

# Cultural Geographies of LGBTQ+ Entrepreneurship in Scotland

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## CONTEXT



This research is a collaborative project alongside Somewhere, a Community Interest Company supporting LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs and arts practitioners in Scotland. Somewhere's Rainbow Enterprise Network is the first formal network in Scotland for LGBTQ+ and ally enterprises.

### Queer Geographies

- Previous focus on the consumption of LGBTQ+ spaces in the 'gaybourhood' which later incorporated queer theory to consider performances of a queer identity in space.
- Limited research into the creation of specifically LGBTQ+ spaces or LGBTQ+ life in Scotland

### Entrepreneurship

- Entrepreneurship studies have focussed on uncovering the individual reasons that LGB people enter self-employment, rather than wider networks that may be at play.
- Research primarily considers for profit businesses run by white, cisgender, gay men in urban areas.

## Research Questions

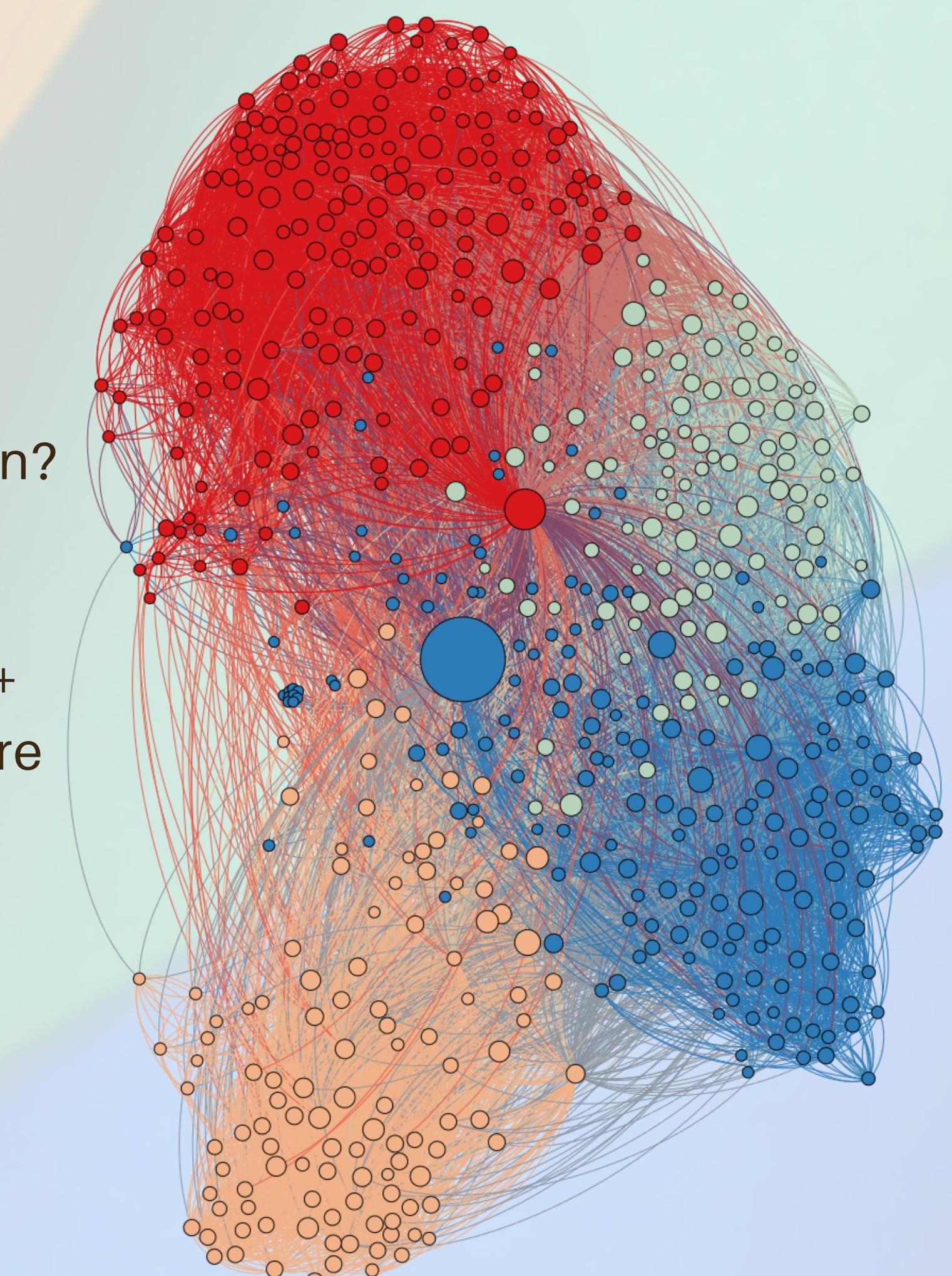
1. Who are LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs in Scotland?
2. What and where are the **spaces of LGBTQ+ entrepreneurship** in Scotland?
3. Which **industries** are LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs working in?
4. What **networks** enable and further LGBTQ+ entrepreneurship in Scotland?
5. What affordances do **time-limited events** give LGBTQ+ entrepreneurship in Scotland and how do these compare to the affordances given by more permanent places?

