviews and documents from four of ten entrepreneurs evidencing the view that aligning with well-established and respected bodies such as universities or mainstream energy suppliers, as well as gaining a favourable image with mainstream customers, assists these entrepreneurs in acquiring legitimacy from a wider range of stakeholders than perhaps is available to them through aligning to solely sustainability-oriented bodies. Those entrepreneurs who discussed aligning to well-established sources demonstrated a strategic form of legitimation: “We have to view the typical high street and our non-ethical consumers as stakeholders as well...we're all in the same business vying for the same attention so we need to be seen as that” (Laura, SEAI).

The four SEI entrepreneurs for whom image emerged as important represented diverse enterprise missions and types, showing image was not found to be more important for any particular sector or enterprise structure. Similar to SEAI entrepreneurs, almost half of the entrepreneurs from SEI showed that they understand and accept the value of aligning to sources of this nature in pursuit of a favourable image, and subsequently legitimacy, without
any reluctance. Although, six entrepreneurs did not. Interestingly, most of these entrepreneurs did actually mention the importance of a favourable image for legitimacy, but believed the dominant sources of this type of legitimacy to be aligned to a sustainability-oriented logic, as will be shown in section 5.3.2.

**Finance**
The final way in which a mainstream-economic-oriented logic was revealed in perceived dominant sources of legitimacy in the field for SEAI entrepreneurs was when they discussed how customers and potential investors were a dominant source of legitimacy. Whereas the sources mentioned above provided entrepreneurs with legitimacy as a result of avoiding conflict and providing a favourable image, receiving legitimacy from customers and investors will result in financial gains for entrepreneurs. For example, Nick mentioned that when it comes to legitimacy, since profit depends on the end-user, this is the ultimate source of legitimacy: “The end user is the most important, looking at where to focus attention to make profit.” Nonetheless, perceived dominant sources of legitimacy which provide financial gain were only a feature of the data for three SEAI entrepreneurs despite all but one SEAI entrepreneurs having financial legitimacy goals, as seen above. This demonstrates a disconnect between what entrepreneurs aspire to achieve in legitimacy, i.e. goals, and the sources of legitimacy they actually perceive as dominant. Eric, for example, mentioned “For me unfortunately I need to put a lot of energy into looking at who’s going to be funding this down the line...investors.” When asked to explicitly consider dominant sources of legitimacy, his response indicated that the reality of pursuing financial sources can be time-consuming despite financial gain being one of his legitimacy goals. Nonetheless, the fact that these sources are explicitly mentioned as the most important sources of legitimacy for three SEAI entrepreneurs further demonstrates the presence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in the field. Overall for SEAI entrepreneurs, a mainstream-economic-oriented logic emerged in many perceived dominant sources of legitimacy and in multiple ways for every one of these entrepreneurs. The varied benefits of pursuing legitimacy towards sources that adhere to this logic show it to be very valuable to these entrepreneurs.

For SEI, three entrepreneurs were found to perceive sources of legitimacy associated with financial gain as dominant in the field. Specifically, these entrepreneurs discussed the local council, national government bodies and mainstream consumers as important sources of legitimacy, as can be seen in Table 5.2. This is the first way in which financial gain became
apparent in the data for this group of entrepreneurs, as there was no evidence of financial legitimacy goals as organising principles for a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. These three entrepreneurs did not discuss financial gain from adhering to these sources as a goal, but rather an inevitability. One entrepreneur states “We’re still a clothing store, we still need to set ourselves up in a way that makes customers want to come in the door and to make money” (Dawn, SEI). References to perceived dominant sources representing a mainstream-economic-oriented logic are passive, with entrepreneurs in this group neither expressing eagerness nor reluctance to pursue legitimacy towards these sources. This represents a more substantive form of legitimation rather than strategic. Overall, these findings are similar to those of the SEAI entrepreneurs in that this mainstream-economic-oriented logic emerged in many perceived sources of legitimacy for all but one of these entrepreneurs. Frank who did not mention sources of legitimacy that adhere to this logic focused solely on sustainability, as will be discussed in section 5.3.2. The perceived benefits were also similar in both sets of participants, namely the avoidance of conflict, maintaining a positive image and financial gain. This is a key finding for the conceptual framework as it further demonstrates how an economic sustainability pillar manifests as a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, and that this can be identified through examining the perceived dominant sources of legitimacy in the field.
### Table 5.2 Mainstream-Economic – Oriented Perceived Dominant Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Conflict Avoidance</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Finance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEAI</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Positive image brings legitimacy from mainstream stakeholders</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>“Regulation is huge”, “market doesn’t allow for mistakes… you’ll just end up suffering the consequences”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>“very small community… commercial counterparts”, “reputation for professionalism and quality”</td>
<td>Appearing favourably with “companies involved in commercial building management”</td>
<td>Investors want to see “international competitive standard” **Company website also makes reference to “innovation”, “market leading” and “first in the market”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>* Crucial to follow the building regulation “no short cuts because you will get caught” **Company website and brochures: “high-standard”, “quality-assurance”, “pedigree quality”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“The end user is the most important, looking at where to focus attention to make profit”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>*A voids culture of deception in mainstream industry “won’t engage in that type of behaviour”</td>
<td>“good relationship with the media” important for mainstream legitimacy</td>
<td>Not applicable **Company website: “The innovations will enable the Irish manufacturing industry to improve competitiveness”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Action</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Communicating “background with business” to media important for mainstream legitimacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>* Adhere to informal rules of business community</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* Form mainstream partnerships to improve image</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>** Company website testimonials from mainstream partners</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“funding this down the line…investors” ** Company website details his history of success with gaining investment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>“having the experience and the knowledge to make judgements about (conflict)” and avoid “upset”</td>
<td>&quot;domestic, commercial, municipal and industrial” clients</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Crucial to “get on with everybody” by adhering to informal rules in mainstream field</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>* Avoid conflict in mainstream community</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>“get on with the council... I know how aggressive they can be if you don’t”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>* Partnering with large, established organisations for legitimacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

166
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entity</th>
<th>Viewpoint</th>
<th>Social Media Page Mentions Partnerships</th>
<th>Company Website Mentions Financial Value</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“need to set ourselves up in a way...to make money”</td>
<td><strong>Company website mentions financial value</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>&quot;don't bite the hand that feeds you...city council&quot;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“we rely on the council to give us the things we need...like money”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>In reference to mainstream community: “strict rules in place”, “unwritten rules”, “play by the rules”</td>
<td>*Emphasises enterprise as similar to a mainstream enterprise</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Must maintain a positive image amongst mainstream “high street and our non-ethical consumers”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Dependent on a network of investors for funding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Image among mainstream industry important</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Context description

**Documentation
5.2.3 Means

This section presents the findings on how examining the means through which entrepreneurs strive for legitimacy reveals which logics manifest in these means (Berente and Yoo, 2012; Turcan, 2013). During data analysis, the researcher found that these entrepreneurs discussed a range of means of pursuing legitimacy, and that this was also a feature of the literature. This ultimately resulted in the subtheme of ‘legitimacy means’. Dowling and Pfeffer (1975) define legitimation as “the process whereby an organisation justifies to a peer its right to exist, that is to continue to import, transform and export energy, material or information” (1971, p. 361). Legitimation is not concerned with legitimacy outcomes and effects, but rather the dynamics how actors extend, maintain or defend legitimacy (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008). Accordingly, the activities and behaviours that both groups of entrepreneurs from SEAI and SEI engage in to try and gain and maintain legitimacy are presented below in relation to how they reveal the logics present in the field. The first logic that became apparent during entrepreneurs’ accounts of their legitimation and in the documentation was a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. The ways in which this logic manifested can be largely categorised in three ways; demonstrating adherence to standards and norms, showing professional skills and showing commercial potential. These means of legitimacy corresponds with the findings of the previous section wherein entrepreneurs were found to perceive sources of legitimacy that provide them with conflict avoidance and financial gain as dominant in the field. They also correspond with the findings on how fitting-in and financial gain were revealed as legitimacy goals of these entrepreneurs.

Demonstrating Standards and Norms

Seven of eleven SEAI entrepreneurs discussed demonstrating adherence to standards and norms as a means of legitimacy. An additional entrepreneur (Tom) was found to use his website and press releases to demonstrate adherence to standards and norms despite not having mentioned it during interview. Throughout entrepreneur accounts and documentation, it emerged that these means of legitimacy were carried out in adherence to standards and norms set by field members who represent a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. Table 5.3 illustrates that SEAI entrepreneurs discussed, for example, engaging in practices to meet the requirements of formal regulatory bodies such as city councils and national government bodies. One entrepreneur even discussed how he goes beyond the requirements of regulation and raises the standard himself which brings legitimacy to the field overall: “When you are
the winner...it kind of sets the goal for other people because it brings us into a higher level...it increases the standard and the competition which helps us maintain and strive to improve” (Nick, SEAI).

Analysis revealed that SEAI entrepreneurs also engage in practices that they believe will enable them to adhere to informal rules and norms of society, which assists them to gain legitimacy from mainstream consumers and potential clients. An important point is that all seven who discuss the importance of adhering to standards and norms as a means of legitimacy specifically mention the sustainability award as a crucial way of demonstrating this adherence. For example, “we saw the award as an opportunity to gain recognition and credibility with [mainstream-stakeholder]” (William, SEAI) and “it’s hard for small businesses but we recognise that having the award...it gives you an extra box tick, if we're ever looking for sponsorship as well. The award definitely helps to legitimise what we're doing here” (Noel, SEAI). The award enables them to demonstrate ‘box-ticking’ with regards to standards and norms of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in the field. Entrepreneurs representing organisations at various stages of the business lifecycle discussed engaging in this means of legitimation as the award invites applicants from new and well established organisations. This shows that it was found to be a useful means of legitimacy across the business lifecycle. Applying for an award as a means of attaining legitimacy is strategic as it is intentional and requires planning, and is another example of how these entrepreneurs engage in strategic legitimation towards a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. Further, a representative from the SEAI awarding body discussed how the award is a “confirmation of doing the right thing”, which is “really really good for legitimacy” (SEAI representative).

Seven of ten SEI entrepreneurs were also found to engage in a number of practices involving adherence to standards and norms as a means of legitimacy, and analysis revealed that these practices are directed towards a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. Table 5.3 shows that these practices can range from strict adherence to regulations and boundaries set by the city council, to demonstrating respect for the norms of the local mainstream community, much like SEAI entrepreneurs. For example, Beth said of collaborating with the city council: “I suppose we do get legitimacy from being collaborators and co-operators with these processes.” She discussed her reluctance to work with this body but that it does provide legitimacy through demonstrating that her business meets standards of the council. Additionally, Charlotte discussed how she views adherence to the norms of her local
community as important for legitimacy, as otherwise she could experience exclusion due to her sustainability mission not fitting within those norms. As was found in relation to perceived dominant sources, when SEI entrepreneurs discuss the practices they engage in as means of legitimacy, they do so with a sense of resistance, indicating that they do not view having to engage in these means of legitimacy in a positive light.

Five of these entrepreneurs discussed how the sustainability award enabled them to demonstrate that their enterprise meets certain standards and that this has helped with their legitimacy from mainstream-economic-oriented sources, as was found for SEAI entrepreneurs. Nora talked about how she believed winning the award would equal immediate legitimacy, but that it was more of a process involving her learning that she needed to demonstrate that she had won the award to the right people: “it gave us that courage to go to people who wouldn’t have given us the time of day because we’re a bit cracked and say you will listen to me because I’ve won this award” (Nora, SEAI). SEI entrepreneurs were largely found to engage in strategic legitimation, engaging in certain practices purposefully to gain legitimacy despite having reservations regarding doing so. Although resistance was expressed with regard to adhering to standards and norms in pursuing legitimacy towards a mainstream-economic-oriented logic, entrepreneurs who discussed the award as a means expressed gratitude and respect for the awarding body: “I appreciate what the award has done for me...they’re really helpful and supportive and they’re rigorous you know, they...I see them as super legitimate because of the rigour they bring to it and I mean in the competition, in the judging process” (Pat, SEI).

Overall, demonstrating adherence to standards and norms towards a mainstream-economic-oriented logic was found to be an important means of legitimacy across the business lifecycle for both SEI and SEAI entrepreneurs, particularly through achieving national awards. Both groups of entrepreneurs also discuss the particular importance of appealing to mainstream end-users and communities by demonstrating that they meet certain standards and adhere to certain norms, and both demonstrated strategic legitimation. Additionally, the two stakeholder interviews as well as the two contextual interviews carried out with the awarding bodies also revealed that winning awards is important for legitimacy for these entrepreneurs across the field. These multiple sources of data strengthen this finding.

Demonstrating Professionalism
Another way in which entrepreneurs were found to attempt to gain legitimacy in the field was by demonstrating professional skills to mainstream field members. This is done in a number of ways, and each reveals the presence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. Table 5.3 illustrates the ways in which this logic manifested for four SEAI entrepreneurs as they discuss demonstrating professional skills as a means of legitimacy. For example, one entrepreneur discussed the importance of attending networking events as people want to see a professional, put-together person behind the product (William, SEAI), while two of these entrepreneurs discussed demonstrating professionalism as a means of showing their position in the mainstream market. One stakeholder, in discussing the legitimation activity of an SEAI entrepreneur, mentioned that being easy to work with is important as this is a sign of professionalism. There was no common features in terms of the type of enterprise these entrepreneurs represent, illustrating that professionalism can be important for legitimacy across sectors and business lifecycles. These entrepreneurs discussed ways in which they have strategically demonstrated professionalism and their intent to continue doing so in the future. However, it was not as frequent a feature of the data for these entrepreneurs as adhering to standards and norms, with four SEAI entrepreneurs discussing professionalism and seven discussing standards and norms.

Seven SEI entrepreneurs also discussed the importance of demonstrating professional skills for legitimacy from mainstream field members, demonstrating that this was a stronger feature of the data for SEI entrepreneurs. Table 5.3 illustrates the various ways in which entrepreneurs discussed showing professionalism as a means of legitimacy, highlighting the presence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. Four of these entrepreneurs specifically discussed how within the sustainability field, there can be negative assumptions about their level of professionalism and consequently, they must make an effort to highlight this in legitimation. In this way, they use the demonstration of professionalism as a means of overcoming negative assumptions, but try to do so in a way that does not compromise their sustainability mission:

“Power and money and influence reside in the hands of decision makers who reside in a certain segment of society and have a certain appreciation for suits and ties...it’s this balancing act of...staying true to who we are but at the same time, like identifying that our mission statement and our vision would be best served by attaining legitimacy with certain funders and certain organisations” (Beth, SEI).
Those who expressed this view were similar in that they represented small community enterprises, suggesting that size is a factor in being perceived as professional in the field. Another entrepreneur in the clothing industry mentioned how professionalism is key to her legitimacy as many of her competitors are large mainstream high street retail stores (Laura, SEI). This entrepreneur and others did not express hesitation or issue with this means of legitimacy, and simply mentioned it as an effective means of attaining legitimacy. Further, not all entrepreneurs found to discuss this means of legitimation mentioned it in a strategic way, with some expressing a more passive acknowledgement that demonstrating professionalism is important. For example, Charlotte said that she had never thought about it before but if she did not have professional structures in place such as email, a website and premises, she believes this would be damaging for her reputation and business. Evidently, these entrepreneurs were found to engage in both strategic and substantive legitimation. There is clearly strong evidence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in the means of legitimation discussed by SEI entrepreneurs. Further, those who did not mention demonstrating professionalism as a means of legitimacy did however mention the other means of legitimacy associated with a mainstream-economic-oriented logic; either demonstrating adherence to standards and norms or demonstrating commercial potential.

**Demonstrating Commercial Potential**
The final way in which the presence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic became apparent in legitimation was when entrepreneurs discussed the importance of demonstrating the commercial potential of their enterprise as a means of legitimacy. This refers to the potential of the enterprise to offer financial savings and value for money for end-users, return on investment for investors, and future growth. This was a feature of five SEAI entrepreneur accounts of their legitimation practices. Table 5.3 shows that these entrepreneurs specifically discussed how certain important stakeholders, such as mainstream end-users and investors, are mostly interested in saving money and getting a return on their investment. In this way, these entrepreneurs discuss how they pursue legitimacy by demonstrating the commercial potential of their product or service. These entrepreneurs mention this in a ‘matter-of-fact’ way, for example: “obviously our investors and their associates want to see the numbers, they want to see how we’re going to make money so we have to consider that…we won’t get anywhere without them” (Eammon, SEAI). These entrepreneurs’ accounts of demonstrating commercial potential as a means of legitimacy largely demonstrate substantive legitimation.
This is because they did not discuss points at which they realised the strategic importance of doing so, nor do they explain how they put plans and process in place to strategically achieve legitimacy in this way. Rather, this means of legitimation emerged as something that is carried out in a taken-for-granted way by entrepreneurs across this group.

The fact that entrepreneurs demonstrate their commercial potential as a means of legitimacy provides further evidence of the presence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in the field. While this was a feature of the data for just less than half of these entrepreneurs, overall there was a strong presence of this logic among SEAI entrepreneurs in the means through which they pursue legitimacy. All but two demonstrated that they adhere to this logic in their legitimation through either showing adherence to standards and norms, professionalism or commercial potential. As section 5.4.2 will demonstrate, of the two outlier entrepreneurs, Eric demonstrated adherence to a sustainability-mission-logic as a means of legitimacy, but Dan neglected to offer explicit examples of what he considers to be means of legitimacy.

For the SEI entrepreneurs, only three entrepreneurs were found to demonstrate their commercial potential as a means of gaining legitimacy. Table 5.3 illustrates the specific ways in which these entrepreneurs discussed the importance of demonstrating commercial potential as a means of legitimacy, and shows that these reasons are similar to those given by SEAI entrepreneurs. For example, one entrepreneur discusses the importance of gaining legitimacy from her investors while the other two focus on their mainstream end-users. All three of these entrepreneurs work in the clothing sector, and specifically mention that they must communicate commercial potential so as to be able to compete with their mainstream competitors and gain legitimacy from mainstream customers. One entrepreneur touches on the point that she believes attaching a cost to something and showing it as a commercial offering can be beneficial for legitimacy for mainstream end-users:

“sometimes when something is free it's not appreciated enough or people think someone else is paying for it, so not having a cost attached can be damaging sometimes for legitimacy”
(Helen, SEI).

Therefore, findings show that these entrepreneurs strategically demonstrate the commercial potential of their products in order to gain legitimacy, unlike SEAI entrepreneurs who do so in a non-strategic way. This was just a feature of the data for three SEI entrepreneurs.
However, it is important to note that overall, every SEI entrepreneur demonstrated that they adhere to this logic in their legitimation through either showing adherence to standards and norms, professionalism or commercial potential. Evidently, this logic was a slightly stronger feature of SEI legitimation than SEAI, and very strong feature across the field. This is another important finding for the conceptual framework as it further demonstrates how an economic sustainability pillar manifests as a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, and that this can be identified through examining the means through which these entrepreneurs pursue legitimacy in the field.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Standards and Norms</th>
<th>Professionalism</th>
<th>Commercial Potential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td><em>Demonstrating standards for legitimacy from mainstream industry</em>&lt;br&gt;*<em>Company website communicates adherence to regulation in the field: “ISO:9001 accredited, is certified with Bureau Veritas and DNV-GL”</em></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td><em>Award demonstrates adherence to mainstream norms</em></td>
<td>“designing a more efficient system and you’re doing so using the same skills [as used in mainstream profession]”</td>
<td>“Investors and their associates… want to see how we’re going to make money”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>” award as an opportunity to show [mainstream player]… you’re an appropriate representative of their standards of practice”</td>
<td>Attending professional trade-shows and commercial events, or else mainstream would question whether there was validity to your professionalism</td>
<td>“aim to be seen as a mainstream solution” by showing “cost savings”&lt;br&gt;*Importance of H2020 funding&lt;br&gt;**Company website emphasises cost-saving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>“Occupational Health &amp; Safety Management System certificate by EQA” shows adherence&lt;br&gt;**Press releases and the website highlight mainstream partnerships</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“have to get financials right first”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>Award “brings us into a higher level…we are the premier builder…increases the standard and the competition”</td>
<td>*Professionalism crucial in mainstream field</td>
<td>“monetise a problem, people are a lot more easily focused on it…I help them understand the cost side”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“appeal to the end-users of our designs is the...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Professionalism Important to Mainstream Media</td>
<td>SEI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>&quot;having the award...gives you an extra box tick&quot;</td>
<td>*Professionalism important to mainstream media</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>*Partnership with mainstream organisations shows standard, award is useful</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>Award “ultimately set the standard and winning shows you meet that standard” **Award demonstrated on company website, press releases, brochures</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>*Adherence to norms of local community important</td>
<td>*Demonstrates professionalism through having an email address, having the structure of a building as an office</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Award “shows you’re successful, normal” **Company website showcases award</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>&quot;network...it looks professional&quot;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>*Collaboration with mainstream industry members important *Gained credibility from mainstream through award</td>
<td>&quot;have to have the numbers, we have to have land plans...professional ecologists on board who do these plans in a very professional way&quot;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Website and press releases mention “ways of reducing the cost”**

"cost saving so cost is a huge factor"
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dawn</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>“Our main stakeholders are our funders”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>“we've received a huge amount of credibility and legitimacy from the awards...from being collaborators and co-operators with [mainstream body]”</td>
<td>“decision makers who...have a certain appreciation for suits and ties”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>“Don't try to be too clicky” and be rigorous in handling finances to upkeep standards</td>
<td>“evaluation...important for legitimacy” as shows professionalism to mainstream</td>
<td>*Attaching a cost to something can be beneficial for legitimacy for mainstream end-users</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“Being professional...that is massive within the industry...our professional website and blog...staff are all qualified and presentable”</td>
<td>*Mainstream customers want competitive pricing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>*Award attracts mainstream industry</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>“in the competition, in the judging process...[awards are] rigorous”, sets standard</td>
<td>*Mainstream experience shows professionalism</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Context description

**Documentation
5.2.4 Challenges

The final way in which a mainstream-economic-oriented logic was revealed in legitimation for these entrepreneurs was when they discussed the various challenges associated with gaining and maintaining legitimacy in the field. During data analysis, these entrepreneurs were found to discuss many challenges, which was also found to be a feature of the literature when this was revisited. As discussed in Chapter Three, Turcan (2013), in examining international new venture legitimation, identified a number of possible challenges of legitimation such as how goal misalignment might occur during legitimation oriented towards a market logic, or how finding new adopters willing to try new technology might be a challenge of pursuing a technology logic. The current study identified a number of challenges specifically associated with legitimation in the sustainability-oriented enterprise field which can be broadly categorised as relating to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic, or a sustainability-oriented logic.

Despite not having been asked to discuss challenges, analysis revealed that a number of topics and particular organisations cause legitimation issues for these entrepreneurs in their pursuit of sustainability through entrepreneurial means. It emerged that many of these represented the presence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic, providing further evidence of this logic in the field. As entrepreneurs were not explicitly asked about challenges, they are not a strong feature of the data for either group. Nonetheless, those challenges that were mentioned by multiple entrepreneurs, particularly across the two groups, were noted as interesting findings which provide further evidence of the presence of logics in the field. Specifically, SEAI entrepreneurs mentioned distrust of institutions, and entrepreneurs in both groups mentioned issues relating to legitimacy as an individual level issue, and incompatible goals. These three challenges are elaborated on below, with Table 5.4 providing illustrative data and context descriptions.

Distrust of Institutions
For SEAI entrepreneurs, Table 5.4 demonstrates that two entrepreneurs mentioned challenges relating to distrust of institutions. For example, Nick continuously pointed to the mainstream building sector as something people are slow to trust due to recent corruption as well as poor regulation. He discussed the regulation as actually having the effect of being a disincentive to any sustainability in this sector, and so views this as a challenge for legitimation:
“The regulations allude to where they’d like you to get to but they are depending on the construction industry like us to deliver it and we would always be the first people who would get there. We’re pioneers…But there is a disincentive in being good and that is within the regulations there is a disincentive for aspiring to do better” (Nick, SEAI).

Additionally, Eric in the context of a discussion on sustainability in the field, mentioned how mainstream political bodies are taking an increased interest in sustainable energy, but their reputation as having a more economic-oriented focus on fossil fuels can cause scepticism and distrust in the field. He argues that if people see sustainability as a mainstream-economic oriented political issue and something enforceable, they will be less inclined to buy into sustainability. This poses a challenge for legitimation of the field and its actors. The researcher did not note any descriptive commonalities between these two entrepreneurs or their enterprises. In contrast, although analysis revealed that SEI entrepreneurs frequently express opposition with mainstream-economic-oriented institutions in legitimation, they did not explicitly mention challenges relating to distrust of these institutions. The ways in which a mainstream-economic-oriented logic was revealed for SEI entrepreneurs is presented in the following sections.

Individual Level
The next way in which evidence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic was revealed during analysis was when the researcher noticed that entrepreneurs of both groups repeatedly discussed how legitimacy is dependent on the thoughts, goals and values of individual people rather than organisations. This makes legitimation time consuming and complex, and is a challenge that was explicitly mentioned by entrepreneurs of both SEAI and SEI. Table 5.4 demonstrates how this was mentioned by two SEAI entrepreneurs, and that these two entrepreneurs had very similar perspectives on the issue. They both mention this issue as more prevalent in situations where they are attempting to gain legitimacy from investors or mainstream counterparts in the renewable energy sector and both represent established enterprises. They also both specifically refer to the issue of hierarchy or power in the hands of a small number of individuals at the top who are not visible, making legitimation quite challenging. For example, Tom states:
“When you are talking about individuals like it’s not this big company making a decision, it’s the individual decision maker...if he doesn't have the appetite for it or he doesn't see how it makes his life easier or if he doesn't see the awards on the other side then he won't let it happen. So you have to manage that very carefully...the individual level thing with legitimacy is huge and that's what makes it such a challenge...personal values come in and then it’s about pitching to that” (Tom, SEAI)

Analysis also revealed that SEI entrepreneurs had experienced challenges of this nature, and Table 5.4 illustrates how three entrepreneurs described these challenges. Beth had a similar to view to SEAI entrepreneurs regarding how powerful mainstream-economic oriented individuals are not visible and this makes it difficult to gain legitimacy from them based on not knowing where their expectations truly lay. While Entrepreneurs 16 and 20 were also found to believe legitimacy is an individual level issue in the field and that this is a challenge for legitimation, they refer more to their end-users: “you need to have an individual focus...people are different and you can’t always tell how people feel” (Ed, SEI). These entrepreneurs discussed how mainstream-economic-oriented individuals can appear as sustainability-oriented by showing interest in their enterprises, which leads to misinterpretation of expectations and failed legitimation by over-emphasising their sustainability offering. Each of these accounts further highlights the presence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in the field, and shows that entrepreneurs face multiple challenges when responding to this logic in attempts to gain legitimacy.

Incompatible Goals
The final way in which a mainstream-economic-oriented logic manifested in legitimation challenges was when entrepreneurs of both groups discussed how the inherent incompatibility between their sustainability goals and the economic goals of certain field members caused them difficulties in pursuing legitimation. This was found to be the case for two SEAI entrepreneurs, one of whom mentioned that in the energy field, the dichotomy between those who gain from promoting fossil fuels and those interested in sustainability is ever present. He mentions that award schemes are sometimes merely superficial gestures of support for the sustainability agenda which mask an economic agenda to slow down sustainability progress. As can be seen in Table 5.4, the other SEAI entrepreneur gave an example of how the goals of his enterprise often misalign with that of the county council and
that this has caused challenges with legitimacy as the council undermine the work of his enterprise. Again, incompatible goals as a challenge for legitimacy was just mentioned by two entrepreneurs, yet overall, six of eleven SEAI entrepreneurs representing a diversity of sectors and organisation types mentioned challenges pertaining to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic across lifecycle stages. This shows that examining the legitimation challenges of these entrepreneurs provided an effective means of identifying this logic in the field.

