<u>**The Application of Various Research Methods in a Defined Research Question**</u>

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**Research Question**

*How to design infrastructure to promote entrepreneurship with feminist values?*

Considering the kind of evidence that I'm looking for, I decided to use the following research tools in order to come up with a convincing answer for my research question.

**Prototyping**

Experimental prototype can be used in various ways; considering my research question, it seems most appropriate to use prototyping as 'a model to consider variations of research question', in this case various feminist values. The following two prototypes are intended to identify perception of entrepreneurs and interested people about incorporating new values in entrepreneurial models. In each prototype a specific value should be studied.

- Creating a 'Cyberg entrepreneur' identity (where the boundaries between entrepreneur and employee are blurred, which is a feminist quality), that would be introduced through its website, advertisements in relevant websites, brochure, etc. I can measure the attractiveness of this new identity, and track discussions that are shaped around it. It could help me to come up with new questions, or bring up aspects that I overlooked.

- Creating an imaginary startup with specific feminist values and then offering an exclusive look at this new startup at 1871 (an entrepreneurial hub for digital startups). The discussion and feedback of interested individuals and entrepreneurs in that session could help us understand the values and concern in the community that I am trying to approach.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study could be implemented through joining 1871 community and initiating a startup based on feminist values. It could be through pitching a new startup, or offering a workshop to the community and asking interested members to join and develop a new startup based on my proposed values. Upon launching this startup, my research study would benefit from studying an entrepreneurial process from A to Z. Aside from the lessons learned throughout the process, I can learn from the feedback of various stakeholders throughout the process.

**Experimental Research**

I will choose two groups in an entrepreneurial hub such as 1871; the groups will be randomly selected. Then I will pitch two exact same business models to them to be implemented in small-scale within two different sectors of Chicago with have the same socio-economical identification. I'll keep one of the groups as controlled, however in the other group I will incorporate one or more feminist values, for instance a 'Cyberg entrepreneur' identity as an alternative to 'employee' identity. For example, these startups would be about food delivery service and will be operating among limited number of corporate buildings in the Loop. In the controlled group, participants will be working under the same identity as current employees. However, in the other group participants would learn about 'cyborg entrepreneur' identity. They can choose to develop their career further and build on their current status as an opportunity to grow. This model would be transparent on risks and probable costs. The outcome of this experiment would help us compare the success of each model and study the differences, concerns and risks that stakeholder on various stages of an entrepreneurial activity are handling.

**Quasi Experiment**

I have not yet encountered with a business model that embodies several feminist values. However, there are examples with diverging attitude compared to the mainstream businesses. For example, REI, the sporting goods and outdoor gear retailor, is an American retailer that is prioritizing values over profit making. Instead of shareholders, REI has a 'consumer co-op' model; therefore, in order to keep its members loyalty, it is focusing on what members care about. For example, REI stores and its website were closed on Black Friday, the biggest shopping day of the year. I can compare the brand image of REI after being close on Black Friday with another retailor with the same size such a North Face. It would be interesting to see what is the perception of public on value-centered businesses and if there would be a larger steak for value models rather than business models that are based on revenue streaming. I will probably need more examples, and study a specific value in each one.