### Methodology

**Oral history** style interviews with those identifying as LGBTQ+ who own or run a business or social enterprise

**Participant observation** at Pride events across Scotland

**Network analysis** of Somewhere's Twitter network



Example Twitter network of @rowanrush. The largest circles (nodes) represent accounts with the greatest influence within the network, whilst the lines (edges) represent connections between nodes.

## KEY FINDINGS

### 1. Disconnection from traditional heteropatriachal profit driven business

- Entrepreneurship is associated with being cisgender, white, heterosexual and male.
- For LGBTQ+ people interviewed, success is equated with personal fulfillment rather than business growth and profit
- Unease between wanting to provide inclusive LGBTQ+ spaces and needing to make a profit to survive within neoliberal capitalism



### 3. Long term physical spaces and short term events play different roles in developing LGBTQ+ owned enterprises and networks

- **Physical spaces** provide strong network ties and ongoing informal support
- **Time limited events** can have a lasting impact, and are associated with initial ideas and impetus to begin an enterprise, but limited ongoing support

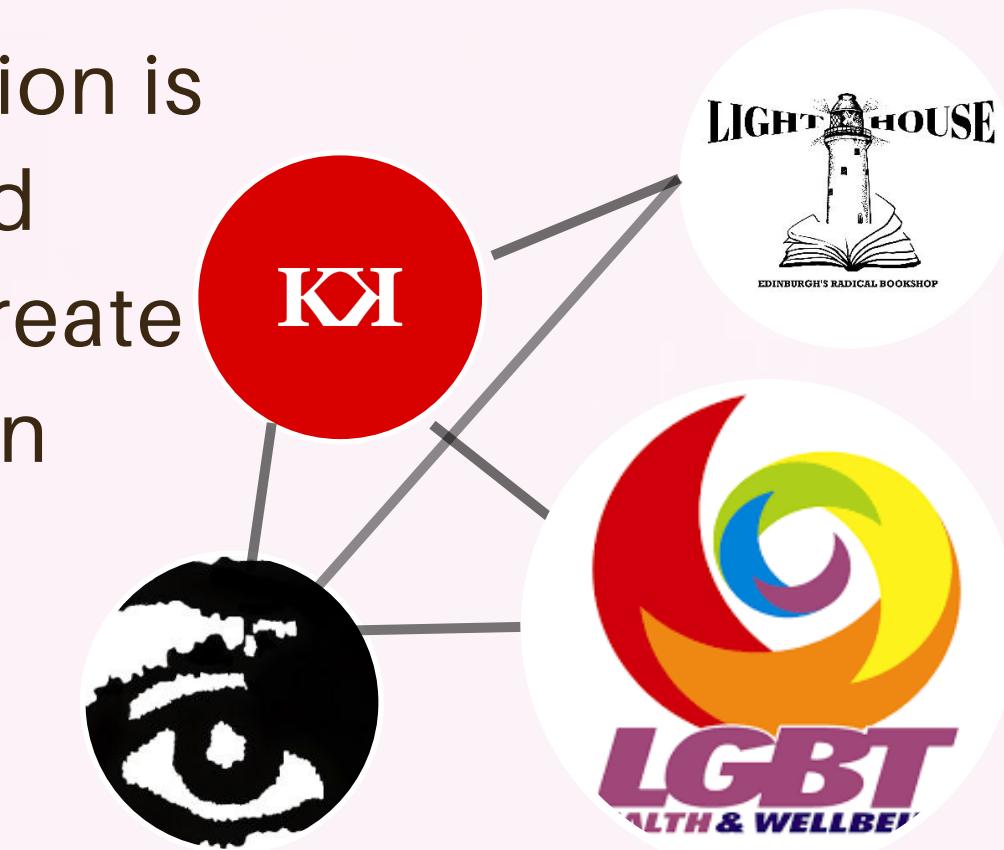


Trans Pride, Paisley 2022

Four Pillars, Aberdeen

### 2. The role of cultural and institutional anchors in network development

- Building on Ghaziani's (2011, 2014) concept of *cultural anchors* and *anchor institutions*, specific organisations in Scotland are central nodes in the shared networks of LGBTQ+ enterprises, even when not providing direct enterprise support
- Volunteering with an LGBTQ+ organisation is strongly associated with going on to create openly LGBTQ+ run and supportive enterprises



## Why is this research important?

Beyond adding to literature within queer geographies and entrepreneurship studies, this research has practical implications.



Researching LGBTQ+ run enterprises through a network approach offers opportunities for Somewhere to develop the support they provide. By understanding the extent and development of already existing networks, areas can be identified where linkages between disparate networks can be made.

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