Five of ten SEI entrepreneurs also mentioned how incompatibility of goals between their enterprise and mainstream field members caused challenges for legitimacy. For half of these entrepreneurs to bring up challenges relating to this logic is significant as they did so unprovoked. Table 5.4 illustrates how Pat for example, reflected the views of SEAI entrepreneurs in that he referred to a push-back within the wider mainstream field of energy regarding the sustainability movement. Four SEI entrepreneurs specifically mentioned the council as a barrier to legitimacy due to conflicting goals which was also mentioned by SEAI entrepreneurs, while another expressed that she believes there is a contradiction between her sustainability goals and the industry she is in: “our whole purpose is based off of and founded upon a deeply flawed and dangerous series of problems with an industry that operates under that traditional type business model” (Laura, SEI). Overall, seven out of ten SEI entrepreneurs discussed challenges of legitimation relating to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. This clearly shows that this logic is a strong feature of the field, but that many field issues are linked to the presence of this logic. Table 5.5 summarises the frequency with which a mainstream-economic-oriented logic manifested in legitimation across the dimensions of organising principles, perceived dominant sources, means and challenges. These findings provide empirical evidence for the conceptual framework that an economic sustainability pillar is present in the organisational field in the form of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic, and that this can be identified by examining legitimation of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Distrust of Institutions</th>
<th>Individual Level</th>
<th>Incompatible Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Need to gauge individual interests of mainstream-oriented stakeholders where power resides with few at the top</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“*Conflicting goals between those actually interested in sustainable energy solutions and those who gain from a mainstream agenda”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“<em>about individuals...it’s the individual decision maker</em>”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“the individual level thing with legitimacy is huge...so personal values come in”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“that goes back to the individual thing and keeping a person’s goals' in mind... have to keep in mind what the individual wants”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>&quot;there is a disincentive in being good and that is within the regulations there is a disincentive for aspiring to do better&quot;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“The council is important but I'm very sceptical about them...they've no real understanding or care for what we're trying to do”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>“it’s very much so a political issue...politics breeds scepticism”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td>“our whole campaign was a reaction to what city council were doing and we were against it”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“We were struggling with...trying to super-impose an economic model on a social structure”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Difficult to identify mainstream versus sustainability orientation of end users in</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>Quotes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>* Time consuming to gauge true expectations of individuals within mainstream organisations</td>
<td>“if there's an issue that's of significant importance to us, we don't mind having a petition and actually like doing radical direct action, provided that it doesn’t alienate us and there are tangible, achievable goals to it. it’s a balancing act”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“we will always challenge the council to be more progressive”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Sees the council as a barrier to carrying out certain practices that would be good for legitimacy such as running community-based fundraisers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>* Sees the value for legitimacy of being ‘entrepreneurial’ but believes that certain element of this conflict with her sustainability goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“need to have an individual focus...people are different and you can’t always tell how people feel”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“the field is always looking to people to...challenge the status quo...but obviously there’s plenty who don’t want to see that happen”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.5 Mainstream-Economic-Oriented Logic Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Organising Principles</th>
<th>Perceived Dominant Sources</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organising Principles</td>
<td>Perceived Dominant Sources</td>
<td>Means</td>
<td>Challenges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goal</td>
<td>Conflict and Image</td>
<td>Finance and Norms and Standards</td>
<td>Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
<td>✅</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAI Sum</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum SEI</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Logic

The second overarching logic identified during analysis is termed a ‘Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Logic’. The enterprise missions of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs represent environmental and/or social sustainability, and this overarching logic encompasses the presence of both environmental and social sustainability sub-logics. These sub-logics were found to be a prominent feature of the data, but were often referred to jointly, as was the case with ‘mainstream’ and ‘economic’ sub-logics. This logic also emerged as a distinct construct that represents the presence of rules, norms, expectations and requirements (Thornton & Ocasio, 1999) oriented towards institutions and actors concerned with environmental and social sustainability. Figure 5.2 represents the most common words coded as representative of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic across all data in NVivo for both groups illustrating some of the keywords used in accounts of legitimation by these entrepreneurs. The following subsections illustrate how this logic emerged as entrepreneurs discussed their legitimacy goals as organising principles, the sources of legitimacy they perceive as dominant in the field, the means through which they pursue legitimacy, as well as the challenges they face in legitimation.

![Figure 5.2. NVivo Word Cloud Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Logic Both Groups](image)

187
5.3.1 Organising Principles

The first way in which evidence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic emerged was when entrepreneurs discussed what legitimacy ultimately means to them, and what they believe they can achieve as a result of attaining legitimacy. In this way, the legitimacy goals of entrepreneurs reflected the presence of an organising principle for this logic. As these entrepreneurs are defined by having a sustainability mission, it was expected that this mission would inform their goals, including legitimacy goals. However, analysis revealed significant divergence in legitimacy goals between the two groups of entrepreneurs in this respect, with entrepreneurs of SEI demonstrating much more of an inclination to organise their legitimisation behaviour so as to achieve goals relating to their sustainability mission. In responding to questions regarding what they hope to achieve as a result of pursuing legitimacy, seven out of ten SEI entrepreneurs discussed a belief that pursuing legitimacy could help them with their sustainability mission, as distinct from the goal of making a profit or fitting in with mainstream, traditional entrepreneurship. In contrast, there was just one report of goals-orientation of this nature from SEAI. Table 5.6 illustrates how the two sets of entrepreneurs differ in this regard. Relationship and consensus goals as well as self-sufficiency goals are shown to be the main legitimacy goals that reveal the presence of organising principles for a sustainability-mission-oriented logic across both groups.

Relationships and Consensus Goals

The evidence presented in Table 5.6 highlights the nature of legitimacy goals oriented towards this logic for entrepreneurs of SEI. Six out of ten of these entrepreneurs discussed how they believe pursuing legitimacy will enable them to develop deeper relationships and gain trust from like-minded end-users and other field members. Trust is an important concept in legitimacy and it was seen in the previous section that the gaining of trust was also a legitimacy goal of entrepreneurs in response to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. One SEI entrepreneur, in relation to the fashion industry discussed how relationships with everyone, sustainability-oriented or not, are important, but those with like-minded, ethically interested field members are particularly important for legitimacy. Another SEI entrepreneur, also in the fashion industry, mentioned how regular customers expect to see a certain ethical standard maintained and this means that a rigorous approach to their sustainability mission is necessary for legitimacy from these field members. Within the fashion industry, establishing trust and connections with like-minded field members was clearly found to be important, yet this was also a feature of legitimisation across other sectors such as sustainable transport and
These SEI entrepreneurs also discussed how their legitimacy goals are organised around their sustainability mission in that pursuing and achieving their sustainability mission will bring consensus to the field. As evidence in Table 5.6 shows, amongst SEI entrepreneurs, there is a sense that the pursuit of these various sustainability goals is most important for legitimacy as this pursuit will bring entrepreneurs to a level where they can build a consensus with like-minded individuals towards a common sustainability goal: “I’ve realised that sustainability is something we all understand and [we] can join together in conversations of sustainability” (Beth, SEI). This idea of coming together and building strength through cooperation represents the social sustainability pillar and is entirely different to entrepreneurs of SEAI who, as shown in section 5.2.1, most frequently mentioned legitimacy goals of profit and funding which are very much so representative of economic sustainability. Overall for SEI, more than half of these entrepreneurs explicitly mention organising their behaviour around legitimacy goals of enhancing and deepening relationships with other field members who value their sustainability mission and in turn, strengthening the collective sustainability mission of these field members. Goals of this nature were found to manifest across the business lifecycle, both early on when entrepreneurs are eager to demonstrate their sustainability mission to a wide range of stakeholders, and later when they have gained a group of regular end-users who they can continue to demonstrate their sustainability mission to for legitimacy. These goals were also mentioned by entrepreneurs with a diversity of sustainability missions and enterprise types. These legitimacy goals clearly demonstrate the presence of organising principles for a sustainability-mission oriented logic in the field. This is consistent with findings from the SEI stakeholder interview as, in relation to the legitimation activity of an SEI entrepreneur, the stakeholder discussed the importance of every person’s effort towards the overall goal of preserving biodiversity in Ireland. Further, a representative of the SEI awarding scheme in a contextual interview emphasised how the scheme facilitates entrepreneurial individuals working together towards a common goal of social change. This was also found throughout awarding body documentation, with their mission including the goal of developing a network of like-minded entrepreneurs. These multiple sources of evidence strengthen this finding.

Comparatively, evidence of a legitimacy goal of this nature was only found for one SEAI entrepreneur. This is unsurprising given that these entrepreneurs were found to possess
legitimacy goals relating to financial gain and fitting-in with mainstream-economic-oriented field members. Noel described how to him, legitimacy is about building relationships with like-minded people and increasing recognition for their shared sustainability mission of sustainable transport: “Legitimacy is about increasing recognition to connect up with others doing these things nationally...to get people cycling all over” (Noel, SEAI). Despite only having established his enterprise in 2014, this entrepreneur demonstrated an awareness of the importance of relationships and consensus for legitimacy in the same way more established SEI entrepreneurs did. Two other SEAI entrepreneurs revealed evidence of organising principles for a sustainability-mission oriented logic in the field beyond economic gain, and this is discussed below.

**Self-Sufficiency Goals**

One SEAI entrepreneur elaborated on the importance of having a self-sustaining business and how this was indeed the most important legitimacy goal to him, describing this legitimacy goal as: “to have this business for the community in a sustainable way to maintain it...so that it's self-funding you know, that you're not looking for government money to back it up so that it can just serve its purpose to the community...Because that’s what the community needs. Think of longevity” (Warren, SEAI). He asserted the importance of finding a way to ensure that the community can experience a long-lasting positive impact of having a sustainable source of energy.

Another SEAI entrepreneur also acknowledge that self-sufficiency means going beyond dependence on limited resources and this shows it to be a fundamental requirement of sustainability. In discussing renewable energy clusters in other countries, this entrepreneur asserted that renewable energy practices would have to find a way to become self-sustaining to offer true return to the local community. Analysis revealed a belief that self-sufficiency is important for legitimacy, and that self-sufficiency is not just economically sustainable but also implies sustainability for the people of the community. The sustainability-oriented legitimacy focus of these entrepreneurs is unique in the context of the predominantly mainstream-economic oriented nature of responses amongst SEAI entrepreneurs regarding legitimacy goals. This still demonstrates the presence of an organising principle for a sustainability-mission-oriented logic across the field. This also reflects findings from award scheme documentation which emphasise the need for going “beyond best practice” (SEAI, 2017).
For entrepreneurs of SEI, it can be seen from Table 5.6 that the legitimacy goal of having their sustainability mission and venture become self-sufficient emerged throughout five of ten entrepreneur accounts of their legitimation behaviour. This was also a feature of the contextual interview and documentation pertaining to the SEAI award scheme, as it was mentioned that these entrepreneurs need to focus on ‘what can be’ rather than ‘what is’ in their sustainability efforts, developing innovative solutions that are self-sustaining. While one entrepreneur discussed self-sufficiency as a requirement for his enterprise to be perceived as legitimate internationally (Ed, SEI), the other four discussed self-sufficiency in relation to how it is important for the legitimacy of the field in Ireland. Ed however, does not export and represents a small enterprise. This finding indicates that he thinks in terms of context and the ‘big-picture’ regarding sustainability. The legitimacy goals of the other four SEI entrepreneurs were that the sustainability mission of the field be recognised and appreciated into the future, and their short-term goal is putting in place measures to teach skills and shift thinking to facilitate this. For example, “We must be working towards the bigger goal of sustainable development through these incremental changes in practice...being sustainable is not about the now, its future generations seeing the effects of these changes” (Pat, SEI).

Entrepreneurs of both groups who mentioned legitimacy goals reflecting the presence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic demonstrated a high valuation of this goal, perhaps because it aligns with their personal feelings and views (orientation) on sustainability. Therefore, their pursuit of this goal in legitimation emerged as something that is done more substantively rather than strategically in that they easily conformed to this logic and no conflict was evident. As these legitimacy goals go beyond a mainstream-economic-oriented conception of sustainability and instead incorporate social and environmental sustainability concerns, they are the first source of evidence found of organising principles for a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in the field. This evidence empirically supports the conceptual framework as it demonstrates how environmental and social sustainability pillars manifest as a sustainability-mission-oriented logic, and that this can be identified through examining the principles towards which entrepreneurs organise their legitimacy goals.
### Table 5.6 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Organising Principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Relationship and Consensus Goals</th>
<th>Self-Sufficiency Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>&quot;increasing recognition to connect up with others doing these things nationally&quot;</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>&quot;business for the community in a sustainable way to maintain it...so that it’s self-funding... Think of longevity&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>&quot;becoming self-sufficient... funding dependency, that’s completely unsustainable&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>*Sustainability achieved through thinking “collectively”</td>
<td>* Creating something self-sufficient by instilling sustainability values and skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>&quot;hope that people will self-educate and become aware”, leading to self-sufficiency</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SEAI

SEI
<p>| | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>“together with all these wonderful like-minded people...gives us strength in numbers...formed lasting relationships”</td>
<td>“beyond sustainability” towards self-sufficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>Relationships with “core group of my customers that are total ethical consumers”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>“join together in conversations of sustainability...community development, sustaining communities”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>“important to be connected”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Not compromising on sustainability in these relationships important</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“self sufficiency” ultimate legitimacy goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>“respect for the actual work” from like-minded stakeholders</td>
<td>“bigger goal...not about now...future generations”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Context Description*
5.3.2 Perceived Dominant Sources

Section 5.2.2 showed that entrepreneurs were found to view sources of legitimacy that provide conflict avoidance, favourable image and finances as dominant. Despite this, not all of the sources identified adhered to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic, and a sustainability-mission-oriented logic was also identified through sources of legitimacy that provide conflict avoidance and favourable image. Entrepreneurs from both SEAI and SEI mentioned a number of key sources of legitimacy that represent a sustainability-mission oriented logic, further demonstrating the presence of this logic in the field.

Conflict Avoidance

The first way in which the presence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic was identified was through entrepreneurs’ accounts of the importance of avoiding conflict in the field as a source of legitimacy. Across both groups of entrepreneurs, they discussed the power held by certain organisations and groups that adhere to this logic, and that there could be negative legitimacy consequences for not abiding by the rules that they set. This was apparent amongst SEI entrepreneurs, with six of ten mentioning both formal and informal rules and norms. For example, national sustainability policy, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Fair Trade, and sustainability-minded community members were all mentioned as sources of legitimacy. One entrepreneur discussed how he believes it’s important to replicate national sustainability policy in practice: “it’s important not to get on the wrong side of things, and anything about sustainable living and sustainable economies, any national policy like that is sort of what we try to replicate” (Eammon, SEI). Another gave an example of how informal accountability is a direct source of legitimacy: “Our main source of legitimacy is always the ethical and non-ethical public…it’s an issue of consciousness and conscience” (Laura, SEI). Findings demonstrate that a number of key sources of legitimacy in the field represent a sustainability- mission-oriented logic, and that the rules and norms set by these sources must be adhered to in order to achieve legitimacy. Analysis revealed that SEI entrepreneurs are very conscious of the value of adhering to these sources in legitimation, suggestive of a more strategic approach to legitimation. The implications of this are discussed in Chapter Seven.

For the SEAI entrepreneurs, the importance of avoiding conflict by adhering to rules and norms set by sources of legitimacy representing a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in the field was also a feature of six of eleven entrepreneur accounts. Table 5.7 demonstrates that
these entrepreneurs view a number of national organisations, such as the EPA, the SEAI, and a number of international policy makers concerned with sustainability as important sources of legitimacy in the field: “The EPA have to be mentioned, we look to them as much as they look to us, or at us...scrutiny” (Eammon, SEAI). Entrepreneurs across enterprise type and structure discuss a number of ways in which they attempt to avoid conflict by adhering to the formal rules and regulations, for example, by developing policies within their own enterprises which reflect these rules. Also, two entrepreneurs operating in the sustainable building sector mentioned that they see the efforts they make to adhere to these rules for legitimacy as counterproductive to sustainability. This shows that, even though they are attempting to avoid conflict by adhering to rules, they face internal conflict as a result of adhering to rules. One entrepreneur also referred to the importance of informal rules or norms set by other field members such as knowing who holds the power in his local community, which was also a feature of SEI entrepreneur legitimation across the lifecycle.

Overall, both SEAI and SEI entrepreneurs report similar sustainability-mission-oriented field members as sources of legitimacy, and report that these sources in particular provide a means of avoiding conflict. The frequency with which this point of following the rules so as to avoid conflict within the wider industry emerged in analysis shows that entrepreneurs operate within a highly regulated field. Entrepreneurs also explicitly acknowledge the utility of engaging in legitimation activities to adhere to these sources, suggesting a largely strategic approach to legitimation towards a sustainability-mission-oriented logic.

Image
The other key finding regarding sources was that entrepreneurs of both SEAI and SEI expressed how dominant sources of legitimacy in the field enable them to achieve or maintain a favourable image. Whereas many of these sources were found to adhere to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in section 5.2.2, many were also found to adhere to a sustainability-mission-oriented logic. For the SEAI, seven entrepreneurs mentioned these sources of legitimacy as having a positive effect on image. Table 5.7 demonstrates that these sources are organisations such as the SEAI as well as local community organisations and groups. Noel discussed the importance of visibility and having an image of sustainability for legitimacy: “with the bike scheme you know a kid can just hop on a bike...the bike scheme is very inspirational, very visible like the bikes are on our brochures and Facebook and they’re right there out in the car parks so sustainability is in your face” (Noel, SEAI). An important point
was that many end-users are sustainability-minded and entrepreneurs need to convince them that their sustainability offering is truly sustainable rather than being ‘for show’: For example, “green energy became the hot topic then, it became the hot thing to get into...people in this field are increasingly looking at how truly sustainable you are, how you can show that” (Dan, SEAI). A positive image among sustainability-oriented bodies and individuals emerged as an important source of legitimacy for enterprises of different sizes and across the business life-cycle, including relatively new enterprises. This demonstrates that even entrepreneurs representing not yet well established enterprises (less than three years old) understand the importance of image, and the necessity to demonstrate it strategically towards a sustainability-mission-oriented logic.

A sustainability-mission-oriented logic as a source of legitimacy was even more apparent for the SEI entrepreneurs across the business lifecycle and across other factors such as size, with eight out of ten discussing how adhering to these sources of legitimacy provide them with a favourable image. For example, entrepreneurs discuss how being part of a growing sustainability movement with a positive image in the country creates legitimacy for them and the field itself, while others describe how the sustainability awarding body has helped create a positive image for their own enterprise and increase their legitimacy: “they saw what we were about and encouraged us and helped shape us actually into a more verified version of what we were initially presenting” (Laura, SEI). These entrepreneurs referred to sources of legitimacy such as the sustainability-oriented business community and sustainability-minded end-users, which reflects the presence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in the field. Documentation also frequently showed evidence of entrepreneurs attempting to present a positive image towards sources of this nature, such as describing themselves as part of the growing sustainability movement or emphasising the authenticity of their sustainability offering (see Table 5.7). This is another key finding for the conceptual framework as it is further evidence of how environmental and social sustainability pillars manifest as a sustainability-mission-oriented logic, and that this can be identified through examining the perceived dominant sources of legitimacy that these entrepreneurs target in their legitimation.
Table 5.7 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Perceived Dominant Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Conflict Avoidance</th>
<th>Image</th>
<th>SEAI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td><strong>Not applicable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not applicable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td>“The EPA have to be mentioned, we look to them as much as they look to us, or at us...scrutiny”</td>
<td><strong>Not applicable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td><strong>Not applicable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not applicable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>“We try to capture market leading, cutting edge efficiency” which is important in small sustainability community</td>
<td>“now the focus is on pure sustainability”, must show this for good image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>*Adhering to regulation not good for sustainability as its inefficient</td>
<td>Favourable image with sustainability-oriented end-user as “Word of mouth is very important”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td><strong>Not applicable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Not applicable</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>*Keeping up to date on European sustainability policy important</td>
<td>“the bike scheme is very inspirational, very visible like the bikes are on our brochures and Facebook and they’re right there out in the car parks so sustainability is in your face”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**Website, blog and a number of press releases communicate a sustainability image, including mentioning the winning of “an award for sustainability”.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>*Knowing people in the sustainability community crucial to avoid trouble</td>
<td>Relationships with “dolphin watch group for example, eco-focused people so people that are worried about the environment” important for image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td><strong>Not applicable</strong></td>
<td>Understanding “needs…and their vision for the sustainable future” of like-minded stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Demonstrating adherence to international sustainability policies important</strong></td>
<td><strong>Company website extensively details adherence to sustainable procurement</strong></td>
<td><strong>“huge CSR commitment, social responsibility so we’re very proactive in our community”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dan</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>“people in this field are increasingly looking at how truly sustainable you are, how you can show that”</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charlotte</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frank</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>“it’s important not to get on the wrong side of things…anything about sustainable living and sustainable economies, any national policy… we try to replicate”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nathan</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>“regulation around environmental protection… what we do would be considered above and beyond compliance”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>website mentions carbon footprint of every building, discusses “responsible tourism”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Notes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Award body helped build sustainability image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**Website and social media mention award</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>“you have to think of who’s regulating all this so the World Fair Trade Organisation, the FairTrade Labelling Organisation, the UK based Ethical Trading Initiative”*Favourable image with ethical consumers important ** Website, blog and posters extensively describe the ethical mission of the enterprise and the entrepreneur’s sustainability orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We regulate each other to an extent, that’s an important commitment…to keep ourselves and others at a standard”</td>
<td>*Favourable image with ethical consumers important ** Website, blog and posters extensively describe the ethical mission of the enterprise and the entrepreneur’s sustainability orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>* Bodies concerned with setting standards and regulating sustainability issues are important</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“new standards for local community development… the environmental pillar”</td>
<td>*Expressing gratitude to volunteers good for image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>** Social media page publishes the names of volunteers and thanks them for their work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Expressing gratitude to volunteers good for image</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>** Social media page publishes the names of volunteers and thanks them for their work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Informal accountability of “ethical public”</td>
<td>“[awarding body] reflects the mood of the community” so good for legitimacy from likeminded stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>** Website, blog, posters and promotional material emphasise the responsibility of the consumer to be accountable</td>
<td>*Sustainability award brings respect from likeminded stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Sustainability award brings respect from likeminded stakeholders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>“some of these (international) standards are crucially important”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Context Description **Documentation
5.3.3 Means
As entrepreneurs discussed the means through which they pursue legitimacy, evidence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic emerged. These means can be categorised into two mechanisms; demonstrating their sustainability offering and demonstrating their sustainability values. The following sections demonstrate how a sustainability-mission-oriented logic became apparent in the legitimation of these entrepreneurs, demonstrating the similarities and differences between the two groups.

Sustainability Offering
Eight of eleven SEAI entrepreneurs emphasised the value of communicating the sustainability offering of their product or service in gaining legitimacy. Throughout entrepreneur accounts and documentation, it emerged that this means of legitimacy was carried out in order to gain legitimacy from field members who represent a sustainability-mission-oriented logic. Table 5.8 illustrates how SEAI entrepreneurs strategically engaged in practices that would most effectively communicate their sustainability offering to potential end-users: “I suppose what we're trying to call out is that our product is by a significant factor, more sustainable in terms of...energy applications, resource applications, and by-product applications...that is our key message” (William, SEAI). Another entrepreneur discussed the use of the actual term sustainability itself as more effective than alternatives such as CSR in communicating his sustainability offering: “Sustainability probably is one of the terms we use most, you know CSR is preferred by bigger companies but sustainability is something everyone can understand” (Tom, SEAI). The term sustainability was also mentioned as important by both stakeholders who were interviewed in that it effectively communicates the sustainability offering of the enterprise.

Additionally, five SEAI entrepreneurs discussed using the sustainability award to communicate their sustainability offering. Highlighting their award was found to be something that facilitates their inclusion in the sustainability movement in Ireland which indicates progress and innovation, resulting in legitimacy from those aligned to a sustainability-mission-oriented logic:

“I think the award is one that you kind of would need to be considered in a certain league in this sector yeah, and I wanted to be part of it... it’s very important for legitimacy in this field certainly in Ireland...they definitely encourage healthy competition which achieves the end
goal of more engagement in energy efficiency practices” (Liam, SEAI). Entrepreneurs were found to engage in this means of legitimation in the start-up phase when trying to first gain legitimacy, as well as a means of maintaining legitimacy that they had already gained in the field over time. Given the frequency with which this was mentioned as a useful means of legitimation for small, medium and large enterprises at all stages of the business lifecycle, and positive valuation given to it as a strategic means of legitimation by entrepreneurs, it is clearly an important means of legitimation representing the presence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic.

The presence of this logic was also evident in six of ten SEI entrepreneur accounts of how they pursue legitimacy, demonstrating that it was slightly less prevalent a feature of SEI interviews than SEAI, but a sustainability-oriented logic was still clearly evident. Table 5.8 illustrates the ways in which these entrepreneurs communicate their sustainability offering to gain legitimacy. Three entrepreneurs mentioned the role of the sustainability award in helping them communicate their sustainability offering, which was also found for SEAI entrepreneurs. For example: “our idea was not the kind of idea that people could grasp easily, [the award] certainly legitimised it for us as it gave us that courage to go to people and say you will listen to me because I've won this award” (Nora, SEI).

Across both groups, stakeholders and awarding body representatives interviewed also explicitly mentioned the award as an effective means for entrepreneurs to communicate their sustainability offering. Additionally, entrepreneurs discussed the importance of sustainability-minded suppliers, customers and community members, and gave examples of how they communicate their sustainability offering to gain legitimacy with these field members. Both groups of entrepreneurs acknowledge the importance of demonstrating the authenticity and value of their sustainability offering as a means of legitimacy in similar ways, and both demonstrate understanding of its strategic utility in the field, acknowledging this in discussions of legitimation behaviour and communicating this throughout documentation. Entrepreneurs representing a range of enterprise types from diverse sectors such as renewable energy, land conservation and ethical clothing were found to demonstrate their sustainability offering as a means of legitimacy, demonstrating its value for legitimacy across the field.

Sustainability Values
Evidence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic also became apparent as entrepreneurs discussed their experience of demonstrating their sustainability values. However, this was not reported as directly valuable for legitimacy and was only the case for two SEAI entrepreneurs. Further, demonstrating sustainability values was not found to be valuable for legitimacy throughout documentation, stakeholder or awarding body representative interviews for this group. Table 5.8 shows how these entrepreneurs believe that getting involved in sustainability initiatives outside their own enterprises shows their communities that they personally care about sustainability. Entrepreneurs report that this helps them to gain a level of respect from their communities, but that it is not directly beneficial for legitimacy as their local communities are largely indifferent. Although this was only reported by two SEAI entrepreneurs, it does provide further evidence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic, as it shows that these entrepreneurs believe some of their sustainability-minded community members respect their values. These two entrepreneurs operate in diverse sectors of sustainable building and small scale renewable energy projects, with one offering Business to Consumer (BtoC) services and the other Business to Business (BtoB). To that end, values might emerge as indirectly valuable across a range of such factors. Further, these entrepreneurs referred to deliberate attempts at demonstrating values in order to gain legitimacy, suggesting a strategic approach to legitimation. For example, Eric talked specifically about how he tries to show the local community that he “personally [has] a huge amount of respect for natural community development”, but also discussed how he faces challenges in doing so. Overall, eight SEAI entrepreneurs showed evidence of this logic in discussing their means of legitimation, either through discussing the communication of their sustainability offering or their sustainability values as a means of achieving legitimacy. Three SEAI entrepreneurs did not discuss this logic, namely Entrepreneurs 1, 2 and 8, and each of these entrepreneurs was found in section 5.2.3 to have reported adherence to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic as a means of legitimation.

For SEI entrepreneurs, the number of entrepreneurs found to have demonstrated their sustainability values as a means of legitimacy was also low with only two entrepreneurs mentioning values in this way. Unlike the SEAI entrepreneurs above, these entrepreneurs referred to the demonstration of values as something that can facilitate the achievement of legitimacy from sustainability-minded field members. Despite this, documentation, stakeholder and awarding body representative interviews revealed that the demonstration of sustainability values was not as important as the demonstration of sustainability impact.
Table 5.8 shows how one entrepreneur specifically mentioned that she believes her passion was an important factor in winning the sustainability award and that this has had hugely positive effects on her legitimacy (Dawn, SEI). While this entrepreneur also reported that communicating her sustainability offering has helped with legitimacy, the other entrepreneur who mentioned sustainability values did not discuss the legitimacy benefit of his sustainability offering. Pat solely discussed how demonstrating to the community that he is personally interested in sustainability issues such as community development and sustainable transport helped with legitimacy. The two entrepreneurs who mentioned the utility of demonstrating sustainability values represented different stages of the business lifecycle as well as the diverse sectors of conservation and renewable energy, illustrating that values might be important for legitimacy across these factors. Although just two SEI entrepreneurs mentioned sustainability values, overall seven of these entrepreneurs discussed adherence to a sustainability-mission-oriented logic as a means of pursuing legitimacy. The three outlier entrepreneurs were all shown in section 5.2.3 to have demonstrated adherence to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic as the sole means of legitimacy. These findings provide further empirical evidence in support of the conceptual framework in that they demonstrate how environmental and social sustainability manifest as a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in the organisational field, and that this can be identified through examining the means through which entrepreneurs pursue legitimation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Sustainability Offering</th>
<th>Sustainability Values</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>“our product is by a significant factor, more sustainable in terms of energy applications, resource applications, and by-product applications…that is our key message”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**Company website and brochures: “The company has won a number of awards for its innovations in the field of renewable energy technology”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>“Sustainability probably is one of the terms we use most…CSR is preferred by bigger companies but sustainability is something everyone can understand”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>“Applied for [award] to reflect how sustainable we are…awards that we have won are included in our advertising to reflect our sustainability”</td>
<td>*Communicates values to sustainability-oriented end-users **website states he is: “guided by a deep-rooted appreciation for long term value and sustainable development”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>Award shows “engagement in energy efficiency practices” **Company website: “award winning team specialising in the advancement of the next generation of energy efficiency technologies”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Quote</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>“[Goal is] the social inclusion in rural towns...improving the rural economy...it’s more environmentally friendly...that’s what’s important to these people”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>“[Focus is] the people, the community...what their vision is and what they’re looking for in terms of sustainability and community development”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Social media page highlights importance of community members</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>Award helped communicate “saving of 26,000 tonnes of carbon” and “support to 81 community and voluntary groups”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>*Award helped communicate sustainability offering</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Sustainability award mentioned on company website</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SEI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>*Strong sustainability offering gains legitimacy from like-minded customers</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**Blog posts mention that his sustainability offering “not only benefit these sectors individually, but also our society and environment as a whole”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>*Award helped to communicate sustainability offering which was a “very strange concept for people to grasp”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Dawn   | “Fair Trade element...we’re striving to meet those criteria...includes empowerment of the producers...customers” | “[Awarding body] recognise that it takes real passion to develop a project to a standard where you’ll get their
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>“too... important that we provide them with the product that they desire”</td>
<td>attention” <strong>Blog details passion for her sustainability mission</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>“to provide a safe, open space ...something like that can affect mental health positively...it’s socially sustainable”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>Pursued award which “shape us actually into a more verified version of what we were initially”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>“the competition...we do get a bit of media attention anyway and we do get invited to speak at various things...that was great for getting our concept out there”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“my own personal interest in mental health and sustainable transport” helps with legitimacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Context Description

**Documentation
5.3.4 Challenges
The final way in which evidence of a sustainability-purpose-oriented logic was found in the legitimisation behaviour of these entrepreneurs was when they discussed a number of challenges they have faced in the field. Again, entrepreneurs were not asked about challenges yet nine of them proceeded to discuss this topic, and challenges revealed the nature of logics in the field. Specifically, SEAI entrepreneurs mentioned a micro versus macro issue with the sustainability field in Ireland, and entrepreneurs in both groups mentioned issues relating to the sustainability field not being legitimised in Ireland, as well as this field not being sustainable. These three challenges are elaborated on in the following sections, and Table 5.9 provides illustrative data and context descriptions.

Macro vs. Micro
The first way in which evidence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic emerged was when SEAI entrepreneurs discussed a macro level versus micro level issue in the sustainability field of Ireland. Four entrepreneurs from this group brought up how, compared to international counterparts, Ireland’s approach to sustainability is to think in terms of micro level changes, which results in inefficiency. Table 5.9 demonstrates how Nick explicitly referred to this problem in relation to experiencing pressure from the sustainable building sector to implement ‘passive housing standards’ which in reality are not the most suited to Ireland’s climate. Additionally, Eammon discussed the challenges of legitimising sustainable waste water treatment solutions in Ireland when for one, Ireland operates at a very small scale and two, Ireland has not shown evidence of being capable of joint-up, ‘big-picture’ thinking. Entrepreneurs’ accounts of their legitimisation challenges reveal the presence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in that they make reference to several sustainability-oriented dominant field members and the sustainability field itself. Although this was just a feature of four SEAI entrepreneur accounts, it was found to be an interesting feature of the data as it transcended sectors, business lifecycle stage and enterprise size. Those entrepreneurs who mentioned this issue of size were emphatic in their communication of the issue and discussed it in depth. In contrast, SEI entrepreneurs did not explicitly mention challenges relating to a micro versus macro issue in the sustainability field. However, these entrepreneurs also alluded to a number of challenges relating to this logic which will be demonstrated in the following sections.
Field Not Legitimised

A number of entrepreneurs from both groups also described having experienced challenges in attempting to pursue legitimacy for their enterprises as a result of the sustainability field itself not being legitimate in Ireland. Table 5.9 illustrates how this was expressed by two SEAI entrepreneurs. Warren discusses how there is a lack of legitimacy for the sustainable energy because the field is still emerging in Ireland, particularly in his area of hydrokinetic energy. This poses challenges for him when trying to gain legitimacy for his enterprise: “the field itself is still developing so...the sustainability image part of it is isn’t really legitimate at all yet...I don’t know how much value it really has” (Warren, SEAI). Additionally, Dan discussed how his enterprise has both social and environmental sustainable energy offerings, but that his socially-oriented end-users do not care about the sustainable energy offering as they do not see this as a legitimate sustainability offering: “they don’t understand or don’t care about energy efficiency, they’re connected with more pressing day to day issues” (Dan, SEAI). They see energy as associated with a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. These entrepreneurs both point to a lack of legitimacy for the area of sustainable energy in Ireland as it is an emerging area that is still largely associated with a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. As these entrepreneurs discuss how this presents challenges for legitimacy from sustainability-minded stakeholders, it illustrates the presence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in the field.

This was also a feature of SEI entrepreneur interviews as they discussed challenges associated with legitimation. Table 5.9 demonstrates how three SEI entrepreneurs mention challenges they have experienced relating to a sustainability-mission-oriented logic. For example, two entrepreneurs mentioned corruption and distrust of charities as having has a negative effect on the field and that this effect has trickled down and threatened their legitimacy. As expressed by one entrepreneur, distrust relating to accountability has put increased demands on her to justify herself as trustworthy and subsequently legitimate in how she manages donations and funding. Another entrepreneur articulated how the field of sustainable energy in Ireland suffers from issues of legitimacy due to its small size and slow rate of growth, and that this inevitably causes issues from anyone trying to gain legitimacy for sustainable energy enterprises: “Ireland is particularly vulnerable as Ireland relies really very heavily on fossil fuels still despite having huge absorption capacity for renewables we still have 95% of total primary energy requirement coming from fossil fuel if you can believe
These entrepreneurs all point to the field of sustainability-oriented enterprise, whether it be those who run socially-oriented enterprises or those in sustainable energy, as facing legitimacy challenges due to lack of legitimacy for the field overall. These entrepreneurs also represent enterprises at different stages of the lifecycle, demonstrating that this issue exists across factors of sector and enterprise age. Also, in explicitly discussing lack of legitimacy of the field as an issue, these entrepreneurs show an awareness of the importance of legitimacy in the field. This corresponds with the often strategic nature of their legitimation activity.

Field Not Sustainable
Entrepreneurs in both groups discussed the fact that the field of sustainability in Ireland is not actually sustainable which causes issues for legitimacy of the entire field as well as individuals pursuing legitimacy for their enterprises. Table 5.9 illustrates how four SEAI entrepreneurs mentioned the field as unsustainable: “I know the buzzword for green energy is sustainability at the moment but green energy on its own is not sustainable if you don’t have a market for green energy” (Dan, SEAI). Eammon and Warren discussed how they see sustainability as meaning self-sufficiency and endurance, but point out that the field in Ireland currently does not allow for either of these. The four entrepreneurs who discussed experiencing this legitimacy challenge represent different sectors and different enterprise types, illustrating how this challenge exists across the field. The ways in which they describe this challenge as damaging to the legitimacy of the sustainability field provides further evidence of a sustainability-purpose-oriented logic, as it shows that despite this challenge, sustainability efforts are being made. Overall, half of SEAI entrepreneurs discuss having experienced legitimation challenges relating to a sustainability-mission-oriented logic. This shows the presence of this logic while also suggesting it is not a stable source of legitimacy.

Just one SEI entrepreneur mentioned the challenge of competing for legitimacy in a field that itself is not sustainable. Pat, as can be seen in Table 5.9 asserts that what is being done is not enough for sustainability and Ireland is quite behind in terms of being a sustainable country. He emphasised this point by discussing how Ireland is a system that offers something like sustainability awards which actually take the focus away from the sustainability work being done and puts it on the entrepreneurs, which is counterproductive in his opinion. Overall, three SEI entrepreneurs discuss challenges of legitimation relating to a sustainability-mission-oriented logic. This shows that this was not a strong feature of the data, and challenges associated with this logic are less frequent for SEI entrepreneurs than SEAI. However, a
sustainability-mission-oriented logic was still a feature of the legitimation behaviour of both groups, showing its existence across the field. Table 5.10 summarises the frequency with which a sustainability-mission-oriented logic manifested in legitimation across the dimensions of organising principles, perceived dominant sources, means and challenges. The findings illustrated here provide key evidence for the conceptual framework on how both environmental and social sustainability pillars manifest as a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation. They show how examining the legitimation challenges reveal the presence of this logic in the organisational field.
Table 5.9 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Challenges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Micro v Macro</th>
<th>Field not Legitimised</th>
<th>Field not Sustainable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td>“around Europe... vision...room to think big...true sustainability... tangible impact there on an international scale that I just don’t feel in Ireland... when we’re dealing with a sector and country the size it is, and we’re not even on target”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“can’t keep going the way...is not an endless supply of fossil fuels...scarcity and politics are driving prices up and it’s unsustainable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>“no mid market, you're either a huge company or your tiny... Ireland it’s tiny... real global success you need to be working with [large players]”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“lack of joint up thinking and vision...bigger picture”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>“Micro versus macro is a huge thing to consider in sustainability. Ireland is not looking at the macro... Everything is small, local, micro issues in Ireland”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“[Award] increases the standard...the field is still very unsustainable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warren</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“legitimacy from the industry I think it’s something that’s lacking...field is still developing so...the sustainability image part of it is isn’t really legitimate”</td>
<td>“biggest challenge for renewable energy as it becomes self-sufficient because at the moment it’s not sustainable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eric</strong></td>
<td><em>Ireland’s micro thinking is a problem “small money... incremental and tedious and painstaking”</em></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evan</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dan</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“[Socially-oriented end-users] don’t understand or don’t care about energy efficiency”</td>
<td>“green energy on its own is not sustainable”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEI</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Charlotte</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frank</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nathan</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nora</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dawn</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beth</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td><em>Disassociate with distrust of charities: “disagreement with their definition of what a charity is... we do not want to be consider a charity because we’re not”</em></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helen</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td><em>Must show accountability for legitimacy “ quite a bit of distrust going on with charitable organisations”</em></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laura</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ed</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pat | Not applicable
---|---
*Sustainability field is illegitimate and slow: “Ireland is particularly vulnerable...relies really very heavily on fossil fuels”*
*Awards are distraction from lack of sustainability: “award is such an abstract thing... they want to see their lives improved”*
Table 5.10 Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Logic Frequency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Organising Principles</th>
<th>Perceived Dominant Sources</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>Consensus</td>
<td>Self-sufficiency</td>
<td>Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAI Sum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

214
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
<th>✔</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI Sum</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.4 Sustainability Logic Multiplicity

The field of sustainability-oriented enterprise has been assumed to be characterised by multiple logics in the literature (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011), yet few have confirmed this through examining entrepreneurial behaviour, much less legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs to determine if they indeed take measures to manage multiplicity (O’ Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011). Evidence of multiple logics in the form of both a mainstream-economic-oriented logic as well as a sustainability-mission-oriented logic were identified by the researcher in a number of ways in entrepreneurs’ accounts of the process of legitimacy, as well as throughout documentation, stakeholder and awarding body representative interviews. In addition, both groups of entrepreneurs were found to offer explicit examples of ways in which they have encountered this multiplicity.

Table 5.11 illustrates that direct evidence of multiplicity was found for eight SEAI entrepreneurs. For example, one entrepreneur stated: “Our purpose is sustainability, sustainable energy, saving energy, reducing costs for end-users and thus keeping them as customers long-term which has its many benefits. But what we do has to be commercially viable for us” (Nick, SEAI). This quote shows how the purpose of his enterprise encompasses both environmental and economic sustainability concerns, and that he must balance these concerns with the viability of his own enterprise. While this entrepreneur and one other discussed multiplicity in relation to their own enterprises, six SEAI entrepreneurs specifically acknowledge multiplicity in relation to what sustainability means to the field in Ireland. They emphasised it as a term that encompasses the interests of diverse stakeholders representing separate logics of economic, social and environmental sustainability. Whereas the analysis up to this point showed multiplicity existing at the broader level of mainstream-economic versus sustainability-mission be it environmental and/or social concerns, this revealed how entrepreneurs also acknowledge multiplicity between the individual sub-logics. Table 5.11 shows how three explicitly referred to the multiplicity between social and environmental, whereas the others focused on economic and environmental. Five entrepreneurs referred to how sustainability as a term is useful for bringing together separate but related elements of a common pursuit. Documentation also revealed evidence of multiplicity, and this was a feature of awarding body representative interviews for both groups.
Eight SEI entrepreneurs also provide direct evidence of logic multiplicity in their accounts of their legitimation. For example, four of these entrepreneurs revealed acknowledgement of multiplicity in the term sustainability itself, indicating that they see the sustainability field in Ireland as characterised by multiple logics of sustainability: “equality, equity, fairness, environment and people but money makes the world go around” (Dawn, SEI). They acknowledge that the field is made up of multiple stakeholders with divergent interests and for this reason, they incorporate measures in their enterprises to adhere to multiple logics simultaneously. Five specifically mention a social logic, while all mentioned the presence of an environmental and economic logic. Table 5.11 illustrates how SEI entrepreneurs also discuss multiplicity in the field in relation to the process of the award scheme in that they see going through the award process as a means of overcoming disparity between sustainability values and sustaining a business. It can be seen overall that SEAI and SEI are very similar in the extent to and ways in which they see multiplicity in the field. Nonetheless, neither of the groups provide much detail on the strategies they use to overcome multiplicity. Figures 5.3 and 5.4 below illustrate how the two groups of entrepreneurs compare with regards to the breakdown of sub logics. These NVivo Tree maps show the top most frequent words each group used in accounts of their legitimation behaviour that were coded by the researcher as relating to sustainability. While purple represents social sustainability, green represents environmental, blue represents economic and yellow represents overarching sustainability. This provides further evidence for the conceptual framework on how multiple sustainability pillars manifest as multiple logics in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, and is a further source of triangulation and subsequently validity for these findings.
Fig. 5.3 SEAI Sustainability NVivo Tree map

Fig. 5.4 SEI Sustainability NVivo Tree map
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Sustainability Logic Multiplicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Killian     | *Sees multiplicity emerge at the individual level in diverse stakeholders*  
**Company website and brochures specific to different products acknowledge multiplicity in discussing the cost-saving economic offering as well as emphasising the cutting edge environmental sustainability offering of his products.* |
| Eammon      | “renewable energy is in a way an alternative movement...to fossil fuels but it’s not ...we need both at the moment”  
“not even just renewable or sustainable energy, it’s much broader than that and it takes the combined effort of all of us really to do our bit towards sustainability.” |
| William     | “offer something that provides a sustainable solution in terms of reducing carbon footprint...but offering something that the mainstream sees as economically viable”  
“sustainability has legitimacy as a term...which actually, goes well beyond thinking about the material you use and is considerate of the human impact of environmental actions” |
| Tom         | “everything from biodiversity to solar to wind...the cost-saving efficiency side...it all helps the greater sustainability, sustainable development goal”  
*Within the area of sustainable energy, there are a diversity of areas that are grouped together due to the small size of the sector in Ireland, and both environmental and economic concerns are evident* |
| Nick        | “our purpose is sustainability, sustainable energy, saving energy, reducing costs for end-users and thus keeping them as customers long-term...has to be commercially viable for us” |
| Liam        | “sustainability...good all encompassing kind of term...cost reduction and improved working conditions and reduction of inefficiencies in systems which reduce CO2 emissions reducing carbon footprint”  
**Company website mentions multiple sustainability concerns** |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>&quot;I see sustainability as very much so a political issue made up of a number of voices with competing concerns’’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Refers specifically to economic versus environmental interests as an ongoing battle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**Company website and social media webpage outlines how individual community members have different goals representing either their environmental or economic interests: “create employment on the islands”, “reduce and gradually remove the dependency…on fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal, including transport) by replacing them with alternative and more sustainable sources of energy”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>“If you look at where our beneficiaries are placed within our model, it’s at the top… have to offer an economic incentive but I believe the incentive based on social and environmental impact is increasingly valued”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**Company website explicitly refers to social, environmental and economic goals of enterprise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>“we divide everything under environmental, social and economic responsibility policies”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>**Company website and blog discuss these policies as separate but related in that they all count towards sustainability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>*Experience of multiplicity between economic and environmental logics in relation to going through the sustainability award scheme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>“equality, equity, fairness, environment and people but money makes the world go around and keeps my business ticking so I’ll throw that in there too”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Acknowledged multiplicity in relation to the sustainability award process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Company website and blog show how she presents herself as both a business woman and someone who is passionate about ethical fashion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Beth   | “balancing act…staying true to who we are but at the same time, like identifying that our mission statement and our vision would be
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Helen</th>
<th>“both social and environmental sustainability” in mission statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>*Ethical clothing is characterised by clothes with both a mainstream-economic-oriented appeal as well as a sustainability-purpose oriented appeal: “my experience with both sides of the coin brought me to where I am”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>“a shared understanding with groups involved in different activities, maybe different elements of sustainability but you have the…common understanding”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Term sustainability used in “financial sector, in renewable energy, in politics you see it used all the time…reducing carbon emission, to coming up with an economically viable way to sustain or to progress society, to develop communities”, “it’s an economic issue as much as a social issue”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.5 Conclusion

How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal the pillars of sustainability as locally embedded logics of the organisational field?

This chapter has demonstrated the findings of the current study as they relate to research question one. In doing so, the findings have shown how the presence of two overarching field logics is revealed in the organising principles of legitimacy behaviour, perceived dominant legitimacy sources, legitimacy means, and the legitimacy challenges of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. Examining how logics are revealed through each of these dimensions has provided a comprehensive view of how logics manifest in legitimation. These findings address a number of critical gaps in the literature on sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation on how the pillars of sustainability emerge as multiple field logics in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011), how examining legitimation is an effective means of identifying logics (Nelson, 2012; Thornton et al., 2012), and on the make-up of the organisational field in which they operate (Fliqstein and McAdam, 2012; Hoffman, 2000). These findings will be discussed in Chapter Seven with regard to how they empirically and theoretically contribute to the extant literature, and inform the framework of this study.

Comparing the legitimation behaviour of two groups of entrepreneurs presumed to reflect the multiplicity of logics in the field, this chapter presented the findings on how a mainstream-economic-oriented logic was identified for both groups of entrepreneurs, but to differing extents depending on a number of factors. Firstly, this logic was identified as an organising principle for the legitimacy goals of both SEAI and SEI entrepreneurs, but was found to be much more common for SEAI and was a strong feature of their legitimation. Next, in examining perceived dominant sources of legitimacy, it was found to be a strong feature of legitimation behaviour for entrepreneurs of both SEAI and SEI, with all SEAI entrepreneur mentioning sources adhering to this logic, and all but one SEI entrepreneurs mentioning sources of this nature. Evidently, it was a slightly stronger feature of SEAI legitimation, and was also given a more positive valuation by this group. This was similar to what was found when examining the means through which they pursue legitimacy, as all but two SEAI entrepreneur mentioning sources adhering to this logic, and all SEI entrepreneurs mentioning...
sources of this nature. This shows that it was strong for both but a slightly stronger feature of SEI entrepreneur legitimation. Finally, examining the challenges associated with legitimation revealed that six SEAI and seven SEI entrepreneurs experience challenges relating to this logic, providing further evidence of this logic in the field, and showing and both groups of entrepreneurs experience if to similar extents. In addition, entrepreneurs of both groups largely pursued this logic strategically, but some also did so substantively, and it was a feature of legitimation activity across the business lifecycle, different sectors, company size and structure.

Additionally, this chapter illustrated the findings on how a sustainability-mission-oriented logic was also identified for both groups of entrepreneurs, and showed how this logic manifested in the legitimation behaviour of both groups. Firstly, in relation to organising principles, it was found to feature in the legitimation behaviour of entrepreneurs from both SEAI and SEI in the form of legitimacy goals, but was far more prominent for SEI entrepreneur legitimation and was found to be a strong feature of their legitimation. Secondly, examining the perceived dominant sources of legitimacy in the field revealed that every SEI discussed sources that adhere to this logic whereas all but three SEAI entrepreneurs did, again showing that this logic is a stronger feature of SEI legitimation. Thirdly, the means through which entrepreneurs pursue legitimacy revealed that eight SEAI entrepreneurs mentioned means of legitimacy that adhere to this logic and seven SEI entrepreneurs did. Therefore, this logic was found to be quite clearly present across the field for both group of entrepreneurs, and both reported similar means of pursuing legitimacy. Finally, in examining the challenges of legitimation, six SEAI and three SEI entrepreneurs were found to have experienced challenges relating to this logic. SEAI entrepreneurs clearly experience more of a challenge with this logic, but it is not a strong feature of legitimation for either group. In addition, entrepreneurs of both groups engaged in strategic legitimation more frequently than substantive, demonstrating awareness of the presence and importance of adhering to this logic, and providing examples of how they purposefully do this along the business lifecycle and across enterprise type, size and structure.

This chapter also demonstrates the findings on how entrepreneurs identify logic multiplicity in the field. It showed that across both groups of entrepreneurs, a distinction between economic, social and environmental logics became apparent whereas up to that point, analysis had shown the separation to occur at the level of mainstream-economic versus
sustainability-mission. The dichotomy between the latter levels emerged as stronger, while the social and environmental logics were found to be complementary sublogics within the sustainability-mission logic. This important finding will be discussed in Chapter Seven with regards to how it extends extant literature (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011). Overall, entrepreneur accounts of their legitimation practices, stakeholder and awarding body representative interviews as well as documentation revealed multiplicity to be a strong feature of the field.

As well as signifying how logics can be identified through examining entrepreneur legitimation, this chapter, in turn, presented the findings on the role played by these dominant logics in shaping legitimation. It illustrated how both groups of entrepreneurs often perceive them as distinct, competing logics in the field. This provides the context for Chapter Six which presents the findings on the role of agency in responding to the dominant logics in legitimation. While the focus of this chapter was on how field-level sustainability expectations manifest as logics in legitimation and how this provides insight into the logic make-up of the field, the next chapter focuses on the role of the entrepreneur in responding to these logics by utilising prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention as agency.
Chapter Six Findings II: The Role of Agency in Legitimation

6.1 Introduction
Having presented the findings of the research as they relate to the presence of logics in entrepreneurial legitimation in the previous chapter, chapter six presents the research findings as they relate to the role of constructs driving sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship behaviour as agency. Specifically, the findings on the role of the constructs ‘prior sustainability knowledge’, ‘sustainability orientation’ and ‘sustainability intention’ in legitimation behaviour are presented, as per the conceptual framework. In doing so, this chapter demonstrates the legitimation activities through which entrepreneurs respond to dominant logics in the field and how these constructs manifest as agency in legitimation. The findings presented throughout this chapter capture how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs experience post-legitimation.

From the discussion of the literature in chapter three, it was seen that field logics have been deemed responsible for guiding legitimation behaviour in organisational fields. The findings of Chapter Five detailed this process in two groups of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs who exist in a field characterised by multiple logics. Despite this, we have also seen from the literature reviewed in Chapter Three that entrepreneurs do not unquestioningly adhere to the prescriptions of dominant field logics but instead, utilize their agency and respond strategically to these logics (Suddaby, 2010). In this chapter, findings on the manner in which constructs specific to these entrepreneurs are utilised as agency in two groups of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs will be demonstrated. This will address research question two: How do prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention manifest as factors of entrepreneurial agency shape sustainability-oriented entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field?

Skilful strategic legitimation requires a diverse array of techniques and a discriminating awareness of which situations merit which responses (Suchman, 1995). A number of typologies exist in the literature for strategic, as well as substantive responses to institutional factors. These are typologies of actions available to individual entrepreneurs in legitimation (Clarke, 2011). The findings presented here detail how entrepreneurs in the two groups studied utilize constructs in legitimation behaviours that can be theoretically defined as either conformance (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002), acquiescence, avoidance, defiance (Oliver, 1991),
alliance or anchoring (Turcan, 2013). Entrepreneurs in both cases were also found to utilise these constructs in a way that did not match current theoretical explanations of strategic and substantive legitimation behaviour and as a result, the current study offers a new dimension to the literature. A key finding in the current study was that the legitimation behaviour between the two groups of entrepreneurs differed due to how these individual constructs manifested rather than as a result of organisational field factors. Documentation, interviews with awarding body representatives and interviews with stakeholders for both groups are referred to throughout this chapter where they provide a source of triangulation for findings.

6.2 Prior Sustainability Knowledge

This section will detail the findings on the role of the construct of prior sustainability knowledge in the legitimation activities of two groups of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. Individuals are more likely to discover venturing opportunities the greater their prior knowledge or experience in the sustainability field, and the more they perceive this field as being threatened (Patzelt and Shepherd, 2011). However, from the review of the literature in chapters two and three, it became clear that very few studies have conceptually or empirically examined the role of prior knowledge in legitimation (O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016). To date, none have studied prior knowledge as a strategic resource which can be utilized as agency in legitimation.

The following subsections detail the different ways in which prior knowledge manifested in the legitimation activities of both SEAI and SEI entrepreneurs. They reveal how three different types of legitimation activities, namely alliance, conformance and condition, were identified. The first of these, the alliance legitimation strategy is characterised as one where entrepreneurs will enter cooperative agreements, partnerships, and joint-ventures (Turcan, 2013) with well-established entities in the field with the aim of increasing features such as their visibility, reputation, image, and prestige (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001; Colombo et al., 2009). Aligning to such entities is therefore beneficial to legitimacy. A conformance strategy is one in which the entrepreneur will attempt to match the structures and practices of existing competitors who already have legitimacy (Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002), and in doing so, they themselves will gain legitimacy. The third way in which prior knowledge was found to manifest in legitimation was as a condition that enabled the continuation of the entrepreneur.
If the term ‘condition’ is taken to mean a circumstance indispensable to some result, prior knowledge was found to be indispensable to entrepreneurs in achieving their sustainability mission through entrepreneurial means. Therefore, this study defines the final way in which prior knowledge manifests as a ‘condition approach’. It is referred to as an approach rather than a strategy as it is more substantive in nature.

The following subsections will show the findings on how many similarities were found between SEAI and SEI entrepreneurs in relation to how prior knowledge manifested in legitimation through alliance, conformance and condition. It should be noted that demonstration of prior knowledge featured across documentation for many entrepreneurs despite not having emerged during interviews. For example, the website of one entrepreneur states: “The company has assembled an exceptional team with a broad range of experience that combines to create a powerful strategic and operational unit. Collectively, the team has expertise in engineering, corporate finance, energy trading, project and commercial development, sales and regulatory compliance” (Killian, SEAI). This illustrates the communication of prior knowledge in alliance with a mainstream logic, as well as compliance with a mainstream logic, despite this not being a feature of the key data source of interviews. In addition, interviews with the two stakeholders revealed the importance of demonstrating prior knowledge for legitimacy for both groups of entrepreneurs, although this was not found to be something that was explicitly taken into consideration in the awarding scheme according to interviews with representatives. The next section demonstrates how prior knowledge was found to be used in an alliance strategy towards both a mainstream-economic-oriented logic as well as a sustainability-purpose-oriented logic by these entrepreneurs.

6.2.1 Logic Alliance
The first key finding in relation to the role of prior knowledge is that it emerged as useful for aligning to well established organisations, and this was found for both SEAI and SEI entrepreneurs. Eight out of eleven SEAI and five out of ten SEI entrepreneurs specifically discussed how having prior experience in this field was useful for developing the ability to ascertain which organisations are worth building alliances, partnerships and relationships with and understanding the legitimacy benefits that such alliances might result in. Table 6.1 present data, context descriptions and reference to documentation that illustrate how national
institutions such as universities and large international companies were mentioned as those well-established organisations which entrepreneurs use their prior knowledge to align with. From the findings presented in chapter five, it became evident that a mainstream-economic-oriented logic was a clear dominant logic in the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. The findings presented here correspond with the findings of chapter five in that they clearly identify that entrepreneurs carry out legitimation to align with entities representing a mainstream-economic-oriented logic.

Table 6.1 demonstrates how for five out of eleven SEAI entrepreneurs, prior knowledge was found to be useful for aligning to well-established mainstream organisations. However, entrepreneurs largely referred to their prior mainstream knowledge rather than prior sustainability knowledge. Their desire to discuss their mainstream industry knowledge and experience over that of sustainability suggests that they value this knowledge more. This was also explicitly mentioned by two entrepreneurs. For example, when asked about his prior sustainability experience, Warren was dismissive of this and stated that his mainstream industry experience taught him of the importance of pursuing strategic alliances with key industry players over smaller industry members, as this is how to achieve “real global success” and “legitimacy”. Another entrepreneur discussed that his mainstream industry experience has taught him that aligning with a university will have positive legitimacy effects, whereas another discussed how investors want to know about your mainstream business experience. An interview with a stakeholder of SEAI entrepreneurs elaborated on how his awareness of the level of mainstream expertise of a particular entrepreneur positively influenced his perception of him as legitimate. It can be seen that these entrepreneurs discuss a range of mainstream-economic-oriented stakeholders to which they demonstrate their prior mainstream knowledge in order to achieve legitimacy, demonstrating the importance of prior knowledge across these stakeholder types. The majority of these entrepreneurs represent relatively new enterprises, suggesting that the demonstration of prior knowledge is particularly important in the early stage of the business lifecycle.

Just one SEI entrepreneur mentioned the utility of her prior sustainability knowledge in aligning with established mainstream organisations, namely universities and schools, as can be seen in Table 6.1 below. She mentions how her “background is philosophy, we used the philosophy of deep ecology and the science of James Lovelock to underpin what we were doing. It helps build a bit of confidence when we’re talking to any of the big [universities]”
as “partners” (Nora, SEI). She discusses her formal education on a topic of sustainability, unlike SEAI entrepreneurs who focused on mainstream industry experience. She also referred to her educational experience frequently in relation to legitimation, indicating how strongly she values it. It was surprising that just one SEI entrepreneur discussed the use of prior knowledge in legitimation in this way given that, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, a mainstream-economic-oriented logic was an important feature of their legitimation. However, the majority of these entrepreneurs were found to use their prior knowledge in alternative ways in legitimation, as will be illustrated below. Overall, using prior knowledge to form alliances with well-established members of the field who adhere to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic was not a strong feature of the data for this group.

Analysis also revealed how entrepreneurs of both groups use their prior knowledge in developing alliances with field members associated with a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in the pursuit of legitimacy. Table 6.1 illustrates how this was a feature of the data for five SEI entrepreneurs. For example, in discussing how he gets volunteers on board with his conservation work and how he maintains those relationships, Frank said: “You can get more from people if they know you’re an expert. You know who to keep happy...how to keep people interested...your experience is what’s valued” (Frank, SEI). While this entrepreneur and two others refer to expertise in their area of sustainability, two entrepreneurs refer to how formal education in a sustainability-related field has helped in the development of alliances and partnerships with like-minded field members. In addition, analysis revealed that prior knowledge is used by these entrepreneurs to both gain legitimacy with new customers and community members as well as to maintain legitimacy with existing, long-term customers (see Table 6.1). For example, Dawn refers to how she must maintain a high ethical standard to maintain legitimacy with her existing core group of ethical customers. These entrepreneurs represent enterprises at various stages of development and enterprises active in different areas of sustainability such as land conservation and ethical clothing (see Table 6.1). Evidently, prior sustainability knowledge was found to be a valuable construct in legitimation across these factors.

Findings show that four SEAI entrepreneurs also use prior knowledge to align to sustainability-minded field members such as local community members and potential and existing customers. Table 6.1 illustrates how SEAI entrepreneurs describe instances in which, for example, experience in the field has been useful in anticipating and responding to
community needs. Eric explains how his “experience with industry and its problems and a curiosity for the underlying cause of these problems and possible solutions” has helped him form relationships with local sustainability-minded community members. Still, these entrepreneurs once again refer mostly to their experience in mainstream industry. Another example was given by an entrepreneur detailing the specific skills that are developed in a non-sustainability setting that translated into successful legitimation in the sustainability sector:

“One of the big things I bring to the table is that I’m not from a sustainability background, I’m a businessman...kind of escaping the same old, same old and what we think we can achieve and looking past that to a place where what’s being done globally can be achieved in our little country...so I think that people with a strong global business mindset, it fosters the creativity and innovation that’s needed in the sustainability field and I think it’s something that will be required to legitimise sustainability” (Evan, SEAI).

The findings presented here are consistent with those of chapter five in that they clearly identify that entrepreneurs in both groups carry out legitimation in response to a sustainability-purpose-oriented logic. Prior knowledge emerged as an import construct in the development of partnerships and development of relationships with sustainability-minded community members and end-users. The two groups were also similar in that they utilize prior knowledge to both gain and maintain legitimacy over the course of their lifecycle. One SEAI entrepreneur discussed how his prior knowledge has helped him to develop a sense of trust with long-term end-users which has a subsequently positive legitimacy effect on potential new end-users. However, differences were found between the two groups of entrepreneurs regarding the type of prior knowledge that helps them to align with sustainability-oriented field members, with SEAI entrepreneurs continuously referring to prior mainstream knowledge.

6.2.2 Conformance

The current study also found prior knowledge to manifest during a conformance legitimation strategy. Whereas an alliance strategy is about partnerships and relationships with important stakeholders, a conformance strategy is one in which the entrepreneur attempts to match the structures and practices of existing competitors who already have legitimacy (Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002). Analysis revealed that entrepreneurs of both groups intentionally and strategically portray themselves in a favourable light by adopting certain practices and
structures, and that their ‘prior knowledge’ facilitates this. This was found to have been carried out in two ways; to ‘fit-in’ and to coopt, with the latter being more strategic in nature.

**Fitting In**

Throughout analysis, it emerged that both groups of entrepreneurs use prior knowledge to navigate the rules of the field and ultimately fit-in with these rules. Chapter 5 showed how both groups of entrepreneurs operate within a highly regulated and rule-bound field, both formally and informally. The findings here show how prior knowledge emerged as effective in responding to these rules and fitting-in. Table 6.1 illustrates that seven SEAI entrepreneurs mentioned the utility of their prior knowledge. For example, Entrepreneurs 2 described how when they first entered the sustainability field from the mainstream, prior knowledge helped them to gauge what was required of them in terms of legitimacy. This shows that prior knowledge can be used to gain legitimacy at an early stage of the business lifecycle. Also, Tom discussed the importance of continual training, demonstrating that prior knowledge must be supplemented with new knowledge along the business lifecycle. While five SEAI entrepreneurs focused on their prior mainstream knowledge, two discussed their prior knowledge in the sustainability field as valuable when attempting to fit-in and uphold the standards of the field: “*People know we’ve been around a long time, we’re market leaders*” (Nick, SEAI). The utility of prior knowledge in a conformance strategy to fit in to the field was a strong feature of the data for SEAI entrepreneurs across different sectors and enterprise structures. Two entrepreneurs did not mention prior knowledge as useful for fitting-in. While it was found to be a feature of the data for Liam in the form of an alliance strategy (see Table 6.1), Killian did not discuss prior knowledge as useful for legitimation in any way. This entrepreneur instead emphasized the importance of orientation and intention, as will be illustrated in a later section.

Five SEI entrepreneurs also mentioned how their prior experience, both formal education and training and practical experience in the sustainability field, has helped them to gain legitimacy in the field by fitting in. All five of these entrepreneurs referred to prior sustainability knowledge unlike the SEAI entrepreneurs. Table 6.1 illustrates how entrepreneurs discussed, for example, how practical experience in sustainability fields of other countries helped them build legitimacy in Ireland, as well as how formal qualifications are increasingly important in the sustainability field: “*in starting up I would have had much more experience and knowledge than qualifications and they came afterwards...I think in*
Ireland we’re going the way of qualifications being required” (Beth, SEI). Nora discussed how the combination of her formal education and her colleague’s practical experience helped them to fit in with multiple stakeholders when starting up: “we came to the same place in life through theory and through practice. So we kind of realised that we need to kind of marry these two now to make it kind of work” (Nora, SEI). Both practical and formal education emerged as important for legitimacy for SEI entrepreneurs to fit in the field, and entrepreneurs explicitly mentioned both as important throughout the business lifecycle.

Overall, in both groups, prior knowledge was found to be particularly useful for fitting-in when entrepreneurs first enter the field as a new enterprise. SEAI entrepreneurs referred mostly to prior mainstream experience and formal qualifications, whereas SEI entrepreneurs emphasised practical sustainability experience and formal qualifications. A contextual interview with an SEI stakeholder also revealed that an awareness of the extensive prior sustainability knowledge, specifically formal education of an SEI entrepreneur played a role in the extent to which this entrepreneur was regarded as legitimate. This is a source of triangulation for this finding on prior knowledge. SEAI entrepreneurs also pointed to the demonstration of formal qualifications as something that becomes more important at a later stage of the lifecycle. The utility of prior knowledge in a conformance strategy to fit in to the field was a feature of the data for just half the SEI entrepreneurs, yet Laura also mentioned the utility of prior knowledge in coopting (see Table 6.1), and Entrepreneurs 16 and 20 mention prior knowledge in relation to condition (See Table 6.1). This shows that overall just two entrepreneurs declined to mention the role of prior knowledge in legitimation, instead emphasising other constructs which will be discussed in a later section of this chapter.

**Coopting**

While the findings presented above reflect how prior knowledge is used by entrepreneurs to fit-in with rules and norms of the field, this section demonstrates how entrepreneurs used their prior knowledge to coopt, meaning to use their knowledge in a role different from the usual or original one in order to conform to the field. Evidently, this is quite a strategic form of legitimation. This was a feature of the data for three SEAI entrepreneurs, as interviews and documentation revealed the ways in which they emphasise particular aspects of their prior knowledge in order to gain legitimacy. While Eammon and Evan were found to have downplayed their mainstream experience and emphasised their sustainability energy experience and community development experience respectively, Noel was found to have
engaged in the opposite. He described an instance in which he ‘played up’ his background in business to the media despite feeling he has more experience in sustainability, as he believes that he gains legitimacy this way through conforming to expectations of the field. Eammon described how he does not believe there is much of a difference between the skills required for traditional and sustainable energy, but that in the sustainability field, there is a perceived difference. For this reason, he emphasises his sustainability skills to gain legitimacy.

Similarly, Evan revealed how he realised that the local sustainability-minded community value his attempts to learn through “trial and error seeing what works and what doesn’t...a lot of hands on learning, on the job learning”, and he heeds this advice by attempting to improve his knowledge of and experience with the local community. These entrepreneurs refer mainly to the early stage of the business lifecycle when they are attempting to gain legitimacy. This was only a feature of three SEAI entrepreneurs’ accounts of legitimation (see Table 6.1) and is therefore not a strong feature of the data.

Evidence of coopting was only a feature of the data for two SEI entrepreneurs and was therefore not a strong feature of the data for this group either. Table 6.1 illustrates how Entrepreneurs 17 and 19 emphasised their prior mainstream knowledge, both formal qualifications and practical experience, as something that is valuable in the sustainability field. Beth mentioned the team working and people-based skills she learned in her degree whereas Laura mentioned her first hand experience of unsustainable practices in the mainstream fashion industry: “[I] worked in the fashion industry and we were witnessing first-hand the negative implications of the industry, I mean absolutely awful practices, appalling labour standards...you have to get your hands dirty...it helped us with credibility that we had that experience firsthand” (Laura, SEI). In doing so, these entrepreneurs talked about how they use experience and knowledge in a way that they did not initially intend, and that this has been valuable for legitimacy. Additionally, both of these entrepreneurs expressed reluctance or hesitation in discussing the use of this knowledge and experience in this way, pointing to how this is strategic form of legitimation that they enact despite personal values or opinions. This is similar to what was found for Noel in the SEAI group. Overall, using prior knowledge in coopting is not a strong feature of the data for either group, and a conformance strategy is most frequently carried out in order to fit-in.
6.2.3 Condition

The third and final way in which prior knowledge manifested for these entrepreneurs was as an enabling condition for continuation in pursuit of their sustainability goals through entrepreneurial means. The researcher noted how entrepreneurs discussed the importance of their prior knowledge outside the context of legitimation, which suggested that prior knowledge has an indirect role in legitimation as an enabling condition for legitimation activities. While both SEAI and SEI entrepreneur interviews revealed that prior knowledge becomes taken for granted and subsequently becomes less of a strategic resource, most discussed it as something that is still an important factor in the success of their enterprise. Despite this, Tables 6.1 show how prior knowledge was also explicitly mentioned as a possible barrier to change and innovation by four entrepreneurs. This demonstrates that while prior knowledge plays an important role in legitimation and enterprise success generally, entrepreneurs recognise and acknowledge that there are potentially negative consequences of being over-reliant on prior knowledge.

Five SEI entrepreneurs discuss how, for example, their long-term, regular customers have become aware of their prior experience and knowledge and that this has helped them to gain the recognition required for continuing on their entrepreneurial path. Beth stated: “You do what you do...you have to have that know-how but people don’t really see that, they just know you’re working...like you wouldn’t have to keep convincing people that you’re qualified, they know you probably are” (Beth, SEI). Ed mentioned how his practical experience with community groups helps him manage day-to-day tasks of running an enterprise. None of these entrepreneurs refer to the benefits of prior knowledge for legitimacy, but they all acknowledge it as an important factor in running their business. This suggests that the role of prior knowledge changes throughout the business lifecycle and that while it is used at times to gain and maintain legitimacy, it mostly becomes taken for granted and remains an enabling condition for continuation on the entrepreneurial path. However, three SEI entrepreneurs also explicitly mention how prior knowledge can have negative effects. For example, “there’s no guarantee prior knowledge makes you more willing and able to learn” (Nathan, SEI). This entrepreneur acknowledged that an over reliance what you’ve learned before can have negative consequences on continued learning. Similarly, Helen mentioned that her local community is constantly in a state of change and she must be aware of this rather than relying on her prior knowledge: “This community is constantly changing...new families and students coming to live...it can be hard to keep up with what they want...I’m 30 years working [in this
This entrepreneur also specifically asserts that certain community members rely too much on their prior knowledge and that this causes problems when trying to innovate “The 'clickyness' applies mostly to...you know people established in the community who might feel they have a say on what should happen and can be opposed to innovative and creative thinking, or they might say we've done that 20 years ago and it didn't work, who do you think you are.” These entrepreneurs represent enterprises established between 2006 and 2008, perhaps indicating that the positive effects of prior knowledge diminish after about 10 years. Still, this is not a strong feature of the data for SEI entrepreneurs, as prior knowledge was revealed to have direct and indirect legitimacy benefits for these entrepreneurs.

Prior knowledge was found to be a feature of legitimation for just two SEAI entrepreneurs in this way. For example, Evan mentioned how field members incorrectly assume that he has prior knowledge in sustainability engineering, making the point that prior knowledge is assumed and thus taken for granted (see Table 6.4). He does however, discuss that his prior knowledge in sustainable architecture is an important factor in his success. Also, as was the case for SEI entrepreneurs, another SEAI entrepreneur warns about the potential dangers of being over-reliant on prior knowledge. Nick states: “I’d be wary of overconfidence or overreliance on what you know about what’s come before...there’s always so much more to learn” (Nick, SEAI). This entrepreneur pointed to the need for a balance between prior knowledge and willingness to learn new things. Both of these entrepreneurs represent well established organisations, suggesting that acknowledgement of the potential negative aspect of prior knowledge occurs over time. Further, despite representing different areas of sustainability, namely sustainable building and wastewater treatment, both pointed to the value of prior knowledge in enabling continuation on the entrepreneurial path. Although prior knowledge condition was not a strong feature of the data for either group of entrepreneurs, there were similarities across both groups regarding how prior knowledge manifests in this way. Further, entrepreneurs of both groups mention the possible negative consequences of prior knowledge. These are key findings for the conceptual framework as they illustrate that prior knowledge manifests in multiple ways, both directly as agency during legitimation and as an indirect enabling condition for the pursuit of legitimacy.
Table 6.1 Prior Sustainability Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Alliance</th>
<th>Conformance</th>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Role of Prior Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“know your stuff” when entering field</td>
<td>*Demonstrates sustainability skills to overcome perception of “it’s sustainability and renewable energy… you’re designing a more efficient system…using the same skills”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>To achieve “real global success”: “have to understand the [mainstream water] industry” “International”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“10 years in the ICT market” helped navigate the field</td>
<td>**In blog entry writes how prior experience has helped him navigate the field.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"relationships"
"working with those types of partners"
"key strategic partnerships"
"we’re smart, we know the industry"

| Tom  | Not applicable | Not applicable | *Certifications and qualifications to fit in with standards
“new level certification”
“professional accreditation and being part of professional bodies”
“ISO qualifications”
“skills base and qualifications”
**Company website extensively details his experience and that of his colleagues | Not applicable | Not applicable |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nick</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>“in-house knowledge” “expertise” Creates a “degree of trust”</th>
<th>“been around a long time, we’re market leaders”, which helps maintain and uphold field standards</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>*Extensive experience in the field has taught him how to predict what the future will need</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>“experience working as a commercial and industrial energy efficiency and LEAN manufacturing consultant” “partnerships [with mainstream industry players]” <strong>Company website details his experience and background as well as that of his colleagues</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td><em>Demonstrates business experience to develop relationship with</em> Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td><em>Finds himself emphasising prior knowledge to people to gain acceptance, even though he does not necessarily see the practical</em></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Experience Reference</td>
<td>Skills Related to Sustainability</td>
<td>Industry Experience Helps Fit in with Industry Needs and Expects</td>
<td>Company’s Social Media Page Mentions Prior Experience</td>
<td>Website Reference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>“industry experience”</td>
<td>*Skills he acquired in mainstream business are respected in the sustainability field</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“getting involved with the university”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“experience with industry” helps build alliances in community</td>
<td>*Industry experience helps fit in with what the industry needs and expects</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>**Company’s social media page mentions prior experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Experience in mainstream helps build relationships in sustainability field</td>
<td>“having the experience and the knowledge to make judgements”</td>
<td>*In reference to what the local community values, learning to adapt to this: “building up experience over the years”, “trial and error”, “hands on learning”, “on the job learning”</td>
<td>*Communicating prior experience strategically would not have merit as it is already assumed that this is the case. Prior knowledge is taken for granted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Industry expertise helps investor relationships</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“know-how”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>“Experience of running businesses like this” helps to fit in. <strong>Company website and social media page detail his prior knowledge.</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>“You can get more from people if they know you’re an expert”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>*Prior experience in conservation in other countries helped set up a training centre that met the requirements for Ireland. *<em>Website and blog outline extensive prior experience</em></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td><em>Experience taken for granted “I have a lot of repeat customers, a lot of regulars since the beginning and once I have those people coming in the door I never spend much time hoping people take a chance on me because of my experience”</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>“Educated by listening to nature and wise teachers*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
who have lived and worked with nature all of their lives”
*Success with gaining legitimacy down to ability to live among communities without disrupting their natural habitat.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nora</th>
<th>“background is philosophy” which helps partnerships with universities</th>
<th>Prior knowledge helps build “relationships with schools for our sustainability education initiatives”</th>
<th>*A combination of her prior educational experience and her colleague’s practical experience as what enabled their success in gaining legitimacy by fitting-in in the field.</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dawn</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“truly ethical consumers…they trust that what they get here is genuinely ethical” because they know of prior knowledge</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beth</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Prior experience has helped her to build relationships with sustainability-minded community.</td>
<td>“Qualifications…supposed to be an indication of knowledge”</td>
<td>*Skills learned in degree used to help her work with people to change the system rather than run a conventional business</td>
<td>“You do what you do...you have to have that know-how but people don’t really see that, they just know you’re working...like you wouldn’t have to keep convincing people that you’re qualified, they know you probably are.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>way of qualifications being required”</td>
<td>degree it’s about working with people”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Helen</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Prior experience in sustainability helps secure trust and resources in sustainability community</td>
<td>*Experience helped her to develop the skills required to know how to fit-in by not being too “clicky” or too “risque” and by finding a balance crucial for legitimacy</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laura</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“Had worked in the fashion industry and we were witnessing first-hand the negative implications of the industry...helped us with credibility that we had that experience firsthand” <strong>Website and blog extensively discuss her experience with mainstream industry and how this has impacted on her current work.</strong></td>
<td>*Made the comparison between her prior experience with unsustainable retail practices and her activist beliefs, pointing to how neither of these is helpful in gaining legitimacy. However, she discussed how having “that firsthand experience” has helped her to stay on her entrepreneurial path as she understands how important it is to make a change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ed</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>*Prior experience of working with community groups helps in the day-to-day running of his enterprise, but not specifically with legitimacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Context Description

**Documentation
6.3 Sustainability Orientation

This section will detail the findings on the role of the construct of sustainability orientation in the legitimation activities of two groups of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. Sustainability orientation is defined as “underlying attitudes and convictions” about issues of “environmental protection and social responsibility”, and how this links to “entrepreneurial intention focused on sustainable development” (Kuckertz and Wagner, 2010, p. 531). The review of the literature in Chapters Two and Three demonstrated the lack of empirical and conceptual research on this construct in legitimation. The following subsections detail the different ways in which sustainability orientation manifested in the legitimation activities of entrepreneurs for both SEAI and SEI entrepreneurs as they responded to dominant logics. They express how two different types of legitimation, namely defiance and condition were identified. The first of these, defiance, is where entrepreneurs dismiss certain norms and values of the field and contest certain rules (Oliver, 1991). The other way in which sustainability orientation was found to manifest was as a condition that enabled the continuation of the entrepreneur, as was found for prior knowledge. The following subsections will demonstrate how many differences were found between SEAI and SEI entrepreneurs in relation to how sustainability orientation manifested in legitimation through defiance and condition approaches. In addition, it refers to how throughout documentation and both stakeholder interviews, demonstrating orientation was not found to be considered important for legitimacy for either group.

6.3.1 Defiance

Defiance is an active and strategic form of resistance to field expectations, and the advantages of defiance to the entrepreneur are, for example, the ability to maintain autonomy in decision making and flexibility in the face of changing requirements (Helfen et al., 2015; Oliver, 1991). This can benefit legitimacy in the face of multiplicity of logics in that entrepreneurs can strategically tailor their legitimation behaviour to diverse stakeholders at any given time. Analysis revealed that defiance manifested in two key ways, namely dismissing and contesting. Dismissing is the less active of the two in that it pertains to instances when entrepreneurs choose to continue to engage in certain practices that do not conform to the expectations of the field. Contesting, on the other hand, is when entrepreneurs engage in practices that purposefully challenge the expectations of the field, usually because
these expectations do not align with their enterprise goals.

**Dismissing**

Two SEAI entrepreneurs mentioned that they engage in certain practices that demonstrate their orientation, despite knowing that this goes against norms or expectations of the field. Table 6.2 illustrates how both of these entrepreneurs discuss instances in which they have experienced indifference from stakeholders when demonstrating orientation. For example, “I wouldn’t say it [showing orientation] alienates us but it’s like they don’t really care either way” (Nick, SEAI). For this entrepreneur, it can be seen that orientation has not been valuable for legitimacy, but it has not lead to negative legitimacy effects either. As such, he continues to demonstrate his orientation. Eric similarly emphasises how passionate he is about sustainability despite this going against expectations of “powers that be”. Both of these entrepreneurs dismiss the norms of the field through demonstrating orientation. These entrepreneurs do not share any characteristics in terms of their enterprise type, and dismissing was mentioned by both as something that they engage in with multiple stakeholders and across the business lifecycle. As this is just a feature of the data for two SEAI entrepreneurs, it is not a strong feature of legitimation for this group.

For SEI entrepreneurs, however, evidence of dismissing norms of the field by demonstrating orientation was a feature of the data for six entrepreneurs and is subsequently a strong feature of the data. Table 6.2 illustrates the ways in which these entrepreneurs described how demonstrating and acting upon their orientation goes against field expectations, but that they dismiss these expectations in favour of their sustainability orientation. An example is when Nathan mentioned that “We’d be in all the local papers telling people what we do and we’d try to make people see how committed and passionate we were, easier said than done” (Nathan, SEI). Despite acknowledging lack of appreciation for his values, he discussed how he still demonstrates these values in communicating with stakeholders. Nora also described an instance during the early phase of her enterprise development when she “had this great idea and we wouldn't let go of it even though everybody kept trying to change it for us, we kept hanging on for dear life” (Nora, SEI). She discussed how she dismisses field norms and continues to demonstrate her strong orientation despite acknowledging that it is often met with indifference.
As was seen from SEAI entrepreneurs, SEI entrepreneurs found that their orientation contradicts the economic interests of society and subsequently cause challenges for them: “I would describe myself as passionate about this (venture)...our society is no longer guided by what is best for people living in society it's guided by power, money and economics” (Beth, SEI). This entrepreneur discussed how she dismisses these societal norms and continuous to demonstrate her orientation. Still, none of these entrepreneurs refer to legitimacy benefits of demonstrating orientation and refer to orientation instead as something they will not compromise on as it brings meaning and purpose to their entrepreneurial journey. This strong orientation is the common feature across this group of entrepreneurs, as those who were found to engage in dismissing do not represent enterprises that share specific features such as size or sector. Further, analysis shows that these entrepreneurs dismiss norms and demonstrate orientation throughout the business lifecycle, both when initially starting out and when they become established in their communities.

In addition, for two SEI entrepreneurs, orientation was specifically mentioned as a valuable asset in legitimation. This was shown in Chapter 5 regarding the means through which entrepreneurs pursue legitimacy towards a sustainability-mission-oriented logic. The following quote demonstrate how there is a belief that orientation plays a role in legitimation in that it helps entrepreneurs to align with like-minded stakeholders:

“When you’re operating in a sector or field or whatever that has largely unethical practices and poor regulation and I mean huge brands, everyone walking around wearing their clothes not a bother to them, and you’re up against that, it’s hard to get validation and legitimacy for yourself...you need to have that passion and care... for us ethics is integral, principles of sustainability and equity are integral” (Dawn, SEI).

While orientation was not a feature of documentation pertaining to the SEAI awarding body, SEI awarding body documentation makes several references to the importance of showing commitment and passion. Despite this, an interview with a representative from the awarding body explicitly mentioned that passion is not valuable for legitimacy when compared to demonstrating impact and ability to scale a project.

**Contesting**
The second way in which entrepreneurs were found to use their orientation in demonstrating
defiance of field expectations was when they engaged in practices that contested those expectations. However, this was only the case for SEI entrepreneurs. Half of these entrepreneurs discussed ways in which their orientation manifested as they contested rules and norms of the field, as can be seen in Table 6.2. Those entrepreneurs who discuss the role of orientation in defiance do so in a way that shows their strong orientation, and analysis revealed that they demonstrate orientation in this way to multiple stakeholders throughout the business lifecycle. Entrepreneurs mention, for example, that making a sustainable change will require taking radical action to challenge the status quo. Beth even mentions that this will involve encouraging others to question the state of society: “we work with people we try and empower them...actually encouraging them to question what kind of society we have” (Beth, SEI). These entrepreneurs each argue the role of their sustainability orientation in enacting this change:

“I’d describe myself as passionate and strongly committed to this cause and as quite radical. I think things like the way I dress and the way I talk, the language I use. And the people I associate with, as a group I think that’s an important indication of where my values lie. And people don’t always like it...when you’re operating in a subset of an industry, you’re part of it but you’re opposing it” (Laura, SEI).

These entrepreneurs acknowledge that this activity can have damaging legitimacy effects in the field, but they continue to demonstrate orientation in this way due to other factors such as the support of like-minded field members and the fact that their orientation helps them to continue on the entrepreneurial path. Overall, seven SEI entrepreneurs demonstrated how their orientation plays a role in legitimation via a defiance strategy. These entrepreneurs, either by dismissing or contesting field expectations, engage in practices that reflect their orientation, highlighting a strong orientation amongst these entrepreneurs. It also illustrates how they often communicate their orientation to field members despite it not having positive legitimacy effects. For SEAI entrepreneurs, just two demonstrated how their orientation manifests in this way, illustrating that this group either exhibits lower degrees of orientation or that they acknowledge the lack of utility it brings for legitimacy and chose not to demonstrate it. Evidently, the two groups of entrepreneurs vary considerable with regards to how they use their sustainability orientation in legitimation as defiance.
6.3.2 Condition

In addition to defiance, sustainability orientation was also found to manifest in a condition approach. As was explained in relation to prior knowledge, a condition approach is when a construct does not emerge as directly useful for legitimation, but acts as a necessary condition which enables the entrepreneur to continue in pursuit of their sustainability mission through entrepreneurial means and engage in legitimation. This shows that orientation plays an indirect role in legitimation as it motivates these entrepreneurs to engage in practices that benefit legitimacy. The subsections below demonstrate how orientation assisted entrepreneurs in two ways; to recognise and enact adjustment regarding the demonstration of their orientation, as well as to continue in pursuit of their sustainability goals by providing motivation and purpose.

Recognising/Enacting Adjustment

Interviews revealed that in attempting to gain legitimacy, SEI entrepreneurs are initially eager to demonstrate their orientation to field members. These entrepreneurs exhibit a strong orientation, and when first attempting to gain legitimacy, assume that this will be appreciated by field members. This was evident from the defiance strategy as discussed above. However, findings reveal that eventually SEI entrepreneurs accept that orientation has little value externally for legitimacy and should no longer be demonstrated to field members. This shows that a condition approach to the use of orientation is a feature of the mid to later stages of the business lifecycle. Analysis revealed how four SEI entrepreneurs came to recognise this, and subsequently adjusted how they utilize their orientation. This is referred to here as recognising and enacting adjustment of legitimation behaviour. Table 6.2 illustrates that, for example, when Charlotte came to her community with her sustainability-oriented enterprise idea, they largely dismissed her. She tried to convince them of her value, but eventually she has to accept that her orientation was not valued in the community. Similarly, Nora discussed her realisation that she was going to have to learn how to “take off that passion hat and put on the business hat when it comes to legitimacy”. In addition, two of these entrepreneurs explicitly mentioned how they struggled to accept this lack of appreciation for their orientation:

“It's difficult to deal with people not appreciating what you're about... [I] didn’t think it would be that way” (Charlotte, SEI).
“When they heard what [our sustainability idea] was it was quite difficult...we came up against that. So that was really difficult” (Nora, SEI).

Nonetheless, these entrepreneurs discussed how they eventually adjusted their behaviour in that they toned down the extent to which they would demonstrate orientation. Analysis revealed this to be true for entrepreneurs working in the areas of biodiversity, conservation, sustainable living and ethical clothing. Despite having a diversity of backgrounds, each has significant prior experience in sustainability, suggesting that the ability to acknowledge and adjust the demonstration of orientation comes with time and experience.

Evidence of recognition or enactment of adjustment was not found for any SEAI entrepreneurs. This was to be expected given that these entrepreneurs did not exhibit strong orientation or a belief that it is useful in legitimation. Nonetheless, two SEAI entrepreneurs did mention their orientation as something that helps them to continue on their entrepreneurial path, as demonstrated below.

Continuation
Table 6.2 shows that three SEAI entrepreneurs mentioned the role of their sustainability orientation in enabling them to continue with their entrepreneurial pursuit. Eammon specifically mentioned how his feelings about sustainability provide personal motivation, but then proceeded to discuss how his interest in sustainability was initially due to his recognition of a potential business opportunity in renewable energy. This demonstrates his acknowledgment of the limited role of his orientation in the success of his enterprise. Similarly, Entrepreneurs 6 and 7 discuss how passion for and personal interest in sustainability drives their behaviour and provides a sense of purpose, but they do not refer to it as being in any way beneficial for legitimacy or business success. This shows that orientation manifests as an enabling condition, but only for three of eleven SEAI entrepreneurs and is therefore not a strong feature of their legitimation. Additionally, William has a blog entry entitled “Passion & Creativity is More Important to a Startup Marketer than Budget” despite not mentioning orientation as important for legitimacy in the interview. This blog entry detailed how passion helps him to navigate difficult times in the field.

Eight SEI entrepreneurs mentioned their orientation as something that helps them to continue on their entrepreneurial path. This is clearly a strong feature of the data for these
entrepreneurs. There is a clear awareness of their reliance on their passion and convictions about sustainability to maintain motivation in the face of legitimacy judgement from those who do not value orientation. For example:

“For many years I have felt a strong connection with nature...this is why I do what I do” (Nathan, SEI).

“It’s not to do with being taken seriously but who in their right mind would go to the trouble of all this without feeling extremely passionate about what they do, and if you are passionate it just comes through naturally” (Laura, SEI).

Table 6.2 illustrates the many ways in which these entrepreneurs were found to value their orientation throughout the lifecycle and across factors such as sectors, enterprise structure and size, but highlight that it is not utilised in legitimation. Evidently, orientation is not strategically utilised in legitimation for either group, but plays an indirect role for SEI entrepreneurs as a condition of continuation.

Overall, there was just one SEI entrepreneur who did not exhibit any evidence of using orientation in legitimation, namely Helen. This entrepreneur mentioned that she considers herself to be passionate and have strong convictions about her sustainability mission, but did not mention its role in legitimation directly or indirectly. For SEAI entrepreneurs, just four out of eleven referred to orientation in discussing legitimation. When asked about their orientation, these entrepreneurs did not go into detail and tended to focus more on what they consider important for legitimacy, namely prior knowledge and intention. This demonstrates how the two groups of entrepreneurs vary considerably with regards to the role of sustainability orientation in legitimation. This is an important finding for the conceptual framework as it shows that sustainability orientation has little value as strategic agency in legitimation, but it is an important internal factor for SEI entrepreneurs.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Defiance</th>
<th>Contesting</th>
<th>Recognising/Enacting Role Adjustment</th>
<th>Continuation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“This is the stuff that keeps me going you know...personally... sustainability is something I genuinely care about and I feel committed to”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>“I wouldn’t say it [showing orientation] alienates us but it’s like they don’t really care either way.” **Company website makes reference to how he is “guided by a deep-rooted appreciation for long term value and sustainable development”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liam</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“I would have been involved and passionate about transport, sustainable transport, just on a personal level I’d have a vision...that’s something that sort of drives me”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noel</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“protecting the environment is important to me...I think the community understands that about me and they see it” <strong>Documents his engagement in sustainability activities in media interviews.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Warren</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eric</strong></td>
<td>“I’m someone who’s passionate about alternative energy sources and I’ve a keen eye for where the problems lay...I’ve personally a huge amount of respect for natural community development without too much damage from say the powers that be” <em>Continues on his sustainability mission despite how this can sometimes contradict the norms of society.</em></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evan</strong></td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>SEI</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*Despite knowing that her enterprise doesn’t fit with the norms of her local community, she continues to advertise and offer her sustainability offering.</td>
<td>“It's difficult to deal with people not appreciating what you’re about… [I didn’t think it would be that way]”</td>
<td>*After discussing some difficulties she initially experienced with negative reactions from the community due to her ‘radical’ image, she acknowledges: “Still we are like our own little ecosystem out here, we depend on each other even if what I’m doing seems radical to them”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>*People found her radical enterprise idea hard to grasp, but she was determined to stick with it</td>
<td>“Now we had that much work done then we knew that [colleague’s] activism was going to help how we’d go about doing it publicly.”</td>
<td>“you have this passion and that’s really what’s motivating you to go on”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nora</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We’d be in all the local papers telling people what we do and we’d try to make people see how committed and passionate we were. Easier said than done”</td>
<td>“My awakening [to] the truth is we are slowly poisoning the mother who feeds us. It is humanity that will suffer greatly in the long term if we do not learn to live more conscious daily lifestyles...it requires action immediately”</td>
<td>**Company website demonstrates strong orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frank</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We’d be in all the local papers telling people what we do and we’d try to make people see how committed and passionate we were. Easier said than done”</td>
<td>“It’s not like anyone would come in and ask questions to see if I really care...some of them might look at the mission statement, is it genuine and authentic and transparent...come on...really nobody cares”</td>
<td>*Blog discusses his strong orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>“For many years I have felt a strong connection with nature. This has led me to seek out the truth about the environment everywhere I have travelled on this beautiful garden planet, our home...this is why I do what I do.”</td>
<td>“For many years I have felt a strong connection with nature. This has led me to seek out the truth about the environment everywhere I have travelled on this beautiful garden planet, our home...this is why I do what I do.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We’d be in all the local papers telling people what we do and we’d try to make people see how committed and passionate we were. Easier said than done”</td>
<td>“My awakening [to] the truth is we are slowly poisoning the mother who feeds us. It is humanity that will suffer greatly in the long term if we do not learn to live more conscious daily lifestyles...it requires action immediately”</td>
<td>“For many years I have felt a strong connection with nature. This has led me to seek out the truth about the environment everywhere I have travelled on this beautiful garden planet, our home...this is why I do what I do.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natha</td>
<td>“We’d be in all the local papers telling people what we do and we’d try to make people see how committed and passionate we were. Easier said than done”</td>
<td>“My awakening [to] the truth is we are slowly poisoning the mother who feeds us. It is humanity that will suffer greatly in the long term if we do not learn to live more conscious daily lifestyles...it requires action immediately”</td>
<td>“For many years I have felt a strong connection with nature. This has led me to seek out the truth about the environment everywhere I have travelled on this beautiful garden planet, our home...this is why I do what I do.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“We’d be in all the local papers telling people what we do and we’d try to make people see how committed and passionate we were. Easier said than done”</td>
<td>“My awakening [to] the truth is we are slowly poisoning the mother who feeds us. It is humanity that will suffer greatly in the long term if we do not learn to live more conscious daily lifestyles...it requires action immediately”</td>
<td>“For many years I have felt a strong connection with nature. This has led me to seek out the truth about the environment everywhere I have travelled on this beautiful garden planet, our home...this is why I do what I do.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Natha</td>
<td>“We’d be in all the local papers telling people what we do and we’d try to make people see how committed and passionate we were. Easier said than done”</td>
<td>“My awakening [to] the truth is we are slowly poisoning the mother who feeds us. It is humanity that will suffer greatly in the long term if we do not learn to live more conscious daily lifestyles...it requires action immediately”</td>
<td>“For many years I have felt a strong connection with nature. This has led me to seek out the truth about the environment everywhere I have travelled on this beautiful garden planet, our home...this is why I do what I do.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Noras</td>
<td>“You have this passion and that’s really what’s motivating you to go on”</td>
<td>“For many years I have felt a strong connection with nature. This has led me to seek out the truth about the environment everywhere I have travelled on this beautiful garden planet, our home...this is why I do what I do.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Company website demonstrates strong orientation**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Dawn</strong></th>
<th>* Sustainability agenda opposes the mainstream fashion industry and the negative consequences of it: “We’re part of the ethical fashion movement really which is a creative, passionate, positive and inspiring movement for change...this translates into better working conditions”  <strong>Strong orientation is very evident from her website and blog.</strong></th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>“I still can’t believe sometimes that this isn’t on people’s radars...I learned the hard way [that it’s not important].”</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beth</strong></td>
<td>* Dismisses societal norms: “I would describe myself as passionate about this... our “People are dis-empowered to participate in shaping their communities...there’s a cynicism about Not applicable</td>
<td><strong>This entrepreneur described orientation as “crucial to keep you going. It helps”</strong></td>
<td><strong>Company website, blog and social media page detail the vision and mission of the enterprise which both reflect her strong orientation.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Company website, blog and social media account still detail her strong orientation.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“we had this great idea and we wouldn't let go of it even though everybody kept trying to change it for us, we kept hanging on for dear life.”  **Company website, blog and social media page detail the vision and mission of the enterprise which both reflect her strong orientation.**

against that. So that was really difficult...I learned that you need to know how to take off that passion hat and put on the business hat when it comes to legitimacy”
society is no longer guided by what is best for people living in society it’s guided by power, money and economics”

**Company website outlines the mission and value of her enterprise and some of these also reflect tension between her orientation and societal norms: “We believe wealth should be redistributed and we are governed by documents and principles that will ensure no indecent difference between lowest paid and highest paid will occur...We operate in a fierce, competitive market but we will always driven by ethics and will offer our people satisfactory wages, terms and conditions.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Helen</strong></th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Laura</strong></td>
<td>“I’d definitely throw in a few comments on my feelings on climate change or cost of wind and solar power in Ireland or go on my spiel about sustainable...”</td>
<td>“I’d describe myself as passionate and strongly committed to this cause and as quite radical...and people don’t always like it...when you’re operating in a subset of an industry, you’re part of it but you’re opposing it”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“It’s not to do with being taken seriously but who in their right mind would go to the trouble of all this without feeling extremely passionate about what they do, and if you are passionate it just comes through...”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>fashion if given the chance”</td>
<td></td>
<td>naturally.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Company website and blog also portray her as someone with a strong orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Ed** | Not applicable | Not applicable | Not applicable | “I’m definitely an environment-conscious person, always have been and I think it comes from feeling a responsibility towards your community and feeling like we all matter...like all of our actions matter”  
*Orientation gives him a sense of meaning in what he does  
**Company website and press releases demonstrate a strong sense of shared sustainability values.** |
|---|---|---|---|---|

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Pat</strong></th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th><em>Argued that the field of sustainability needs to challenge the mainstream in order to enact change. He asserted that this will require enacting strong orientation.</em></th>
<th>Not applicable</th>
<th>“I don’t think I could have spent a large portion of my life looking at rocks or talking about rocks if I didn’t feel some connection to the earth”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

*Context Description  
**Documentation*
6.4 Sustainability Intention

This section presents the findings on the role of the construct of sustainability intention in legitimation for these entrepreneurs. Sustainability intention is defined as “the intention to contribute to solving societal and environmental problems through entrepreneurial means” (Muñoz and Dimov, 2015, p. 640). It requires the entrepreneur to pursue and enact an entrepreneurial and professional approach to sustainable development. The current study examined the role of this construct in legitimation along with prior knowledge and orientation. The following subsections detail the different ways in which intention manifested in the legitimation activities of both SEAI and SEI entrepreneurs. They reveal how two different types of legitimation, namely acquiesce and anchoring, were identified. Acquiesce refers to when entrepreneurs mimic and comply with field expectations (Oliver, 1991) and anchoring is when entrepreneurs both accentuate and conceal elements of their behaviour to appear favourable to field members (Turcan, 2013). The following subsections will show how the two groups of entrepreneurs differ considerably in how they utilize their intention in legitimation. They also show how documentation and interviews with both awarding bodies and two stakeholders reveal the demonstration of intention to be an important for legitimacy across the field.

6.4.1 Acquiesce

The first way in which sustainability intention manifested in the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs was during acquiescence. This form of response to field expectations varies in its degree of strategicness as it can involve habit, imitation and compliance. While habit refers to unconscious or blind adherence to expectations, imitation can be either unconscious or strategic and compliance is strategic, conscious obedience (Oliver, 1991). Hence, compliance is comparable to a conformance strategy (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002), but acquiesce overall refers to both strategic and substantive actions of the entrepreneur that mimic and comply with field expectations. Analysis revealed that these entrepreneurs use their sustainability intention in attempts to mimic and comply with these expectations, demonstrating acquiescence. As can be seen from Table 6.3, SEAI and SEI entrepreneurs do this through the use of professional language and structure that match field expectations. They also describe how they learn from others to use their intention to acquiesce.
Five SEAI entrepreneurs exhibited evidence of the use of intention in acquiescence for legitimacy. While Evan realised the importance of intention during the interview when he considered the potential negative outcomes of not demonstrating intention in the field, the other four were found to demonstrate intention strategically. These entrepreneurs, for example, described how being considered professional is crucial for maintaining their reputation in the field: “I for think legitimacy it’s very important...professional accreditation and being part of professional bodies and so on...you know it’s a very small community...you’ll have a reputation for professionalism and quality” (Tom, SEAI). Table 6.3 shows how entrepreneurs understand the value of demonstrating intention for legitimacy and illustrates how they do this in a number of ways such as through demonstrating certain accreditations, being able to speak at a certain level on a professional topic, as well as showing themselves to be compliant with rules of the field. In these ways, these entrepreneurs mimic and comply with field expectations, and all of these actions are reported to have positive legitimacy effects. In addition, documentation pertaining to the awarding body continuously referred to the importance of demonstrating professionalism, entrepreneurialism and innovation. An interview with an SEAI stakeholder also pointed to the importance of professionalism as he discussed how there is “a lot of competition in this sector, there’s a lot going on so if someone wasn’t professional I think that could be quite damaging” (SEAI stakeholder).

It was only a feature of the data for five of these entrepreneurs, and one entrepreneur actually explicitly mentioned that he does not believe it is important to demonstrate intention for legitimacy: “We don’t need [to demonstrate intention] for legitimacy because we are known” (Nick, SEAI). Despite this, his company website and brochures continuously refer to professionalism illustrating that he does demonstrate intention. Overall, the demonstration of intention in acquiescence was shown to be important for legitimacy in the field, across different sectors, enterprise types and throughout the business lifecycle.

Eight of the ten SEI entrepreneurs exhibited evidence of the use of intention in acquiescence for legitimacy. This shows it to be a strong feature of the data for these entrepreneurs. Analysis showed that they demonstrate intention in similar ways to the SEAI entrepreneurs such as through the use of professional language and portray themselves as professional, rule-compliant entrepreneurs. Table 6.3 illustrates that these entrepreneurs also emphasised the importance of structure, such as having an office space, a storefront and websites, and that
they sometimes seek help from others in learning to do this:

“things like having our premises in the city, having an address and website, that’s professional and I’ve learnt that’s so important” (Nora, SEI)

“I was heavily reliant on reciprocal help from my friends who had more experience with the whole notion of setting up a website and sourcing produce and dealing with suppliers and pricing and marketing” (Nathan, SEI).

These entrepreneurs gave many examples of how they attempt to convey their compliance with rules and norms as well as mimic practices of professional field members in order to acquiesce in the field. As was found for SEAI entrepreneurs, SEI entrepreneurs predominantly acquiesce strategically rather than substantively, describing how they purposefully demonstrate intention to achieve legitimacy. Analysis showed how this is done throughout the business lifecycle, but emerged as particularly important in earlier stages of enterprise development when the entrepreneur first enters the field. In addition, documentation pertaining to the awarding body as well as an interview with a representative from the awarding body continuously referred to the importance of demonstrating entrepreneurialism and innovation. This was also a specific feature of the judging criteria. The demonstration of intention through acquiescence is clearly an important feature of legitimation for both groups of entrepreneurs in the field.

6.4.2 Anchoring
The other way in which entrepreneurs were found to utilize intention in legitimation was through anchoring. This refers to when entrepreneurs purposefully accentuate certain aspects of themselves and their enterprises while downplaying others (Turcan, 2013). In this way, it is similar to the compromise approach suggested by Oliver (1991) in which entrepreneurs placate and accommodate different institutional elements and engage in negotiation with stakeholders. Although, in anchoring, entrepreneurs do not engage in negotiations but rather they strategically conceal, accentuate and even misrepresent themselves in order to gain legitimacy from certain field members. This study found significant differences between the two groups of entrepreneurs regarding the degree to which they engage in this type of legitimation using intention.
For seven SEI entrepreneurs, analysis revealed how they use their intention to overcome certain stereotypes and dissociate with a negative image, and to overcome the perceived dichotomy between having strong orientation and having strong intention. In doing so, they use their intention to conceal certain aspects of themselves and their enterprises while accentuating those that they believe will gain them legitimacy. Table 6.3 shows, for example how one entrepreneur described that she is viewed as a ‘hippie’ by her local community and that to be thought of this way is to “separate yourself from the local community...you need to show the professionalism of your work to escape that image” (Charlotte, SEI). Another states “it’s this kind of balancing act again of kind of like staying true to who we are but at the same time, like identifying that our mission statement and our vision would be best served by attaining legitimacy with certain funders and certain organisations” (Beth, SEI). Analysis revealed a clear sense of dichotomy among this group of entrepreneurs between maintaining their values or orientation, and demonstrating their professionalism and entrepreneurialism, or intention, to gain legitimacy.

Five SEI entrepreneurs also discuss how they are uncomfortable with the image of being an entrepreneur or entrepreneurial, and so demonstrating intention is a difficult task despite being acknowledged as important for legitimacy. This discomfort also leads SEI entrepreneurs to engage in an anchoring strategy where they both accentuate and conceal various characteristics. For example, Nora asserts “I’m uncomfortable with that image of entrepreneur...I will always think of myself as that activist who was in the right place at the right time”, yet she goes on to talk about how she downplays her orientation and demonstrates intention for legitimacy. Another entrepreneur states: “I come from a place where people don’t like to think of it as enterprising, that kind of sucks the goodness out of it” (Nathan, SEI). This group of entrepreneurs give a number of examples of ways in which they accentuate intention and conceal orientation throughout the business lifecycle to multiple stakeholders, and this is a strong feature of the data. For these entrepreneurs, legitimation can involve compromising on their personal values, yet they continue to strategically pursue legitimacy through demonstrating intention through acquiescence and anchoring.

Just one SEAI entrepreneur, Warren, made reference to using intention as a means of dissociating with what he refers to as a ‘hippie’ image (see Table 6.3). He describes such an image as having negative connotations which contradict the capacity for business success in
the form of job and wealth creation: “I didn't go into it on a 'hippie' side or anything like that you know, I got into it with the idea of making a business that you could create employment, create wealth and become a sustainable business...that's what I see success is. Business success. Yeah I mean there's lots of lads that are kind of making things from I don't know...hippies” (Warren, SEAI).

It emerged that he accentuates his intention by demonstrating his entrepreneurial skills to counteract these negative connotations. Operating in the innovative and technologically advanced area of hydrokinetic energy, the researcher did not expect that he would be wary of being perceived in this way by field members. This demonstrates that such an image exists across the field for both groups. However, as this type of legitimation was just mentioned by one SEAI entrepreneur, it is clearly not a strong feature of the data for this group.

Findings indicate that in pursuing legitimacy, entrepreneurs must refine and enhance their ability to demonstrate intention as it is important for legitimacy. The challenge is to overcome the perception that doing so will compromise their orientation which itself is a necessary factor for continuation on the entrepreneurial path, and to do so in a way that is not misrepresentative of the truth, as this might have negative legitimacy effects long term. Intention is evidently a crucial construct for SEI entrepreneurs whereas this is not the case for SEAI entrepreneurs. Intention was found to be particularly useful in gaining legitimacy from professional and regulatory bodies, mainstream industry counterparts and mainstream customers, all of whom represent a mainstream-economic logic. Nonetheless, entrepreneurs do not explicitly mention ways in which they use intention to align with well-established organisations representing this logic as could be seen with prior knowledge. This empirically informs the conceptual framework as it demonstrates that intention is used as strategic agency by sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in legitimation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Sustainability Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acquiesce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SEAI</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Killian</td>
<td><em>Demonstrating professionalism is key for legitimacy in the field, always attempts to maintain this image.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eammon</td>
<td><em>In discussing what is most important for legitimacy:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Again the award, being able to show your figures, your data sheet and prove the cost savings and explain where the cost savings came from”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“slightly different background, architecture which is still a very professional sector [which is important]”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom</td>
<td>“For legitimacy it’s very important...professional accreditation and being part of professional bodies and so on...you know it’s a very small community...you’ll have a reputation for professionalism”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Company website also provides extensive detail on professional accreditations as well as testimonials from customers referring to his enterprise team as professional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam</td>
<td>“Being professional and following the rules or playing by the rules and staying on everyone’s good side, not getting involved in anything illicit including stuff that could damage your reputation”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Company website mentions: “professional service” in “delivering all the requirements; technology, data analysis, audits, consultancy, training and awareness”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noel</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evan</td>
<td>“we wouldn’t do business with a company if they weren’t...if we didn’t think they were professional and understood how to do business and if they were informal in communication”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Company website and brochures demonstrate intention as they outline professional accreditations as well as describe their “professional and innovative approach”</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Frank** | “certifications and awards, they’re very important. It gives the impression that you’re the real deal.”  
**Awards mentioned on website** | Not applicable |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Nathan** | “When I go to networking events and courses and my language is different because I’m trying to present that image of being ‘businessy’.”  
“I was heavily reliant on reciprocal help from my friends who had more experience with...setting up a website and sourcing produce and dealing with suppliers and pricing and marketing”  
“The best way to achieve your goals is to be seen as professional. My advice to anyone starting out...is focus on how to show yourself as a competitor of mainstream business”  
**Company website utilises a star rating system which he mentioned as something that adds professionalism.** | “I come from a place where people don’t like to think of it as enterprising, that kind of sucks the goodness out of it. I’m uncomfortable with that too although you have to kind of show a level of comfort or you’re compromising your end goal”  
**Blog entries show how he thinks sustainable change will not necessarily come from adhering to the norms of professional industries: “We need to be open to the idea that various tipping points, pivots, opportunities for transformation and uptake may not necessarily be found in planning, engineering, or industrial design for instance; they may be cultural, personal/psychological.”** |
| **Nora** | “Things like having our premises in the city, having an address and website, that’s professional and I’ve learnt that’s so important.”  
“We were putting in place the sort of things that an organisation needs, you know policies and things”  
“professionalism [is most important for legitimacy] because I mean when we are dealing with our stakeholders we have to have land plans, biodiversity studies done and they like to see those so we have ecologists on board who do these plans in a very professional way”  
**Company website has a professional structure. Mentions the winning of “prestigious” sustainability entrepreneurship awards** | “It’s quite difficult actually this entrepreneur thing...We didn’t know anything about boards or directors, we didn’t know anything about strategic planning... so structures and confinement were not really what suited us”  
“I’m uncomfortable with that image of entrepreneur...I will always think of myself as that activist who was in the right place at the right time” |
| **Dawn** | This entrepreneur describes how she attempts to be seen as a clothes shop like any other as this helps her demonstrate her intention. She specifically mentions the use of certain language on her website and in advertising as well as having a shop front and having professional staff:  

“Having the actual store front, the premises...we know how to run a business and what’s important there, so...having the premises and being friendly”  

“I came up with a few of these slogans to show that we’re not trying to reinvent the wheel here, we’re a normal shop, normal premises and normal people”  

**These slogans are evidenced on her website and posters that she designed for her enterprise, and her website is very professional.**

| **Beth** | “I’m getting better at the numbers because that’s important to people.”  

*Indicators of professionalism such as formal documents that quantify aspects of her enterprise are acknowledged as important for legitimacy and as something that she is attempting to gain more skills in.

| | “Goals keep you going mentally but it’s [your] entrepreneurial business mind [that’s important].”  

“I think for any of the official organisations they have to see results, statistics, to see where our money is coming from and exactly where it is going. There’s quite a bit of distrust going on with charitable organisations at the moment and rightly so, so it’s crucial for us to demonstrate that we are not that”  

*Acknowledges that there is a dichotomy between demonstrating intention in that it can go against her sustainability mission: “we’re certainly a for profit enterprise, for profit social enterprise and there’s so much about us that makes us a social enterprise but there is a disparity”

| | “It is something that like, if I’m giving a presentation I’m not going to wear my overalls...and that’s, I mean we are who we are, we’re not going to apologise for or change who we are, we might slightly change who we are, or how we present ourselves for a presentation or a pitch.”  

*Expressed mixed feelings about the degree to which she demonstrates intention and how she feels about it.

| | “It’s this thing of having a vision for society but power and money and influence reside in the hands of decision makers who reside in a certain segment of society and have a certain appreciation for suits and ties...it’s this kind of balancing act again of kind of like staying true to who we are but at the same time, like identifying that our mission statement and our vision would be best served by attaining legitimacy with certain funders and certain organisations.”

| | “we’re involved in this to and forth of look we’ve received a huge amount of credibility and legitimacy from the awards and there were always certain
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helen</td>
<td>“the formalised structure even of a community organisation can be intimidating but ultimately it helps, it gives you a basis”</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laura</td>
<td>“You have to draw them to you and part of that is our professional website and blog and advertising and links to other professions in the industry. Our staff are all qualified and presentable and yeah I’d say coming across as professional is something crucial”</td>
<td>“[awarding body] helped us become something defined...to structure it in this way and to apply for an award as a social entrepreneur is scary...it helped to establish us as a business and I suppose us as business women which I hate saying but apparently that’s what we get called, but us as women in business, in enterprise” <strong>Website discusses professionalism of staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>“I’d never say entrepreneur... some event they were running and there we were all the ‘entrepreneurs’ in the room talking to each other and first I was thinking I’m not sure if I’m in the right place, I’m not...entrepreneur you know”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Context Description
*Documentation
6.5 Conclusion

How do prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention manifest as factors of entrepreneurial agency shape sustainability-oriented entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field?

This chapter has demonstrated the findings of the current study as they relate to research question two. It has highlighted the findings on the role of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention in legitimation for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs as they respond to dominant field logics. Examining how the constructs that pertain to the individual entrepreneur manifest in legitimation has provided a critical insight on the role of these constructs as agency in legitimation. These findings address a number of gaps in the literature regarding the role of goals, values and beliefs of the legitimacy-seeker in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur behaviour, specifically legitimation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016). They also provide empirical support on the role of agency in fields (Battilana, 2006; Weik, 2011, Fligstein & McAdam, 2012) and the role of agency in legitimation within pluralistic institutional contexts (Oliver, 1991; Pache & Santos, 2013). Comparing the legitimation behaviour of two groups of entrepreneurs for whom these constructs were presumed to differ provided evidence in favour of this assumption. While each construct was found to be a feature of legitimation for both groups of entrepreneurs, the way in which these constructs manifested differed between the two groups.

Prior knowledge was found to be used by entrepreneurs in three ways in legitimation. Firstly, it was used in an alliance strategy towards a mainstream-economic logic by five SEAI entrepreneurs and one SEI entrepreneur. Evidently, this was not a strong feature of the data. It was also used to align to a sustainability logic by four SEAI entrepreneurs and five SEI entrepreneurs. However, SEAI entrepreneurs were largely referring to prior mainstream knowledge. These findings reflected those presented in chapter five which pertain to research question one on the logics of the field in that both a mainstream-economic logic as well as a sustainability logic were identified. Secondly, prior knowledge was used as a conformance strategy via attempts to fit-in and coopt, by eight SEAI entrepreneurs and six SEI entrepreneurs. This showed prior knowledge as quite valuable in this way for both groups.
Thirdly, prior knowledge manifested as an indirect enabling condition for legitimation activities for two SEAI and five SEI entrepreneurs. While the two groups of entrepreneurs differ with regards to the type of prior knowledge they use, they both use prior knowledge strategically to similar extents and for similar purposes in legitimation.

Sustainability orientation was found to manifest in two ways in legitimation for these entrepreneurs. It was used in a defiance strategy by seven SEI entrepreneurs and two SEAI entrepreneurs, both through dismissing and contesting. Additionally, it manifested as a factor that facilitates continuation on their entrepreneurial path for three SEAI entrepreneurs and nine SEI entrepreneurs, highlighting that this using orientation in this way is a strong feature of the data for SEI entrepreneurs. However, a condition approach is not strategic and subsequently orientation was not found to be strategically utilised in legitimation for either group. It plays an indirect role for SEI entrepreneurs as a condition for adjusting their legitimation behaviour and continuing the pursuit of legitimacy, but was not a strong feature of the data for SEAI entrepreneurs.

Finally, sustainability intention was found to manifest in two key ways in the data, namely in an acquiescence approach and an anchoring strategy. Acquiescence was identified for five SEAI entrepreneurs and eight SEI entrepreneurs. As such, it is a stronger feature of the data for SEI entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurs of both groups discuss how they demonstrate intention through language and structure, as well as how they mimic other in the field who they see as professional. Additionally, just one SEAI and seven SEI entrepreneurs demonstrated the use of intention in anchoring. Specifically, these entrepreneurs accentuated their professionalism in order to overcome and dissociate with the perceived negative image that comes with having a strong orientation. Intention is a much more important construct for SEI entrepreneurs in legitimation, despite often contradicting their orientation.

Overall, the two groups of entrepreneurs are most similar with regards to how they use prior knowledge in legitimation. For orientation and intention, significant differences can be seen in the degree to which these constructs manifest and how they are used between both groups of entrepreneurs. Also, the findings presented here reflect the findings of chapter six regarding how both groups largely respond to similar logics in legitimation. Findings indicate that it is the factors of agency that make the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs different rather than field-level factors. The framework presented in the following chapter
illustrates how the empirical evidence addressed the two research questions of the current study. These findings will be discussed in chapter seven with regards to how contribute to the extant literature, as well as their implications for future research and practice.
Chapter 7 Discussion and Conclusion

7.1 Introduction
Examining sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation is a compelling task against the backdrop of the largely unexplored terrain of the sustainability-oriented enterprise organisational field (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011). The findings of the current study present a number of contributions to the field, which overall justify the rationale for this study. While the importance of the transition to a sustainable Ireland is anticipated to have a “positive impact on innovation, economic activity and job creation” (DCENR, 2015), the role of individual entrepreneurs in this transition is not well understood (Hahn et al., 2015), not to mention sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs who by definition, are well placed to enact a rigorous approach to sustainability that goes beyond piecemeal attempts involving trade-offs between different sustainability elements (Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011). Fundamental to enhancing theory on the role of these entrepreneurs is understanding their legitimation, as legitimacy can be a crucial resource for them in the face of logic multiplicity (Glynn, 2008). Further, their successful legitimation can lead to creative, innovative and entrepreneurial sustainability solutions which have the potential to benefit us all. This study sought to address the lack of knowledge on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in enacting this transition, and how they gain and maintain legitimacy in the field. The study focused mainly on post-legitimacy, capturing the legitimacy experiences of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs after they had achieved an award for sustainability in Ireland.

This chapter discusses the key findings and contributions of the current study on sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation in relation to extant and future theory and practice. The discussion begins by revisiting the central objective and subsequent research questions of the current study. The core objective of this study was to provide a conceptually and empirically grounded framework of sustainability-oriented legitimation. A number of shortcomings were identified in the literature regarding their legitimation which motivated the examination of the role of both field-level (RQ1) and individual-level (RQ2) factors in the legitimation process. The findings gave a clear illustration of the conceptual framework presented in Chapter Three (see Figure 7.1 below). Each key finding will be discussed in more detail, building towards the presentation of Figure 7.2 which shows how the findings
provide empirical strength to the conceptual framework. Implications for practice and a number of recommendations for future research are then discussed ahead of the conclusion, which culminates with this study’s key contributions.

**Figure 7.1 Conceptual Framework**

![Conceptual Framework Diagram]

The evidence, which is based on 25 interviews with entrepreneurs, stakeholders and awarding body representatives and documentation collected from two groups of award-winning sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal both similarities and differences across both groups. Overall, a mainstream-economic-oriented logic and a sustainability-mission-oriented logic were found to exist across the field for both groups, and both groups were found to utilise the individual factors of prior knowledge, orientation and intention in legitimation both directly and indirectly. The specific similarities and differences within each and across both groups as well as the underlying reasons for them are discussed in relation to their contributions to extant literature. The patterns that emerged across all entrepreneurs are also mentioned as particularly salient. Legitimacy is a socially constructed phenomenon as it exists as a result of relationships and interactions between actors (Suchman, 1995) and actors’ interpretations of the meaning behind these interactions. Examining both field level and individual level factors enabled the researcher to capture the effects of both institutional requirements communicated through field logics, and the experiences, beliefs, thoughts and feelings of actors (Gergen, 2015) on legitimation. The examination of these factors resulted in a number of key theoretical and empirical contributions which will be discussed below.
7.2 Sustainability Pillars as Field Logics in Legitimation

7.2.1. Identifying logics through examining legitimation

Research question one of this study is concerned with how sustainability pillars manifest as locally embedded logics of the field, and how this can be identified in the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. The first contribution of this study is a means of empirically identifying field logics, specifically how sustainability logics emerge from accounts and evidence of legitimation behaviour. As was discussed in Chapter Three, extant research has largely used two methods to identify logics (Nelson, 2015), the first of which is traditional content analysis wherein researchers code data to identify categories and patterns representative of logics as they emerge from the data (e.g. Nigam & Ocasio 2009; McPherson & Sauder 2013; Rao et al., 2003). Authors in this area also suggest that researchers seeking to identify logics empirically should utilise dominant ‘ideal types’, such as State and Market logics, which vary depending on organisational field, and search for these in the data (Friedland & Alford, 1987; Greenwood et al. 2009; Lounsbury 2011; Thornton et al., 2012). In the conceptual framework of the current study presented in Figure 7.1, a bidirectional arrow indicates that this study conceptualised legitimation as shaped by sustainability logics, but also that legitimation can reveal these logics. Chapter Three discussed how existing work in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, both specifically concerned with logic multiplicity and work on conceptualising their drivers and goals, established the presence of logics that can be broadly categorised as either social, environmental or economic logics (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013). As of yet, research has not explicitly stated how it came to identify these logics beyond assuming them as ‘ideal types’. Hence, while this study assumed these three logics, which represent the three pillars of sustainability (as per the conceptual framework), to be the ‘ideal types’ that characterise the field, an empirical thematic analysis approach was also adopted to examine if and how these logics emerged from the data. Empirically examining how sustainability logics emerge from accounts and evidence of legitimation behaviour is a unique means of identifying logics. This is a valuable contribution given the key relationship between legitimation behaviour and logics, and the evident utility of examining legitimation to reveal logics found in this study.

As was shown in Chapter Five, logics were found to manifest in the organising principles, perceived dominant sources, means and challenges associated with legitimation (see Figure 7.1).
7.2. Organising principles of logics are embedded within goals (Thornton and Ocasio 2008) such as legitimacy goals. For this reason, examining the legitimacy goals of the entrepreneur can reveal the presence and embeddedness of logics. Next, sources of legitimacy communicate the rules of the field and legitimacy requirements through logics (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). In this way, identifying who or what actors perceive to be the dominant sources of legitimacy was found to be a crucial step in identifying the logics of the field. In addition, this study explored the means through which entrepreneurs strive for legitimacy, meaning the specific legitimation activities of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, in order to identify which logics they are responding to within the organisational field. Finally, Turcan (2013), in examining international new venture legitimation, identified a number of possible challenges of legitimation. For example, goal misalignment might occur during legitimation oriented towards certain logics, or when attempting to align with powerful industry players, large companies might demand exclusive partnerships and legitimacy-seekers could become trapped. The current study reflected Turcan’s (2013) findings in that it identified a number of similar legitimation challenges, such as goal misalignment. However, this study also found that examining different forms of legitimation challenges can reveal logic types. Therefore, the contribution of this study here is that examining each of these components of the process of legitimation can shed light on the field-prescribed balance of logics that constitute the organisational field. This provides a unique means of identifying logics and how they are embedded to varying degrees in the values, goals, interactions, and practices of organisational field actors (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). This also empirically supports the conceptual framework as it shows how sustainability logics can be identified in legitimation through each of these components. For example, financial and ‘fit-in’ legitimacy goals represent an organising principle for a mainstream-economic-oriented logic (see Figure 7.2). Logics were identified in the legitimation behaviour of both groups of award-winning entrepreneurs, which strengthens the evidence for this finding. The discussion below demonstrates that the overarching logics present in the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in Ireland are consistent with those assumed to be present in previous studies based in the United States and the UK, providing validity to the approach used here.

7.2.2 The Emergence of a Mainstream-Economic-Oriented Logic
The next key finding of the current study is that the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship was found to be characterised by two overarching logics; a mainstream-economic-oriented logic and a sustainability-mission-oriented logic. Under
research question one, this study aimed to explore how the pillars of sustainability manifest as multiple field logics in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, and extend the current legitimation literature in the context of these entrepreneurs (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013). Chapter Five demonstrated that the economic sustainability pillar was a prominent feature of the data for both groups of entrepreneurs, providing empirical support to the conceptual framework. It was identified in the legitimating behaviour of every entrepreneur from both groups in some form. It was first found to manifest as an organising principle through legitimacy goals of financial economic gain and fitting-into the wider, mainstream business field (see Figure 7.2). Organising principles are a fundamental characteristic of logics as they provide some shared goals for actors operating within the same organisational field (Berente and Yoo, 2012; McPherson and Sauder, 2013; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008). Still, literature has not examined how legitimacy goals can reveal logics as organising principles. This logic emerged as something entrepreneurs of SEAI see as necessary and valuable for legitimacy and their enterprises, and it was a strong feature of their legitimation goals. SEI entrepreneurs however, did not express having financial legitimacy goals and their ‘fit-in’ goals were largely related to disassociating with negativity and misunderstanding relating to their sustainability purpose.

Goals reflect what legitimacy means to these entrepreneurs and the personal and professional legitimacy motivations of entrepreneurs (Dacin et al., 2007), and the current study found that the two groups of entrepreneurs draw very different meaning of legitimacy from adherence to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic. This suggests that unlike SEI entrepreneurs, SEAI entrepreneurs understand and value the importance of gaining legitimacy from stakeholders who expect them to be economically viable and provide economic value to the field, much like a traditional mainstream entrepreneur (DeClercq & Voronov, 2009, 2011). This is consistent with literature on how entrepreneurs experience logics as research shows that an economic logic manifests in the mission of all entrepreneurs, regardless of their sustainability-orientation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2009, Schaper, 2002). Further, this suggests a degree of overlap between the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship and mainstream-economic-oriented entrepreneurship (Dean & McMullen, 2007; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011). The absence of goals of this nature for SEI entrepreneurs is an important finding as it suggests action taken towards adhering to a mainstream-economic-oriented logic goes against their goals and values. This is comparable to the findings of O’Neil and Ucbasaran (2016) who identified a sense of dissonance and inauthenticity as a personal
consequences of environmental entrepreneur legitimation resulting from a mismatch between personal beliefs and legitimacy expectations.

A mainstream-economic-oriented logic also became apparent when entrepreneurs of both groups discussed how they perceive the dominant sources of legitimacy to be those which provide conflict avoidance, a favourable image, and financial gain, as illustrated in Figure 7.2. Some of the specific sources that provide these benefits were also the same across both groups of participants, namely, city councils, universities, regulating bodies, and mainstream consumers as well as mainstream community counterparts. This is consistent with findings on sources of legitimacy for mainstream entrepreneurs (Clarke, 2011; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002) as well as predicted sources of legitimacy for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011). The importance attributed to these stakeholders demonstrates the presence of a dominant mainstream-economic-oriented logic, but again these sources are a slightly stronger feature of SEAI legitimation and were given a more positive valuation by this group. Sources of legitimacy vary from field to field (Bitektine, 2011; Deephouse and Suchman, 2008) and the extent to which logics are salient in the field is a function of the relative power of the stakeholders who are aligned with those logics (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Scott, 2008). Again, the dominance of these sources suggests that the field in which these entrepreneurs operate overlaps with a mainstream-economic field (Dean & McMullen, 2007; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011) and entrepreneurs should subsequently engage in legitimation within the context of the mainstream-economic oriented field.

A mainstream-economic-oriented logic also became apparent when entrepreneurs discussed the means through which they pursue legitimacy, such as by demonstrating adherence to standards and norms of the mainstream field, how they show professionalism, and how they show the commercial potential of their product or service (see Figure 7.2). These means of legitimation are well documented in the mainstream entrepreneurship and organisational legitimacy literature (Turcan, 2013; Zott & Huy, 2007) as well hybrid organisational legitimacy literature (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2013). The key finding of the current study is that these means of legitimation reflect the presence of a dominant mainstream-economic-oriented logic in the field. The ways in which the logic manifested were similar in both groups of entrepreneurs, but SEI entrepreneur legitimation exhibited slightly stronger adherence to this logic through the frequency with which they demonstrate professionalism and commercial potential. As SEAI entrepreneurs mostly represent the
innovative and high performing field of sustainable energy in Ireland, perhaps they had less need to demonstrate their professionalism and commercial potential as a means of legitimacy. In addition, these means of legitimation could have been more important to SEI entrepreneurs given their need to overcome their somewhat negative valuation of this logic. This finding demonstrates that despite the meaning they attribute to this logic, SEI entrepreneurs also recognise the importance of adhering to this logic in legitimation. These findings reflect a theme in the literature, as discussed in Chapter Three, regarding the importance of an economic logic to all entrepreneurs, and how this logic manifests itself in strategies which guide the focus of the entrepreneur (Anderson, 1998; DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; Schaper, 2002). The current study extends this literature to include the strategies of legitimation.

The final way in which this logic emerged was when entrepreneurs discussed how they face challenges in legitimation due to ‘distrust of institutions’, due to how legitimacy is an ‘individual-level issue’, and due to how their ‘goals are incompatible’ with those of field members aligned to this logic (see Figure 7.2). While the challenges of the ‘individual level’ and ‘incompatible goals’ were a feature of both SEAI and SEI entrepreneur accounts, ‘distrust of institutions’ only emerged as an issue for SEAI. This was surprising given the positive valuation given to the mainstream-economic-oriented logic by SEAI entrepreneurs and the resistance to and even distrust of this logic expressed by SEI entrepreneurs. ‘Individual level’ and ‘incompatible goals’ however, were a stronger feature of SEI responses than SEAI, which reflected the way in which they discussed this logic overall. A key finding was that entrepreneurs in both groups referred to a sense of experiencing a barrier put up by individuals in the field of energy against the sustainability movement which negatively affects the legitimacy of the field. This suggests that individuals are an important source of legitimacy in the field, which is reflective of authors such as Clarke (2011) and Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002), who view legitimacy as socially constructed by individual local actors in local situations, and interpreted by legitimacy-seekers. This reiterates the importance of a social constructionist approach to the examination of legitimacy as it takes into consideration how individual values, beliefs and assumptions shape how reality is constructed (Suchman, 1995).

Additionally, entrepreneurs in both groups specifically referred to how the goals of the local council clashed with their sustainability goals, and that this has had negative legitimacy effects for their enterprises. This is consistent with literature in the context of logic
multiplicity, as some authors have found that if balance between mission and commercial logics is not achieved, it may result in mission drift and internal conflict, in turn causing loss of competitiveness aimed towards satisfying one or both logics (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Pache & Santos, 2010). Similarly, Turcan (2013), in examining international new venture legitimation, specifically identified that goal misalignment might occur during legitimation oriented towards certain logics, and O’ Neil and Ucbasaran (2016) identified personal consequences of challenges of mismatched goals. This finding on the negative role of local authorities in legitimation however, contrasts with findings of Muñoz and Kibler (2015) who found that local authorities have a significant role in shaping opportunity confidence among social entrepreneurs. The main contribution of this study is that the legitimation challenges identified demonstrate the presence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic across the organisational field.

Overall, entrepreneurs of both groups pursued this mainstream-economic-oriented logic both strategically and substantively. The strategic nature of legitimation at times suggests entrepreneurs in both groups of this study are aware of the power of stakeholders who are aligned with this logic, and the positive legitimacy effects of adhering to this logic (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Scott, 2008). This logic was a feature of legitimation activity throughout the business lifecycle, across different sectors, company size and structure for both groups of entrepreneurs. The continuous reference to the mainstream field and the importance of economic-oriented stakeholders for both groups suggests the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field to be a subset of the mainstream field and shows that entrepreneurs in this subset must engage in legitimation within the context of the wider mainstream-economic oriented field. This finding is consistent with the widespread association of entrepreneurship of all types with economic value creation (Schumpeter, 1934). “The social construction of entrepreneurship fundamentally implies an expectation of the profitable exploitation of products, technologies or markets” (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011, p. 324). The current study found this to be the case in terms of the legitimacy goals, sources, means and challenges of two groups of award-winning sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in this organisational field. Figure 7.2 illustrates how the findings presented in Chapter Five, which address research question one, provide empirical support to the conceptual framework regarding how an economic sustainability pillar manifests as a mainstream-economic-oriented logic in sustainability-oriented legitimation throughout the field. In this way, this study provides a unique contribution to the limited theoretical and empirical work on logics in the
sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011). Nonetheless, while this logic emerged as dominant in the field, this dominance was found to be shared with another logic known as a sustainability-mission-oriented logic, as discussed below.

7.2.3 The Emergence of a Sustainability-Mission-Oriented Logic

Many fields are characterised by multiple logics, and this was found to be the case for the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. A sustainability-mission-oriented logic, made up of both environmental and social sublogics, was identified in the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs. This logic was identified in the legitimation behaviour of all but one entrepreneur, showing that this was a strong feature of the data. This empirically supports the conceptual framework regarding how both environmental and social sustainability pillars manifests as a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in sustainability-oriented legitimation. Firstly, as can be seen in Figure 7.2, this logic manifested through ‘relationship and consensus’ legitimacy goals (mission) as well as through ‘self-sufficiency’ legitimacy goals (sustainability) for both groups of entrepreneurs. As previously discussed, legitimacy goals reflect the meaning that these entrepreneurs attribute to aspects of legitimation. There was agreement across both groups on the idea that legitimacy means self-sufficiency and longevity, and that this will produce positive impacts socially and economically for society. However, it was much more prominent for SEI entrepreneurs and was found to be a strong feature of their legitimation. As legitimacy goals reflect attributed meaning, they may be tied to their individual values, and the findings here suggest that SEI entrepreneurs have stronger values related to their sustainability mission. The role of individual values in legitimation is an underdeveloped area of research (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Munoz & Kibler, 2016; O’Neil and Ucbasaran, 2016), and the contribution of the current study to this research will be discussed in section 7.3.

Interestingly, this logic also became apparent when entrepreneurs discussed the dominant sources of legitimacy in the field as those that provide them with ‘conflict avoidance’ and a ‘favourable image’. These sources were also found to be dominant sources of legitimacy for a mainstream-economic-oriented logic, demonstrating that whatever bodies facilitate this and whichever logic they represent, conflict avoidance and a favourable image are the ultimate sources of legitimacy across the field for these entrepreneurs. This is consistent with Clarke (2011) and Zott and Huy (2007) who argue the importance of entrepreneurs presenting a
favourable image through visual symbols in legitimation, and Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) who discuss how entrepreneurs can engage in various strategies to demonstrate adherence to rules, ultimately so as to avoid conflict and maintain reputation. A sustainability-mission-oriented logic strongly featured as a source of legitimacy across both groups of entrepreneurs to similar extents. Both groups specifically mention the EPA, their sustainability awarding body, and the sustainability-minded people of the local community as important sources of legitimacy that provide them with a favourable image and conflict avoidance, and subsequently, these were found to be the dominant sources of legitimacy across the field. The current study finds that these entrepreneurs must deal with dominant sources of legitimacy that adhere to both mainstream-economic-oriented and sustainability-mission-oriented logics, which contributes empirical evidence to the extant literature on how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs operate in a field characterised by logic multiplicity (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil and Ucbasaran, 2011).

The presence of this logic also became apparent as entrepreneurs of both SEAI and SEI discussed how they demonstrate their ‘sustainability offering’ as a means of gaining legitimacy, and to a lesser extent, how they demonstrate their ‘sustainability values’ to gain legitimacy (see Figure 7.2). This logic was found to be quite clearly present in the means of legitimacy for both groups and slightly more prevalent throughout SEAI entrepreneur legitimation. Both groups mention sustainability-minded end-users and their local community as important stakeholders from whom they can gain legitimacy by demonstrating their sustainability offerings and values. This is consistent with the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature which acknowledges that these entrepreneurs develop strategies to deal with sustainability-minded stakeholders as well as those who are economic-oriented (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013). The specific means of demonstrating sustainability offering is also consistent with the legitimacy literature generally as the demonstration of an enterprise’s unique offering, such as their sustainability offering, is a recognised means of legitimation for mainstream (Turcan, 2013) and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs (O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016). However, as previously mentioned, the role of values in legitimation is not well explored and will be elaborated on in a later section of this chapter.

A key finding here was that the majority of entrepreneurs in both groups discussed the sustainability awards as their main means of demonstrating their sustainability offering to
gain legitimacy. The winning of awards has been recognised in the literature as a source of legitimacy for mainstream economic-orientated organisations (Patten, 1992) as well as social enterprises (Nicholls, 2010), and the current study found that sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs use the awards both as a means of pursuing legitimacy towards a mainstream-economic-orientated logic and a sustainability-mission-oriented logic. For some, awards demonstrate that they are ‘ticking boxes’ regarding rules of the field and professionalism whereas others use the awards to demonstrate the authenticity and standard of their sustainability offering. This is consistent with the findings thus far which indicate that these entrepreneurs operate in an organisational field characterised by logic multiplicity. Although, this positive valuation of the awarding bodies could be due to participant bias, and future research should examine whether awarding bodies are valued by other sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs.

The last way in which a sustainability-mission-oriented logic was identified was as entrepreneurs discussed the challenges they face in legitimation. The specific challenges discussed were those resulting from the field of sustainability in Ireland ‘not being legitimised’ itself, as well as the field ‘not being sustainable’, as illustrated in Figure 7.2. Additionally, a number of SEAI entrepreneurs pointed to ‘micro-level thinking’ in Ireland as a challenge compared to the macro level thinking internationally. Evidence of this logic in legitimation challenges was not a strong feature of the data for either group, but was twice as prevalent a feature of SEAI entrepreneur legitimation compared to SEI. SEI entrepreneurs generally expressed a more positive valuation of the field and highlighted how this field aligned with their personal values, which may explain why they reported field issues and challenges less frequently. Still, entrepreneurs of both groups mentioned that the sustainable energy field in particular is not seen as legitimate by either mainstream or more socially-oriented field members. This is reminiscent of findings presented by Johnsson (2014) in the context of global health governance, which identified a number of legitimation challenges for organisations such as difficulties with defining the health issue area and communicating it to diverse audiences with different needs, interests and priorities. In an emerging field such as sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015), which also experiences issues resulting from diverse and competing stakeholder interests (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011), it is not surprising that the field’s legitimacy is in a state of development. Additionally, entrepreneurs from both groups made reference to how Ireland is largely engaged in unsustainable practices and that subsequently the field of sustainability itself is not
sustainable. This finding, which was also reiterated in both stakeholder interviews, is worrying as it suggests that current sustainability efforts cannot reach their full potential in the Irish field. However, this was reported by less than half of the entrepreneurs and is not something that has been documented in the literature. On the contrary, the Irish government report the potential for significantly positive impact on the economy throughout policy literature (DCENR, 2015).

Overall, each element of the process of legitimation examined here revealed the presence of a sustainability-mission-oriented logic for both groups (see Figure 7.2). The sustainability-mission-oriented logic is clearly distinct from the mainstream-economic-oriented logic, and encompasses both environmental and social sublogics rather than an economic logic. Additionally, entrepreneurs of both groups engaged in both strategic and substantive legitimation towards a sustainability-mission-oriented logic, demonstrating awareness of the presence and importance of adhering to this logic, and providing examples of how they purposefully do this along the business lifecycle and across enterprise type, size and structure. The strategic and substantive nature of their legitimation is discussed further below in relation to how it indicates the degree of embeddedness of this logic. Figure 7.2 illustrates how the findings presented in Chapter Five, which address research question one, provide empirical support to the conceptual framework regarding how both environmental and social sustainability pillars manifests as a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in sustainability-oriented legitimation. In this way, this study provides a unique contribution to the limited theoretical and empirical work on logics in the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011).

7.2.4 Logic Multiplicity in Legitimation

“Institutional environments are often pluralistic...as a result, organizations in search of external support and stability incorporate all sorts of incompatible structural elements” (Meyer & Rowan 1977, p. 356). When facing multiple logics, an organisational actor is less able to rely on an isomorphic response to one dominant logic and must interpret the dynamics of multiplicity (Scott, 2008). Logic multiplicity was evident throughout the legitimation behaviour of almost all of these entrepreneurs, which shows it is a strong feature of the data. Both logics emerged throughout the legitimation process to similar extents, indicating that these logics exist alongside each other as multiple dominant logics of the organisational field.
This reflects the literature which argues how the presence of multiple logics in a particular field does not necessarily lead to tension and institutional change whereby one logic replaces another (Leca & Naccache, 2006), but instead acknowledges the likely permanent coexistence of multiple logics in many fields (Mars & Lounsbury, 2009; Purdy & Gray, 2009; Reay & Hinings, 2009; Thornton and Ocasio, 2008).

Examples were given by SEAI entrepreneurs of how sustainability in the field is characterised by multiple stakeholders with different sustainability interests; economic, social or environmental. Some gave examples of the multiple logics experienced by their own enterprises which constitute their purpose and actions. One SEAI entrepreneur offered an example of managing multiplicity when he discussed the importance of interpersonal skills in interpreting and managing diverse sustainability expectations. SEI entrepreneurs alternatively discussed how sustainability itself is a term composed of the interests of diverse stakeholders and subsequently, the field of sustainability in Ireland is also comprised of this multiplicity. SEI entrepreneurs also discussed how they experienced multiplicity through the sustainability awarding process, and one stated that he has taken measures to acknowledge multiplicity in his enterprise such as designing policies around environmental, social and economic sustainability separately. Across both groups of entrepreneurs, a distinction between economic, social and environmental logics became apparent whereas it had previously been found that the separation occurs at the level of mainstream-economic versus sustainability-mission. Social and environmental logics were found to be complementary as both reflect the specific enterprise missions of these entrepreneurs. While some authors view the coexistence of logics as something that will inevitably lead to organisational demise as a result of poor performance (e.g. Tracey et al., 2011), others assert that the multiplicity of logics can fuel sustainable performance and innovation (Jay, 2012; Kraatz & Block, 2008). In the current study, the legitimation behaviour of these entrepreneurs revealed that the coexistence of these logics can at times cause uncertainty for them regarding which logic stakeholders adheres to. This uncertainty can lead them to unnecessarily portray themselves in a way that is not appreciated by stakeholders and does not result in legitimacy, as was found by O’Neil & Ucbasaran, (2016). Although, the majority of the time, entrepreneurs in both groups demonstrated that they can interpret the expectations of stakeholders and act accordingly. Logic multiplicity provides these entrepreneurs with a multitude of means to present themselves as legitimate.
As well as disagreement regarding the effect of multiplicity on performance, the literature on multiple logics features a number of ideas on how actors can navigate this multiplicity in diverse contexts. For example, some argue that it tends to lead to contestation and conflict (Battilana & Dorado, 2010; Zilber, 2002), yet others report agreeable coexistence (McPherson & Sauder, 2013) or present different means of logic blending that actors engage in (Binder, 2007; Pache & Santos, 2013). Neither group of entrepreneurs offered much detail on the specific mechanisms they use to manage multiplicity, which can be interpreted as an indicator that they do not experience issues of conflicting logics, or that they do not strategically and purposefully enact strategies to overcome multiplicity as it is an ingrained and agreeable feature of the field. Future research on sustainability-oriented legitimation should explicitly examine specific strategies used to manage multiplicity. In summary, the findings discussed here provide empirical evidence to support the conceptual framework on how multiple sustainability pillars manifest as multiple logics in the organisational field. This pattern was evident across almost all entrepreneurs, enhancing currently limited theoretical and empirical work on logic multiplicity in the organisational field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011).

### 7.5 Logic Embeddedness

Embeddedness of logics is field specific and subsequently, there are field-imposed preferences with respect to the relative balance between logics (Scott, 2001). Logics become embedded to varying degrees in the values, goals, interactions, and practices of organisational field actors (Thornton and Ocasio 2008). As the current study adopted a social constructionist approach, it was crucial to consider how the embeddedness of logics differed amongst these entrepreneurs, and how this might shape their legitimation experience. Embeddedness and context must be observed in order to interpret variance in experience (Whetten, 1989). The degree of embeddedness of the two dominant logics was observed through considering factors such as the frequency with which the logic features in the entrepreneurs’ accounts of an activity and the valuation (positive, negative, indifferent) actors give to the logic (Dachs et al., 2008). In addition, whether entrepreneurs were engaging in symbolic стратегическое legitimation or substantive legitimation (Crilly et al., 2012; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002) was also taken to be an indicator of the extent of embeddedness of each logic. This is because strategic, purposeful action is distinctly different from unconscious conformance to strongly embedded logics. The legitimacy goals, perceived dominant sources, means and challenges
reveal the differential embeddedness of these two dominant logics in the two groups of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. Logic embeddedness has not been widely examined empirically (Dachs et al., 2008; Lawrence et al., 2002), nor has it been examined in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. Therefore, this study contributes to extant literature by providing an empirical examination in this context, as well as empirical support for the assessment of logic embeddedness via frequency, valuation as well as strategicness.

Exploring these issues firstly revealed the presence of strongly embedded mainstream-economic-oriented logic for SEAI entrepreneurs. This strong embeddedness was evidenced through the high frequency with which this logic featured in legitimation goals, perceived sources of legitimacy, means and challenges. In addition, it was evidenced in the positive valuation attributed to pursuit of this logic, and the more substantive nature of this legitimation work as opposed to strategic. Substantive legitimation is not strategic and instead demonstrates conformance to the legitimacy criteria of the field (Ashford & Gibbs, 1990), evidenced in “goals, structures, and processes” (Ibid, 180). A sustainability-mission-oriented logic was also found to be strongly embedded for SEAI entrepreneurs, despite some negative attitudes towards the perceived value of pursuing legitimation towards this logic. SEAI entrepreneurs were found to place more value on a mainstream-economic-oriented logic, but the frequency with which a sustainability-mission-oriented logic is pursued and the extent of strategic action on the part of the entrepreneur indicate that it is also strongly embedded.

For SEI entrepreneurs, the legitimation goals, perceived legitimacy sources, legitimation means and challenges of legitimation faced by entrepreneurs revealed a strongly embedded sustainability-mission-oriented logic. This strong embeddedness was evidenced through the high frequency with which it featured throughout legitimation accounts, the extremely positive valuation attributed to this logic, and the clear evidence of alignment between legitimation, personal and organisational goals of these entrepreneurs. This alignment reflects a more substantive form of legitimation in which entrepreneurs easily conformed to this logic and no conflict was evident. However, this was not the case for the mainstream-economic-oriented logic. The presence of this logic was found to be weakly embedded. This became clear as a result of entrepreneurs discussing disparity between what they believe in and value and what they must actually engage in so as to gain legitimacy in the field, essentially revealing negative valuations and a more strategic form of legitimation (Crilly et al., 2012). Therefore, despite the acknowledgement by many SEI entrepreneurs that adhering to this
logic is important for legitimacy, the quite negative nature of the valuation given to these sources and the strategic nature of legitimation ultimately undermine the extent to which this logic is strongly embedded.

These findings on logic embeddedness offer a final contribution to research question one regarding how sustainability pillars manifest as locally embedded logics of the organisational field. They demonstrate that a sustainability-mission-oriented logic is strongly embedded across the field, but that the embeddedness of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic significantly differed across entrepreneur groups in the field. This finding is the first for research question one for which differences appear across the groups of entrepreneurs. This contributes to the scarce literature on assessing logic embeddedness (Dachs et al., 2008; Lawrence et al., 2002; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008) and provides an empirical grounding in support of assessing logic embeddedness via frequency, valuation and strategicness. Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs were found to respond to meso-level rules and norms of the field in the form of embedded logics in legitimation. However, this study also found that entrepreneurs enact their agency in legitimation, specifically that they utilise the constructs of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and intention in legitimation. These findings, which address research question two, are discussed below.

7.3 Internal Constructs as Agency in Legitimation

Research question two of the current study is concerned with the role of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention as agency in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation. The findings discussed above signify a clear pattern across all entrepreneurs as both groups of entrepreneurs largely respond to similar logics in legitimation. Comparing the legitimation behaviour of two groups of entrepreneurs for whom constructs of agency were presumed to differ provided evidence in favour of this presumption, as findings indicate that it is the constructs of agency that produce different legitimation behaviour outcomes between these two groups of entrepreneurs rather than field-level factors. Sustainability intention emerged as the most strategically useful for both groups, and a degree of interdependence amongst these constructs in legitimation was identified. Findings empirically support the conceptual framework (Figure 7.1) as they revealed that all three constructs examined manifest in both gaining and maintaining
legitimation behaviour to differing extents. This is illustrated in Figure 7.2, showing for example that prior sustainability knowledge indeed manifests as agency in legitimation, and that this is evidenced through alliance, conformance and condition strategies. As the constructs of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention have individually and holistically been found to be fundamentally important to connecting the pursuit of sustainability goals to entrepreneurship, the current study adds to the literature on internal, individual factors driving sustainable development by examining them holistically in the context of legitimation (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015). By examining these constructs as agency in legitimation, the current study also extends the very limited literature on the role of goals, values and beliefs of the legitimacy-seeker in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur behaviour, specifically in legitimation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016). The following sections elaborate on how this study contributes to the under-explored area of legitimation for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs by offering novel insight into the strategic role of these constructs as agency in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation behaviour.

7.3.1 Prior Sustainability Knowledge
Extant literature has highlighted an over-reliance on top-down, regulatory intervention as the only solution to sustainability challenges, arguing that the enactment of prior knowledge of entrepreneurial individuals can resolve some of the environmental challenges that arise from inefficient functioning of markets (Cohen & Winn, 2007; Dean & McMullen, 2007). Prior knowledge has been found to positively relate to opportunity recognition in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (Choi and Gray, 2008; Patzelt and Shepherd, 2010) as well as mainstream entrepreneurship literature (Gregoire et al., 2010; Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Shane, 2000). As of yet, its role in legitimation is not well understood. This study responds to the recommendation for research on the role of prior knowledge in legitimation of value-driven entrepreneurs which posits that prior knowledge might benefit the entrepreneur in speeding up legitimation and enable the entrepreneur to encounter less dissonance from diverse stakeholders (DeClercq and Voronov, 2011; O'Neil and Ucbasaran, 2016). Overall, the two groups of entrepreneurs examined in this study are most similar with regards to how they use prior knowledge in legitimation, compared to the other two constructs. All but three entrepreneurs in total were found to utilise prior knowledge. As such, the findings on prior knowledge are quite salient. While the two groups of entrepreneurs differ with regards to the
type of prior knowledge they use, they both use prior knowledge strategically to similar extents and for similar purposes in legitimation.

Prior sustainability knowledge was found to be used by entrepreneurs in three ways in legitimation, as illustrated by Figure 7.2. Firstly, it was identified as valuable in forming alliances or partnerships with mainstream industry players to gain legitimacy. The ‘alliance’ legitimation strategy is recognised in the literature, and has been characterised as one where entrepreneurs will enter cooperative agreements, partnerships, and joint-ventures (Turcan, 2013) with well-established entities in the field with the aim of increasing features such as their visibility, reputation, image, and prestige (Deephouse & Carter, 2005; Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001). Therefore, the current study provides empirical evidence of the use of this strategy by sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, and the role of prior knowledge in aiding the use of this strategy (Reynolds et al., 2018). Although entrepreneurs were asked about their prior knowledge of and experience with sustainability issues, SEAI entrepreneurs proceeded to discuss how their prior knowledge of and experience in non-sustainability sectors actually benefitted them significantly in legitimation in this sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field, as they must also respond to a mainstream logic. This suggests the importance of mainstream prior knowledge to the legitimacy of these entrepreneurs, particularly in forming partnerships with universities. Prior sustainability knowledge was identified as especially valuable in forming alliances or partnerships with sustainability-oriented field members for both groups, particularly in building relationships with local community members and end-users. These findings reflected those presented in Chapter Five which pertain to research question one on the logics of the field in that both a mainstream-economic logic as well as a sustainability logic were identified.

Secondly, prior sustainability knowledge was used in a ‘conformance’ strategy via attempts to ‘fit-in’ and ‘co-opt’ by many entrepreneurs in both groups, but was a stronger feature of SEAI legitimation. This is perhaps due to the fact that again, SEAI entrepreneurs are eager to discuss their prior mainstream experience in legitimation, but acknowledge that they must adapt this to the sustainability field. SEAI entrepreneurs mentioned the utility of their prior mainstream experience as well as sustainability experience, whereas SEI just mentioned the latter. A conformance strategy has also been identified in the legitimacy literature (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002). The current study provides further empirical evidence of the use of this strategy by entrepreneurs, particularly highlighting the role of prior sustainability
knowledge in facilitating this strategy in the context of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. In relation to fitting-in, both groups of entrepreneurs mentioned how formal qualifications are becoming more important in the field, and both mentioned how prior sustainability knowledge is particularly useful when entering the field for the first time. This resonates with the findings on logics in that entrepreneurs aim to ‘fit-in’ so as to avoid conflict and maintain a favourable image. In their legitimation work, entrepreneurs are most concerned about being seen in a positive light by stakeholders as opposed to explicit resource acquisition, which is similar to the findings of Clarke (2011) whereby entrepreneurs attempted to gain legitimacy to better engage stakeholders. The importance of prior knowledge in this phase, especially for novice entrepreneurs, has also been identified in the field of mainstream entrepreneurship (see e.g. Mitteness et al., 2013), but the current study found that this importance diminishes over time as it becomes taken for granted.

A number of entrepreneurs in both groups also pointed to prior sustainability knowledge as something that could act as a barrier to further learning, innovation and progress of the field. If entrepreneurs are seen to be over reliant on demonstrating their past experiences, they could be viewed as being opposed to innovation and unwilling to embrace change. Entrepreneurs must understand the diminishing utility of prior sustainability knowledge and learn to adapt their legitimation work when moving from the gaining to maintaining phase with existing stakeholders. It is critical that entrepreneurs stay current in their areas of expertise and this could be enhanced by ongoing professional development. By underlining this as a possible obstacle, this study adds to be body of literature highlighting the challenges of legitimation such as those that arise in establishing expectations (Garud et. al., 2014), demonstrating conformity with institutional norms while maintaining ‘legitimate distinctiveness’ (Navis & Glynn, 2011) and goal misalignment (Turcan, 2013).

Thirdly, as entrepreneurs progress along the business lifecycle, prior sustainability knowledge manifests as an indirect enabling condition for legitimation activities for both groups of entrepreneurs, showing the diverse role of prior knowledge. It was identified as particularly useful in gaining repeat customers, conducting day-to-day business, as well as helping the field to develop. Despite the consensus among entrepreneurs that the strategic utility of prior sustainability knowledge diminishes, this construct was still found to be a necessary condition for continuation, which echoes the findings of Muñoz and Dimov (2015), who found prior knowledge to be a “necessary condition at best”, and one that “needs to be
complemented by other (perhaps more important) factors in driving the entrepreneurial process forward” (p. 649). Prior sustainability knowledge exists as an underlying factor that helps entrepreneurs to continue to pursue their sustainability goals through entrepreneurial means, i.e., intention. This supports the argument of Muñoz and Dimov (2015) that they should be considered as holistic factors. Although a condition approach is not strategically valuable, in reality it is likely that entrepreneurs use their prior sustainability knowledge to “continually make and remake stories to maintain their identity and status” (Lounsbury and Glynn, 2001: 560). The current study provides an important theoretical and empirical contribution in that it addresses research questioning the role of prior knowledge in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016) by demonstrating the strategic utility of prior knowledge in legitimation (Reynolds et al., 2018). Further, the current study adds a new dimension to the legitimation literature (Turcan, 2013; Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002) as it finds that prior sustainability knowledge enables these entrepreneurs to enact a ‘condition approach’ which has indirectly positive legitimacy effects.

7.3.2 Sustainability Orientation

Many authors in the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature have empirically examined the beliefs, attitudes, convictions and values of entrepreneurs that lead them to pursue opportunities for sustainable development in the form of venturing (e.g. DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; Katsikis & Kyrgidou, 2007; Larson, 2000; Patzelt & Shepherd, 2009; Schlange, 2006; Spence et al., 2010; Tilley & Young, 2009; Walley & Taylor, 2002). Gibbs (2009) in examining what sets these entrepreneurs apart from mainstream entrepreneurs considers “the role that sustainability entrepreneurship may have in engendering a shift in the practices and operations of contemporary capitalism” (p. 63), pointing to the role of sustainability orientation. Similarly, Hockerts and Wüstenhagen (2010) discuss how it is the compounded impact of the sustainability orientation of incumbents and new ventures that creates the potential for sustainable transformation of industries. In this way, the orientation of these entrepreneurs has been argued to set them apart as capable of sustainable transformation. This study offered a unique approach to the examination of the role of sustainability orientation by exploring how it can be strategically utilised in legitimation by these entrepreneurs. In this study, orientation was found to manifest in two ways; in a ‘defiance’ strategy (Helfen et al., 2015; Oliver, 1991) and a ‘condition’ approach (see Figure 7.2). This construct was a much stronger feature of SEI legitimation, indicating that this may
be a moderator of legitimation behaviour. Overall however, evidence of the use of orientation in legitimation was not apparent for one third of all entrepreneurs, indicating that the findings on orientation are less notable than those on prior knowledge.

Shepherd et al. (2013) investigated what conditions influence entrepreneurs to make decisions inconsistent with their sustainability values. They argue that “entrepreneurs’ assessments of the attractiveness of opportunities that harm the natural environment depend on the simultaneous impact of values and personal agency” and that they have the ability to “cognitively disengaging their pro-environmental values (p. 1251). This study is interesting as it demonstrates how, rather than orientation ‘wearing down’ over time (Kuckertz & Wagner 2010), entrepreneurs can strategically tailor their orientation to suit opportunity exploitation. Additionally, DeClerq and Voronov (2011) hypothesis that the orientation of nascent entrepreneurs should match the orientation of incumbents in order to successfully achieve legitimacy. Despite this, orientation differs amongst different stakeholders and nascent entrepreneurs are tasked with uncovering what is appropriate to demonstrate for legitimacy. Further, O’Neil and Ucbasaran (2016) develop a model to explain how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs enact their values and beliefs during the new venture legitimation process. They find that these entrepreneurs learn how to balance “what matters to me” (entrepreneur) with “what matters to them” (stakeholders) to achieve legitimacy (p. 133). In the current study, orientation was found to manifest in a ‘defiance strategy’ and a ‘condition approach’, which is consistent with the literature discussed here.

In relation to ‘defiance’, entrepreneurs in both groups firstly mentioned how their orientation was met with both indifference and disagreement from field members. All of the field members mentioned were more concerned with economic interests. Nonetheless, in the early stages of the business lifecycle, these entrepreneurs continued to demonstrate their orientation. This active and strategic form of resistance to field expectations has been identified in the literature as one that provides the ability to maintain autonomy in decision making and flexibility in the face of changing requirements (Helfen et al., 2015; Oliver, 1991). This can benefit legitimacy in the face of multiplicity of logics in that entrepreneurs can strategically tailor their legitimation behaviour to diverse stakeholders at any given time. Secondly, entrepreneurs mentioned that field members are largely concerned with economic interests and that they must take action to oppose and change this. This did not lead to
positive legitimacy effects as extant literature indicates (O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016), and instead, often resulted in feelings of alienation and resistance for entrepreneurs.

In relation to a ‘condition’ approach, orientation manifested as a construct that facilitates the recognition and enactment of role adjustment, and continuation on their entrepreneurial path. This was a much stronger feature of legitimation for SEI entrepreneurs. This condition approach, however, is not strategic and consequently, orientation was not found to be strategically utilised in legitimation for either group. It mainly plays an indirect role for SEI entrepreneurs as a condition for adjusting their legitimation behaviour and continuing the pursuit of legitimacy. This resonates with Kuckertz and Wagner (2010) who found that the positive relationship between sustainability orientation and intention vanishes over time as individuals gain more business experience due to both individual and external factors. This also reflects the argument of Hockerts and Wüstenhagen (2010) who theorized that nascent start-ups will exhibit the strongest orientation.

Sustainability orientation was generally found to be far less strategically valuable than prior sustainability knowledge or intention due to lack of interest from stakeholders, which initially came as a surprise to entrepreneurs. Value-driven entrepreneurs in the start-up stage of business tend to overestimate the level of support they will receive from sustainability-minded stakeholders, as was found by O'Neil and Ucbasaran (2016) and consequently overestimate the strategic utility of their orientation. This compares to the findings on prior sustainability knowledge in that entrepreneurs must learn to accept this lack of appreciation and adapt their legitimation work when moving from the gaining to maintaining phase. This raises questions for the role of the entrepreneur within their sustainability-oriented enterprise regarding the extent to which stakeholders would like them and their sustainability values to be a visible component of the enterprise. Findings also suggest that, much like prior knowledge and intention, orientation and intention are related but distinct constructs (Valliere, 2017) and the real merit of sustainability orientation is as an ever-present, underlying factor that drives the entrepreneurs to stay on their entrepreneurial path in pursuit of sustainability goals, i.e. intention, as was found by Muñoz and Dimov (2015). This mirrors the relationship between prior knowledge and intention and further demonstrates why they should be considered holistically. The key contribution of this study here is that it provides further empirical support for this literature on the non-strategic value of orientation in legitimation.
7.3.3 Sustainability Intention

Schaltegger and Wagner (2011) analyse which business actors are most likely to bring about sustainability innovation, and develop a framework that positions sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship in relation to sustainability innovation. They argue that it is those business actors whose intent it is to contribute to solving societal and environmental problems through entrepreneurial means that produce the best sustainability innovations. York and Venkataraman (2010) argue that “the issue of resolving our current crisis is not one of regulation, but of innovation and motivation” (p. 461), highlighting the potential role of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs with their ethical motivations leading to sustainability intention. In the current study, it emerged that sustainability intention is quite clearly the most important factor for gaining and maintaining legitimacy as it is highly valued by a diversity of stakeholders. It was found to manifest in two key ways in the data, namely in an ‘acquiescence’ approach and an ‘anchoring’ strategy, as illustrated in Figure 7.2. Acquiescence refers to when entrepreneurs mimic and comply with field expectations (Oliver, 1991), and this form of response to field expectations varies in its degree of strategicness as it can involve habit, imitation and compliance. Overall, intention was not found to manifest for six entrepreneurs as compared to prior knowledge which manifested for all but three. However, the utility of intention was particularly significant and so the findings discussed here still hold importance.

Acquiescence was a stronger feature of the data for SEI entrepreneurs, and for both groups, acquiescence was predominantly strategic as opposed to substantive, with entrepreneurs giving multiple examples of how they intentionally demonstrate their professionalism in order to acquiesce. Entrepreneurs of both groups discussed how they demonstrate intention through language and structure, as well as how they mimic others in the field that they see as professional, reflective of mimetic isomorphism (DiMaggio and Powell (1983). In the mainstream entrepreneurship field, legitimation through language is well documented (Lounsbury and Glynn; Martens et al., 2007). However, Clarke (2011) argues that pursuing legitimacy through language is insufficient and that entrepreneurs should also present visual symbols to stakeholders in their legitimation to “present an appropriate scene to stakeholders and create professional identity” (p. 1366). Therefore, the current findings on the importance of demonstrating intention through both language and structure, reflect research within the
mainstream entrepreneurship field and contributes empirical evidence supporting the importance of sustainability intention for acquiescence in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation.

Additionally, entrepreneurs demonstrated the use of intention in anchoring by both accentuating and concealing elements of themselves and their enterprises to appear favourable to field members (Turcan, 2013). Specifically, these entrepreneurs accentuated their professionalism in order to overcome and dissociate with the perceived negative image that comes with having a strong orientation. Intention is a much more important construct for SEI entrepreneurs in legitimation, despite often contradicting their orientation. Intention is perhaps not demonstrated as frequently by SEAI because they operate in a more professional sector of sustainable energy, and their professionalism is taken for granted. SEI entrepreneurs discussed dissociating with a negative ‘hippie’ image by emphasising professional business skills. They also discussed accentuating their intention despite feeling uncomfortable with how this led them to be perceived. Overall, intention was found to be the most important construct for legitimation among this group of entrepreneurs. The successful utilisation of sustainability intention in legitimation during start-up meant that entrepreneurs could be perceived as ‘business savvy’, bestowing them with acceptance from a wider range of stakeholders (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015). Having the ability to demonstrate this intention successfully was found to be crucial for combating negative stakeholder judgments regarding entrepreneurs being too focused on their values and convictions, a challenge identified by O’Neil and Ucbasaran (2016). Entrepreneurs were found to become increasingly aware of a dichotomy between orientation and intention in that too much focus on their sustainability orientation could compromise their focus on the business logic, and this could exclude them from a wider audience of stakeholders. This resonates with the findings of Kuckertz and Wagner, (2010) who found that the positive impact of sustainability orientation vanishes with business experience due to both individual and external factors.

Interestingly, although entrepreneurs acknowledge its importance, several expressed that they feel uncomfortable with their ‘entrepreneurial identity’. This could act as a barrier to successful utilisation of this construct in legitimation and therefore this conflict is something that needs to be examined further to advance theory on sustainability-oriented legitimation. Rindova et al., (2009) discuss what they refer to as the “fundamental paradox of the entrepreneurial dynamic” (p. 483). This refers to the way in which all entrepreneurs,
mainstream and otherwise, are faced with finding a balance between pursuing their values, beliefs and desires relating to their entrepreneurial venture, and managing the constraints posed by legitimacy-granters. A similar argument was presented by DeClercq and Voronov (2011) in the case of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. The current study argues that sustainability intention as a construct embodies this ‘paradox’ for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (Reynolds et al., 2018). In pursuing sustainability goals through entrepreneurialism, entrepreneurs might seem to be displaying contradictory intentions and aims which could cause them to fall between the gap of sustainability-oriented and economically-oriented stakeholder judgements to a place where they are never entirely accepted by either. Learning to successfully overcome this paradox to strategically utilise intention in legitimation is the ultimate challenge of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, as well as their ultimate goal. Figure 7.2 illustrates the contribution of this study, empirically supporting the argument of the conceptual framework regarding the strategic utility of sustainability intention in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation.

7.3.4 Individual Agency in Legitimation
Battilana and D’Aunno (2009) point to the individual level of analysis in agency as an underdeveloped area of research. While extant literature largely leans towards structural explanations for organisational field behaviour, the current study returns focus to the strategic individual entrepreneur. By arguing that it is through the use of these three constructs that entrepreneurs have the capacity to enact institutional work and strategic action in legitimation, this study develops the theory on individual agency which calls for literature to examine which conditions facilitate institutional work and agency (Battilana, 2006; Weik, 2011). This study provides empirical evidence on the important role of individual legitimacy-seekers in carrying out institutional work to incite change in the organisational field by strategizing to legitimise themselves and their practices, specifically demonstrating the strategic utility of prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention across two groups of entrepreneurs in legitimation. “Through processes of social construction, entrepreneurs can develop new meanings that may eventually alter institutional norms, beginning at organisational level” (Aldrich and Fiol, 1994, p. 649). Research on strategic agency can help progress knowledge on entrepreneurial behaviour in the emerging field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. Also, in examining the role of agency in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation, this study extends current empirical
evidence of the role of agency in legitimation within pluralistic institutional contexts (Oliver, 1991; Pache & Santos, 2013).

7.4 Legitimation in the Organisational Field of Sustainability-Oriented Enterprise

The conceptual framework presented in Figure 7.1 illustrated this study’s conceptualisation of sustainability pillars as logics and individual constructs as agency in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation. Examining pillars as logics enabled the researcher to account for the socially embedded nature of how entrepreneurs attempt to navigate the complex sustainability field through legitimation. Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs were found to respond to meso-level rules and norms of the field in the form of logics in their legitimation (see Figure 7.2). Examining how the pillars of sustainability manifest as logics in the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs provides some clarity to the contestation surrounding how the meaning of sustainability is constructed by diverse actors in their organisational field, and how different elements of sustainability are valued in the field. It revealed how these entrepreneurs are concerned with the pursuit of various combinations of economic, social and environmental concerns which reflect the three pillars of sustainability (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015, Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011; Tilley & Young, 2009). This reflects existing literature on logic multiplicity in the field of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship which has categorised them broadly into either sustainability and profit (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011), or economic and environmental (O’Neil and Ucbasaran, 2011). Additionally, it reflects Hoffman’s (1999) work on organisational fields as it shows how the continuous negotiation of sustainability issues provide meaning to the field and bring diverse interested actors together. Different organisational actors have different sustainability concerns and goals, but adhere to the same sustainability logics in a range of ways. This imbues organisational fields with a sense of meaning beyond shared interest in homogeneity of markets or technologies (Wooten & Hoffman, 2016). Therefore, the current study provides a unique empirical examination of the organisational field of sustainability-oriented enterprise that reflects extant conceptual work (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011; Hoffman, 1999).

In addition, as was discussed in section 7.2 in relation to the emergence of a mainstream-economic-oriented logic and a sustainability-mission-oriented logic, this study found clear
overlaps between the sustainability-oriented enterprise and the mainstream enterprise field. This resonates with Fligstein and McAdam’s (2012) theory which "conceive of all fields as embedded in complex webs of other fields" (2012, p. 18), with clear overlap between fields. Their theory addressed a limitation of earlier conceptualisations that were overly focused on boundaries between fields and did not account for change in fields (Greenwood et al., 2008; Hoffman, 1999). When it comes to the issue of sustainability, distinguishing between these fields can be counterintuitive to the holistic triple-bottom line approach which is required to address the complex issue of sustainable development (Dean and McMullen, 2007; Schaltegger and Wagner, 2011; Tilley and Young, 2009). A key finding of the current study is that sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in both groups look to both mainstream-economic-oriented stakeholders and sustainability-mission-oriented stakeholders to gain legitimacy in the field, and this organisational field should be considered as a subset of a larger, mainstream field. This contributes empirical support for Fligstein and McAdam’s (2012) theory as well as that of Dean and McMullen (2007), Schaltegger and Wagner (2011), and Tilley and Young (2009).

Further, this study provides empirical support for Fligstein and McAdam’s (2011, 2012) view of fields as dynamic spaces of strategic action where actors interact out of shared, although not necessarily consensual understandings of an issue (Wooten & Hoffman, 2016). This view highlights the strategic purpose behind actions, therefore offering a nuanced explanation of strategic agentic behaviour of individuals in organisational fields, such as occurs in legitimisation. A key finding of this study, as discussed in section 7.3 is that these entrepreneurs are capable of using prior knowledge, orientation and intention as strategic agency in legitimisation (see Figure 7.2), thus contributing empirical evidence in favour of Fligstein and McAdam’s (2011, 2012) approach.

In conceptualising individual constructs as agency, and sustainability pillars as logics, the current study also contributes to the broad debate on structure versus agency in neo-institutional theory, extending the argument in favour of the ability of organisational actors to enact agency to respond to institutional demands in organisational fields (Greenwood et al., 2006; Lawrence, 2004; Seo & Creed, 2002; Suddaby, 2010). Embedded agency refers to the broad debate within institutional theory between structure and agency (Friedland & Alford, 1987; Seo & Creed, 2002) in which the question remains: how can organisational
actors be both subject to regulative, normative and cognitive processes of institutions, and yet also enact their own values, beliefs and motivations to shape institutions? (Garud et al., 2007). Neo-institutionalists research has become increasingly concerned with the role of agency in organisations, with authors arguing the role of organisational characteristics in enabling responses to institutions over the potentially fatalistic implications of seeing institutions as impenetrable and unchangeable. This literature aims to explain institutional creation and change by examining the field and organisational-level conditions that enable institutional work, the social skills institutional entrepreneurs use to enact institutional work, and the interplay between these dynamics in different institutional settings (Hardy & Maguire, 2008). In the current study, individual entrepreneurs were found to respond to organisational field-level dynamics through the use of prior knowledge, intention and to a lesser extent, orientation in their legitimation work and to this end, the current study demonstrates empirical evidence of the role of agency in strategically responding to institutional structure (see Figure 7.2). Further, by examining the interplay between field-level logics and micro-level factors of agency in the entrepreneurial legitimation process, this study also responds to the literature calling for multi-level research on organisational fields and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (e.g., DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; Wahga et al., 2018).

Overall, legitimation was found to be shaped by an interplay of field logics and individual constructs, with certain individual constructs being used to strategically respond to field logics in the process. The framework presented below in Figure 7.2 illustrates how the empirical evidence addressed the two research questions of the current study. This framework shows how a mainstream-economic-oriented logic and a sustainability-mission-oriented logic were identified through organising principles, perceived dominant sources, means and challenges of legitimation. It also shows how prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention each manifest in legitimation through a number of strategies.
7.5 Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurs and a Paradox Approach to Sustainability

Paradoxes refer to contradictory yet interrelated tensions that persist over time (Lewis, 2000; Smith & Lewis, 2011). There has been little work done as of yet on the role of individual entrepreneurs in managing sustainability paradoxically, although the individual’s role in sustainability is recommended as an important area of future research (Carollo & Guerci, 2017; Hahn et al., 2015; Sharma & Jaiswal, 2017). Further, research has yet to explicitly acknowledge the role of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in enacting a paradox approach to sustainability. This study subsequently addresses a number of important gaps in the literature by examining how individual sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs manage these tensions as logics in legitimation. Paradoxical tensions are believed to arise as actors socially construct their reality (Smith & Lewis, 2011). As legitimacy is a socially constructed phenomenon (Zimmerman & Zeitz, 2002), the current study found that there is ample
opportunity for paradoxical tensions to arise between the diverse stakeholder expectations of what is legitimate, and sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs must overcome these tensions through legitimation. A paradox approach to sustainability is crucial for legitimacy in the field.

Approaching a tension between pillars of sustainability as one that requires trade-offs will require a choice between pillars, diluting the pursuit (Hahn et al., 2010). This study found that the pillars of sustainability are separate but interrelated in the organisational field, and that sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs are well placed to manage sustainability tensions in nonlinear, holistic ways, managing trade-offs. Firstly, since sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs are characterised as having a number of unique traits which have been deemed responsible for driving entrepreneurial activity towards sustainable development (Muñoz & Dimov, 2015), this was found to imbue them with the mindset required to enact a paradox approach. Specifically, these entrepreneurs were found to use their prior sustainability knowledge, their strong sustainability values (orientation) and their entrepreneurial mindset (intention) to engage in a paradox approach as opposed to a less rigorous trade-off approach in managing tensions between the different pillars of sustainability, including during legitimation. Entrepreneurs are very aware of the multiplicity of the field, and that navigating this multiplicity is necessary for successful legitimation. This reflects the findings of authors (e.g. Aguilera et al., 2007; Anastasiadis, 2014; Koe Hwee Nga & Shamuganathan, 2010, Murphy, 2017) who suggest that “a cognitive shift or expansion in mindset is required to more effectively integrate the contradictory and complex aspects of sustainability” (Van der Byl and Slawinski, 2015, p.64). Sustainability intention emerged as particularly important in assisting entrepreneurs to negotiate tensions between diverse logics.

Secondly, evidence of a paradox approach to sustainability emerged when SEI entrepreneurs discussed how they strategically demonstrate certain aspects of themselves and their enterprises which they know will bring legitimacy despite it conflicting with their sustainability purpose. They demonstrate an ability to manage tensions between conflicting logics to successfully pursue legitimacy. Also, throughout both groups of entrepreneurs’ accounts of perceived dominant sources and means of legitimacy, many acknowledge sources representing both dominant logics. This awareness of diverse legitimacy sources and subsequent accounts of attempts to navigate multiplicity through various means demonstrates the use of a paradox approach to sustainability. Further, the continuous acknowledgement of
overlaps between organisational fields shows that these entrepreneurs are familiar with the process of identifying the expectations of diverse stakeholders and making legitimacy choices accordingly, such as is required in a paradox approach (Smith & Lewis, 2011). Finally, tensions were identified as entrepreneurs discussed the challenges they face in legitimation. These entrepreneurs operate within a field with diverse stakeholders and successfully achieve legitimacy nonetheless by working through the consequences of multiplicity in the form of sustainability tensions. Sustainability itself exists as a paradox of competing terms in the organisational field which these entrepreneurs navigate. The ability of these entrepreneurs to recognise and work through these paradoxes demonstrates the suitability of a paradox approach to the conceptualisation of sustainability in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, extending the literature on the paradox approach to sustainability (Hahn et al., 2015; Van der Byl & Slawinski, 2015).

7.6 Implications for Practice

In line with international policies and research, Ireland needs to transition towards a more economically, environmentally and socially sustainable economy. The Irish government asserts that the field of sustainability is “one of the most dynamic and rapidly growing markets in the world” and one that “presents a major opportunity for growth, competitiveness and employment creation for Ireland” (DJEI, 2012). Research is growing on the role of individual entrepreneurs in providing creative and innovative solutions for sustainability challenges, and there is a growing focus on the need for entrepreneurs to be future orientated by creating value for the triple bottom line of people, planet, profit (Tilley and Young, 2009). Hahn et al., (2010, p. 7) argue that despite having received very little attention in the literature, the individual efforts to manage sustainability tensions is a crucial point of analysis as “eventually organisational behaviour with regard to sustainable development depends on the perceptions, motives, values and decisions of single actors.” In examining how these entrepreneurs achieve and maintain legitimacy in the organisational field, this study provides a number of implications for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship practice.

Firstly, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs were found to operate in an organisational field in which both an economic-mainstream-oriented logic and a sustainability-purpose-oriented logic are dominant. Subsequently, entrepreneurs operating in this field, or attempting to enter this field need to be aware of this and need to be inclusive of both logics in legitimization.
behaviour. Not adhering to legitimacy expectations can have detrimental effects on an enterprise (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011). Specifically, the findings of the current study suggest that these entrepreneurs should focus on demonstrating adherence to rules and norms so as to fit in and maintain a favourable image in this highly regulated field. One means of doing this is receiving awards in the field, and this study found that this is a particularly effective means of demonstrating adherence to both dominant logics. Additionally, entrepreneurs discussed how they face challenges in legitimation due to distrust of institutions, due to how legitimacy is an individual-level issue, and due to how their goals are incompatible with those of field members aligned to this logic. Other challenges identified were that the field of sustainability in Ireland is not legitimised itself, the field is not sustainable, and the field is characterised by micro level thinking. This study suggests that entrepreneurs in this field be aware of these possible issues that pose challenges for legitimacy, as equipping themselves with this awareness can be a first step in successful legitimation (Johnsson, 2014; Turcan, 2013).

Secondly, in relation to prior knowledge, this study found that both sustainability and mainstream knowledge are valued in the field, and prior practical experience is particularly important for forming alliance and conformance strategies in legitimation. Despite this, entrepreneurs discussed how this is changing and predict that formal academic and professional qualifications will become increasingly important. It was also highlighted that being overly reliant on prior knowledge does not suffice. In terms of implications for practice, this suggests that these entrepreneurs need to engage in continuous training, particularly in the form of formal academic qualifications, as this is becoming increasingly relevant for legitimacy across the field.

Thirdly, sustainability orientation was not found to be strategically useful for legitimacy for SEI entrepreneurs, and SEAI entrepreneurs were not found to exhibit strong sustainability orientation. This raises questions for the role of the entrepreneur themselves within their sustainability-oriented enterprise regarding the extent to which other field members would like them and their sustainability values to be a visible component of the enterprise. Although this study found that orientation is valued for legitimacy by some field members, this is often difficult to judge, and is likely not the case. To this end, the current study suggests that sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs who possess strong sustainability orientation learn to use this characteristic in a way that provides internal support for their enterprise rather than demonstrate it externally. Orientation was found to be particularly effective in providing
motivation for continuation on the entrepreneurial path, as well as enabling entrepreneurs to stay consistent in their enterprise mission despite resistance from certain field members such as local councils.

A fourth implication for practice is related to the findings on the importance of demonstrating sustainability intention through both language and structure. Demonstrating sustainability intention was shown to be a very valuable tool in legitimation, specifically through acquiescence and anchoring which are the most strategic forms of legitimation (Oliver, 1991). However, SEI entrepreneurs were mostly found to accentuate their intention in order to overcome and dissociate with the perceived negative image that comes with having a strong orientation. Because of this, as well as the fact that these entrepreneurs expressed discomfort with the ‘entrepreneur’ image, sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs need to find a balance between their sustainability orientation and demonstrating intention so as to successfully achieve legitimacy. Rindova et al., (2009) refer to this as the fundamental paradox for entrepreneurs. The current study suggests that learning to successfully overcome this paradox to strategically utilise intention in legitimation is the ultimate challenge of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs, as well as their ultimate goal. Continuous professional development and coaching could help balance these perceptions of conflict, and skilful management of this conflict should be a benchmark of good practice in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. Understanding this tension is therefore also important for policy initiatives that aim to support the emergence and growth of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship.

A fifth and final implication for practice is related to the study’s key finding on the importance of sustainability award schemes to legitimacy in the field. If such award schemes provide legitimacy to sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship, these award schemes could work with the Irish Government to provide training on how to achieve the award standards, as well as incentives to encourage this form of entrepreneurship more generally. Additionally, new and more refined awards should be created to reflect continued progress in the field. This study found that both groups of entrepreneurs respond to the same dominant logics and exist in a field which overlaps with others. For this reason, award schemes need not over differentiate between entrepreneur types.
7.7 Directions for Future Research

The findings of this study highlight a number of areas that future research should consider in progressing the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field. Firstly, there are a number of limitations in the current study, as discussed in Chapter Four. Future research examining legitimation of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs could address these shortcomings, for example by utilising a larger sample size and using a longitudinal approach. The latter will require the development and maintenance of longitudinal databases of sustainability-orientated enterprises. A longitudinal approach would also enable researchers to capture experiences of pre-legitimacy as well as post-legitimacy which was the focus of this study. Furthermore, it is crucial to note that these findings reflect the experiences of award winning entrepreneurs. Future research should consider the legitimation experiences of entrepreneurs who have not decided to pursue awards, as these may offer an array of legitimation strategies not found here. To add, a shortcoming of the findings was the lack of information retrieved on specific strategies to overcome logic multiplicity. Therefore, this is a necessary subject of future research (O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013).

Future research should also not only focus on the individual legitimacy-seeker and delve deeper into the strategic, agentic behaviour of these entrepreneurs in legitimacy, but also include the perspectives of multiple legitimacy-granters in analysis to paint a full picture of how legitimacy is socially constructed in the field. Additionally, future organisational fields and logics research should look at identifying logics empirically through legitimation behaviour, as this study found this to be an effective method for identifying dominant logics of the organisational field. Related to this, as the current study provides empirical evidence in support of conceptual work on the presence of multiple sustainability logics in this organisational field (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011), future research should consider how the dynamics and embeddedness of these logics vary in different institutional contexts.

Also, as this study identified the individual constructs of prior knowledge and intention as strategically useful in legitimation, responding for calls for research on the role of individual constructs in legitimation (DeClercq & Voronov, 2011, O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016), research might consider the role of alternative factors that were not examined here, and which might be best served through the use of an alternative theoretical framing such as innovation theory. Finally, this study recommends that future research delve deeper into how these
entrepreneurs manage the interplay between both internal factors of agency and external institutional factors in their legitimation work. This would respond to literature calling for multi-level research in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (Wahga et al., 2018).

7.8 Conclusion
In discussing the future development of Ireland’s largest city, Dublin City Council’s Development Plan (2016-2022) recently provided a fitting description of the current climate for entrepreneurship nationwide and internationally. It states “fiscal restraint has led to a new energy for civic participation, social entrepreneurship, volunteerism and collaboration across the community, cultural, corporate and institutional sectors. These new ways of working can result in innovative and vibrant solutions, whilst strengthening local communities” (DCC, 2016, p. 189). The current study has shown how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs in Ireland navigate the field to gain and maintain legitimacy; embracing support for both their sustainability missions and their mainstream-economic requirements. This study offers a number of theoretical and empirical contributions to an important emerging area of research. Conceptualising triple pillar sustainability as holistic and paradoxical, and conceptualising sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs as capable of adopting a holistic and paradoxical approach to their sustainability pursuit in legitimation was the mission of Chapter Two. This was framed within a neo-institutional approach in Chapter Three which led to the development of the conceptual framework. This framework illustrated the argument that sustainability pillars should be conceptualised as organisational field logics, and that individual constructs of sustainability prior knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention should be conceptualised as individual constructs of agency. It also illustrated how examining sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation would reveal the presence of these logics and constructs of agency, as legitimation is shaped by these factors concurrently. Using a qualitative methodological approach underpinned by a social constructionist ontological stance, working within an interpretivist epistemological position, the data analysis addressed research questions one and two, the findings from which were presented in Chapters Five and Six. Figure 7.2 in this chapter demonstrates how these findings contributed empirical strength to the conceptual framework, and provides a robust framework for future theoretical and empirical development on sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation. The current study offers a number of contributions to the literature at the intersection of entrepreneurship, sustainability and legitimacy. This thesis concludes by
summarising these contributions below under each research question.

**Research Question One:** *How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal sustainability pillars as locally embedded logics of the organisational field?*

Firstly, this study presents a unique empirical examination of how the pillars of sustainability can be examined as multiple field logics in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur legitimation which extends legitimation literature in the context of these entrepreneurs (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013). Specifically, it provides empirical support to the conceptual framework regarding how an economic sustainability pillar manifests as a mainstream-economic-oriented logic and how both environmental and social sustainability pillars manifests as a sustainability-mission-oriented logic in sustainability-oriented legitimation. In this way, the current study contributes to the limited theoretical and empirical work on logics in the sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship field (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; O’Neil & Ucbasaran, 2011).

**Research Question Two:** *How do ‘prior sustainability knowledge’, ‘sustainability intention’ and ‘sustainability orientation’ manifest as factors of entrepreneurial agency to shape sustainability-oriented entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field?*

Secondly, by examining prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability orientation and sustainability intention in legitimation, the current study firstly extends the very limited literature on the role of goals, values and beliefs of the legitimacy-seeker in sustainability-oriented entrepreneur behaviour, specifically legitimation (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016). More specifically, the current study provides empirical evidence in strong support of intention as the most strategically valuable construct in legitimation, and that this construct embodies a paradox for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship that is crucial to manage in legitimation (DeClercq and Voronov, 2011; Muñoz and Dimov, 2015; O'Neil & Ucbasaran, 2016; Rindova et al., 2009).
Overall, in conceptualising these factors as agency, and sustainability pillars as logics, the third contribution of this study is to the broad debate on structure versus agency in neo-institutional theory, extending the argument in favour of the role of agency in legitimation within pluralistic institutional contexts as well as research on individual-level enabling conditions for agency (Battilana & D’Aunno, 2009; DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; Greenwood et al., 2006; Oliver, 1991; Suddaby, 2010).
Appendix A: Email Correspondence to Potential Interviewees Requesting Participation

Dear [insert name]

I hope this email finds you well.

My name is Orlagh Reynolds and I am a 3rd year PhD student in the Department of Management, National University of Ireland, Galway. I am carrying out research into the factors that enable and constrain sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship. The research aims to provide guidance for sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs seeking to create competitive sustainable business. It also aims to shed light on the role of sustainability competitions in enhancing the credibility of new sustainable ventures.

I intend to focus on winners of sustainability awards in Ireland, including the Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland Awards and the Social Entrepreneurs Ireland Environmental and Sustainability Sector Awards. Given that your enterprise [insert name and focus of enterprise], resulting in the achievement of this sustainability award, it would be really great if I could interview you as part of this research, and hear the story of your experience.

If this is something that you might be interested in, I would of course travel to meet you at a time and place of your convenience. I estimate that the interview would take about 45 minutes. I can also send you on any further information about the purpose and output of this research, and answer any queries you might have via email or phone on 0877403743.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,
Orlagh
Appendix B: Information Provided to Participants Ahead of Interview

Title of Research: Legitimation Strategies of Sustainability-Oriented Entrepreneurs

Overarching Research Question: How do both organisational field-level factors and individual-level factors of agency shape the processes of legitimation in the case of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs?

Sub-Question 1. How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal sustainability pillars as locally embedded logics of the organisational field?

Sub-Question 2. How do prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability intention and sustainability orientation manifest as factors of entrepreneurial agency to shape sustainability-oriented entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field?

Sample interview questions:

1. What is the primary environmental and/or social issue(s) that you were aiming to contribute to/address when starting this enterprise/project?

2. What does the term ‘sustainability’ mean to you?

3. Do you any have prior experience in an area of sustainability-oriented enterprise? (For example, have you ever worked in the area of Corporate sustainability, Corporate social responsibility, Environmental management, Socio-economic development, Renewable energy, Earth and environment, non-profit social enterprise etc?)

4. In your view, can you tell me who you think are the main stakeholders of sustainability-oriented enterprise? (E.g. possible suppliers, potential customers, local government, national government, sustainability networks, local community, trade unions, NGOs etc.) In what way are these the most relevant stakeholders, can you elaborate on these relationships?
5. During the startup phase, did you actively try to develop a perception of sustainability-orientation? (For example, creating a professional website, logo, business cards, branding, marketing in line with sustainability-oriented mission?)

6. What was the most important/significant legislation you had to take into account in the startup phase of this enterprise/project? For example, industry specific legislation (waste management?), location based legislation, employment legislation? How did you comply with this legislation?

7. Can you tell me a bit about what your motivations were for applying for the SEAI award? The winning of such an award should indicate the achievement of some degree of legitimacy. Would you agree with this and why-how has winning this award impacted on legitimacy? Have you been nominated or won any other awards or prizes or do you plan to pursue this in the future?

**Information for participants before interview**

Firstly, thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. I am a PhD student in the Department of Management, NUIG, and the focus of the research is on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs. Therefore, I am interviewing entrepreneurs who have established enterprises and who have been successful winners of Sustainability Awards in Ireland.

This research is looking at how entrepreneurs of sustainability-oriented enterprises strategize for legitimacy when they are starting up their enterprise. Legitimacy means that something, whether it is a business, behaviour or a person, is being perceived as appropriate, proper or desirable within a situation or context. So entrepreneurial legitimacy means the entrepreneur’s actions are thought of as being appropriate and organisational legitimacy means the organisation is considered appropriate and proper within the sector, industry and society. For example, for a sustainability-oriented entrepreneur to gain legitimacy, they might need to convince relevant stakeholders that they are indeed sustainable. Different stakeholders will want different things so this is where strategy formulation can be seen. An indicator of the achievement of some degree of legitimacy would be the winning of a Sustainability Award. It is thought that entrepreneurs starting up a business will carry out certain actions to try to achieve this legitimacy, as legitimacy is believed to lead to more success in securing necessary resources, attracting customers and could lead to competitive advantage.
A number of factors are thought to influence how entrepreneurs actually strategize for legitimacy, and in this research I am exploring some of these. Firstly, I am looking at how institutional logics might shape strategies. Institutional logics are defined in the literature as “a set of commonly held assumptions, practices, norms, and values that discipline action and thought”. They come from institutions. For example, in the financial sector, the dominant logic would be ‘wealth creation’, or ‘profit’. In the sustainability-oriented enterprise sector, the dominant logic could be ‘social sustainability’ or ‘environmental sustainability’. So if you think about why people behave the way they behave, this theory says that the way we behave is influenced in part by these things called logics that come from institutions and these logics determine what is viewed as normal and common and desirable in the field. As institutions become more important or less important in the context, behaviour will change to align with what is considered appropriate for legitimacy. Put more simply, I will be asking questions about how your environment has influenced your actions, and I will use this information to try to determine what logics are present.

However, people do not just unquestioningly follow what is considered appropriate and desirable by dominant institutions and their logics. We also have the ability to act independently and make our own choices. This is the second factor that this research explores in terms of its effect on legitimation strategies and it is called ‘agency’. Agency is simply defined in the literature as “the capacity of an agent (entrepreneur) to act in a given environment.” Certain factors have been found to influence entrepreneurial agency in the case of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs (prior knowledge, intention, orientation, desire value creation) and I will explain these as we go through the interview. This research aims to explore how these factors of agency might influence how sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs respond to the different institutional logics in the pursuit of legitimacy. Again put more simply, factors of agency are basically about you as an entrepreneur and how different aspects about you as an individual entrepreneur might have influenced your behaviour around legitimacy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition from literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship</td>
<td>“Sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship is a process of venture creation that links the activities of entrepreneurs to the emergence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of value-creating enterprises that aim to contribute to the sustainable development of the social-ecological system” (O’Neil et al., 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legitimacy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy is defined as a generalized perception or assumption that an actor, group of actors, process or unit is desirable, proper, or appropriate within a system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions that are socially constructed by the parties that participate (Fischer, 2010; Suchman, 1995)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisational field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“set of organizations, often with different purposes, that are recognized as participants in the same debate surrounding specific issues, plus those concerned with the reproduction of institutional practices or arrangements related to the matter” (Hoffman, 1999)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Logics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Logics are a set of commonly held assumptions, practices, norms, and values that discipline action and thought within the field (Friedland and Alford 1987; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Scott, 2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entrepreneurial agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“the capacity of an agent (entrepreneur) to act in a given environment” (Muñoz &amp; Dimov, 2014)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Prior Knowledge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience with and knowledge of sustainability issue, field</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Value Creation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The true value that the entrepreneurs aim to create both for their business and for society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability Intention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refers to the entrepreneur’s direct intention to pursue the sustainability-oriented venture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sustainability Orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Refers to underlying attitudes and convictions towards sustainability issue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rationale for research:

- Sustainability-oriented enterprise has been considered fundamental in a transition to a more sustainable society and economy and so is an important emerging area of research (Hall et al., 2010; Spence et al., 2010; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011).

- The under investigated role of institutions in stimulating or constraining action has been identified as critical in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship (IJEBR call for papers, 2015)

Proposed theoretical contribution:

- Address the theoretical gap in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature on how institutional logics influence the legitimation strategies of these entrepreneurs (DeClerq & Voronov, 2009, 2011; Pache & Santos, 2013)

- Address the theoretical gap in sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship literature on how these entrepreneurs can act as institutional entrepreneurs to utilise four archetypal constructs of individual entrepreneurial agency to strategically manage multiple logics (Muñoz & Dimov, 2014; Schaltegger & Wagner, 2011)

- Respond to the literature calling for multi-level research on sustainability-oriented entrepreneurship by examining the multilevel interplay between field-level logics and micro-level factors of agency in entrepreneurial legitimation (DeClerq & Voronov, 2011; Lawrence and Suddaby, 2006; Nicolopoulou, 2014)

Proposed Implications:

- Insight on how entrepreneurs can achieve entrepreneurial legitimacy through managing logics successfully

- Guidance on how to strategically utilise factors of agency in responding to dominant institutional field logics and achieve legitimacy

Output:

- PhD Thesis published on NUI Galway ARAN Thesis repository

- Peer reviewed entrepreneurship journals (e.g. International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour and Research)
Appendix C: Interview Schedules

1. Sustainability Award Scheme Interviews

Interviewee __________
Date and Time __________

1. Why was this award scheme started?
2. How is it funded?
3. What does an applicant have to do to apply? (online, paper version, how long does it take to complete)
4. What are the different categories of awards? Can you tell me what each are about?
5. What are the eligibility criteria?
6. What type of organisations can apply? (charities, social enterprises, for-profits)
7. Does the applicant have to be the originator of the idea or the main driver and decision maker of the project/organisation?
8. What do the questions in the application aim to capture about the applicant and their enterprise?
9. How is sustainability defined for this award scheme?
10. What elements of sustainability are most important for the award scheme?
11. How important is innovativeness to the various award categories?
12. How important is sustainable impact?
13. What is required of someone who has been selected for an award? (time commitment etc.)
14. What are some of the main benefits to having received one of these awards?

2. Entrepreneur Interviews

Interviewee __________
Date and Time __________
The Entrepreneur

1. So firstly, what is your own name?
2. What age bracket are you in? 18-24 25-34 35-64
3. In what country were you born?
4. How long have you lived in Ireland?
5. What is your highest formal education qualification? (pre primary- doctoral)
6. Did you have a parent who was self-employed/ran their own business?

The Enterprise

1. What is the name of your business and what is its primary activity (ies)?
2. Exactly when was your business established? (Date and Year)?
3. In this business, are you sole trader/partnership/family run firm/co-operative/limited company/franchise arrangement/agency or commission arrangement/other?
4. What were the factors that contributed to you selecting this particular business structure?
5. Are there currently any paid staff employed in your business (not counting yourself)?
   If yes, how many?
6. How many of these employees are full-time (work 30 or more hours per week)?
7. How many of these employees are part-time (work less than 30 hours per week)?
8. Over the past year, has the number of a) full-time persons you employed b) part time persons you employed increased or decreased? Why?
9. Approximately how many customers/clients do you have?
10. Are these customers/clients primarily Business to Business (BTB)/
   Consumer/Household Market/ Government (local/national)/Mix of the above/Other?
11. In the market in which your business currently operates are there other businesses offering the same goods or services as you? Can you tell me approximately how many businesses you are competing with? (For example, 1-3 or more)

Initiating/Preparing

As I mentioned at the start of the interview, we would like to go back in time and ask you some questions about the initial phase of when you decided to pursue this venture, the preparation involved with this and factors that may have influenced this. Thinking back,
1. What were the main factors that influenced your decision to become a sustainability-oriented entrepreneur? (Was it more of a business opportunity that presented itself or was it something you were determined to do for other reasons?)

2. What’s the primary environmental and/or social issue(s) that you were aiming to contribute to/address when starting this enterprise? Has this changed over time along with the changing business or natural environment and if so, what influenced this change?

3. Does your enterprise have a clear mission statement and if so can you share this with me? Why was this mission statement chosen, where did this idea come from? Has this changed at all over time and if so, what influenced these changes? (Role of stakeholders)

4. Do you have prior experience in an area of sustainability-oriented enterprise? (For example, have you ever worked in the area of Corporate sustainability, Corporate social responsibility, Environmental management, Socio-economic development, Renewable energy, Earth and environment, non-profit social enterprise etc?) If yes, how many years experience all together would you say you have in this area? Because of your prior knowledge/experience, to what extent would you say that you understood the economic, social, environmental problems of society when you began this venture?

5. How did your attitude and convictions towards issues of sustainability affect how you developed your venture?

6. Tell me about your inclination to engage in entrepreneurial activities as the means to solve societal and environmental problems at hand? So this question is about why you chose to approach sustainability through entrepreneurialism?

7. In your view, can you tell me who you think are the main stakeholders of sustainability-oriented enterprise? (E.g. possible suppliers, potential customers, local government, national government, sustainability networks, local community, trade unions, NGOs etc.) In what way are these the most relevant stakeholders, can you elaborate on these relationships? Then thinking back, what influence, if any, did these stakeholders have on the initial idea phase of your business? What about the start-up phase, did this influence change or did any new stakeholders become more influential to your venture? In your opinion, how does responsibility to the main stakeholders of sustainability-oriented enterprise influence your daily decision making as an entrepreneur? Would you be able to give me any examples?

8. Are you aware of any policies at either national or international level which aim to promote SOE? (EU Entrepreneurship 2020, Action Plan for Jobs 2012-sustainable jobs, greening the economy). If yes, did these have any effect on your decision to
become a sustainability-oriented entrepreneur? Did policy influence the start-up phase of your enterprise in any way? Did it have any effect on the expansion of your enterprise? How so?

**Start-up and Growth/Survival**

The next set of questions are about how you strategized for legitimacy during the start-up phase continuing on to the growth/survival stage and what factors influenced this, so once again if you could think back to this. I will ask about the actual steps of starting up and then ask about some of your actions that could be considered as strategy for legitimation. I will ask about some factors that may have influenced your actions and how this influence may have changed as you continued to the growth/survival phase.

1. During the start-up phase, did you actively try to develop a perception of sustainability-orientation? (For example, creating a professional website, logo, business cards, branding, marketing in line with sustainability-oriented mission?) If so how did you do this? Why did you do it this way? Do you do it this way now? Can you tell me you think this impacted on legitimacy?

2. Did you actively promote your sustainability-oriented business through advertising at the start-up phase? If no, why not? If yes, why? Do you believe this promotion influenced the decision of customers and other businesses to do business with you? What is your current advertising/marketing/promotion strategy? Explain how you think this strategy impacted on legitimacy?

3. During the start-up phase of your enterprise, did you establish a board of advisors/board of directors and/or link in with any figurehead in the sustainability-oriented enterprise field? Why/why not? If yes, can you again please explain how you think this impacted on legitimacy?

4. What was the most important/significant legislation you had to take into account in the start-up phase of this enterprise? For example, industry specific legislation (waste management?), location based legislation, employment legislation? How did you comply with this legislation? Did anyone – e.g. your stakeholders; networks; help you with this compliance? If yes, how? What is the situation now? How exactly do you think your compliance impacted upon legitimacy?

5. Are there any other, ‘unwritten rules’ that you can think of and did you have to take any of these into account when starting your enterprise? If yes, how did you and do
you deal with this and why this way? How do you think your actions impacted on legitimacy?

6. Have you taken actions to obtain sustainability-related certifications for any of the products that you sell or any of your business processes? What’s the reason for this? Was this difficult? Did any stakeholders play a role in helping or hindering this? Have you taken steps to make your carbon emission targets publicly available, or even the origin of materials used and how they were produced? Why/not? How do you think these types of actions affect the legitimacy of your venture?

7. So having just talked about some of the ways in which you have strategized for legitimacy, can you tell me now overall what factors you see as most important for legitimacy for your business - in other words what makes a business like yours appear desirable and appropriate?

8. How do you deal with the separate goals of trying to make a profit and your sustainability mission? How do you deal with this multiplicity in relation to legitimacy? Which logic/combination most important for legitimacy? (respond to each logic, one more dominant?)

9. As I mentioned at the start of the interview, certain factors are thought to influence entrepreneurial agency, agency meaning the ability of the entrepreneur to act in a given situation. How do you think this construct (one at a time) influences how you respond to and deal with some of the stakeholder and institutional factors mentioned above? What about how you strategise for legitimacy? Do you think you have strategically utilised this construct in pursuing and achieving legitimacy? How?

10. Can you tell me a bit about what your motivations were for applying for the SEAI award? As I mentioned to you at the start of the interview, the winning of such an award should indicate the achievement of some degree of legitimacy. Would you agree with this and why-how has winning this award impacted on legitimacy? Is/has your company nominated for or won any other awards or prizes or do you plan to pursue this in the future?

11. How much do you know about the selection process? For example, which elements of your business were the reasons for your winning? Comparatively how important was the sustainability of the business (including environmental impact, social equality) and how important was the business potential?
12. Are you a member of any sustainability-oriented entrepreneur or enterprise networks such as Sustainable Ireland, Cultivate, Irish Environmental Network etc.? If no, why not? If yes, what motivated you to join this network? Does this help with legitimacy? How so?

13. What do you project the future, let’s say the next 3-5 years, will hold for you as a sustainability-oriented entrepreneur and what would you like to see the future hold? E.g. growth in employment; export markets; franchising opportunities, sustainability?

3. Stakeholder Interviews

1. Why did you choose [entrepreneur’s business] to work with/ use the goods/services of?

2. a) Are you aware of [entrepreneur’s] prior experience in the sustainability field and how have you seen them demonstrate this?

   b) How does this affect your perception of them as legitimate? How has this changed over time?

3. a) Are you aware of [entrepreneur’s] attitudes and feelings about sustainability and how have you seen them demonstrate this?

   b) Does this affect your perception of them as legitimate? How has this changed over time?

4. a) In what ways does [entrepreneur] demonstrate how business savvy, professional, entrepreneurial he/she is?

   b) Does this affect your perception of them as legitimate? How has this changed over time?

5. How do you think [entrepreneur’s business] compares to its competitors in terms of sustainability?

6. a) What do you believe gives them legitimacy? b) Can you give me any examples of how you have seen them try to attain this legitimacy?

7. How do you think the winning of the award might have helped with legitimacy in your opinion?
Appendix D: Mapping of Research Questions and Entrepreneur Interview Questions

Research Question 1. How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal sustainability pillars as locally embedded logics of the organisational field?

Research Question 2. How do prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability intention and sustainability orientation manifest as factors of entrepreneurial agency to shape sustainability.

Over-Arching Research Question:
How do both organisational field-level factors and individual-level agency factors shape the process of legitimation in the case of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs?
oriented entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question 1. How does the legitimation behaviour of sustainability-oriented entrepreneurs reveal sustainability pillars as locally embedded logics of the organisational field?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presence of logics (Stakeholder/Incumbent influence)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. In your view, who are the main stakeholders of sustainability-oriented enterprise? What is the relative importance of each of these stakeholders?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. In your opinion, how does responsibility to the main stakeholders of sustainability-oriented enterprise influence your daily decision making as an entrepreneur? Why/How; examples?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. What, if any, influence did the general media or advertising have on your decisions to (a) become a sustainability-oriented entrepreneur (b) on the start-up (c) on the expansion of your enterprise?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Overall, what factors do you see as most important for legitimacy in this field of sustainability-oriented enterprise? (What makes a business appear desirable and appropriate?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Are there any other, ‘unwritten rules’ that you know of or that you had to take into account when starting your enterprise? If yes, how did you and do you deal with this and why this way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Presence of logics (Institutional influence)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Are you aware of any policies at either national or international level which aim to promote SOE? If yes, have these had any effect on (a) your decision to become a sustainability-oriented entrepreneur? (b) on the start-up of your enterprise (c) on the expansion of your enterprise? How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. What was the most important/significant legislation you had to take into account in the start-up phase of this enterprise? How did you comply with this legislation? Did anyone – e.g. your stakeholders; networks; help you with this compliance? If yes, how? What is the situation now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Types of legitimation strategies (actions taken, evidence of logics influence)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Did you actively promote the sustainability-oriented business strategy through advertising at the start-up phase? If no, why not? If yes, why? Do you believe this promotion influenced the decision of customers and other businesses to do business with you? Current strategy? Explain how you think this media strategy impacted/s on legitimacy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. During the start-up phase of your enterprise, did you establish a board of advisors/ board of directors and/or link in with any figurehead in the sustainability-oriented enterprise field? If yes, explain how you think this impacted on legitimacy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Have you taken actions to obtain sustainability-related certifications for any of the products that you sell or any of your business processes? Why/not? Have you obtained these? Difficulties/assistance/role of stakeholders?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Did you actively try to develop a perception of sustainability-orientation (including, for example, creating a professional website, logo, business cards, branding, marketing in line with sustainability-oriented mission) at start-up phase? How? Why? Do you still? Explain how you think this impacted/s on legitimacy?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Award, position in networks (Indicator of achievement of some legitimacy, o some extent indicates what’s important in the field)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. What were your motivations for applying for the SEAI award? How has winning this award impacted on legitimacy? Is/has your company nominated for or won any other awards or prizes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Do you know comparatively how important to the selection process was (a) the sustainability of the business (including environmental impact, social equality) and (b) the business potential?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Are you a member of any sustainability-oriented entrepreneur or enterprise networks (e.g. Sustainable Ireland, Cultivate, Irish Environmental Network etc.)? If no, why not? If yes, what motivated you to join this network? Does this help with legitimacy? How?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Sustainability knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. Do you have prior experience in an area of sustainability-oriented enterprise? How do you believe your previous professional experience and knowledge influenced your decision to become a sustainability-oriented entrepreneur?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q. To what extent would you say that you understood the economic, social, environmental problems of society when you began this venture?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2. How do prior sustainability knowledge, sustainability intention and sustainability orientation manifest as factors of entrepreneurl agency to shape sustainability-oriented entrepreneur responses to dominant logics in the pursuit of legitimacy within the organisational field?
References


