Participant 6 Interview Transcript

**Ivan:** So first, can you tell me a little bit about your professional and personal life? Your age as well as your professional and personal life.

**Participant 6:** Yeah, so I am 35, and I am a Senior Engagement Manager at the University of Southampton in the office of Development and Alumni Relations, so I look after alumni volunteering and low-level fundraising. And my background is in Higher Education, in International Recruitment, the Voluntary sector, Education as a teacher and a couple of bits working for social enterprises with social entrepreneurs. Personally, I live in Southampton and I am a mother of two and I have a partner who is in Cairo, who is an entrepreneur involved in start-ups.

**Ivan:** Great, so you mention that you’ve worked previously for social enterprises, is that your only experience with entrepreneurship?

**Participant 6:** So I worked with social enterprises. I worked in the community supporting voluntary organisations and social enterprises to kind of get started. And then in addition to that I worked at the University with student social entrepreneurs, to kind of learn about social entrepreneurship and get their ideas off the ground. In terms of entrepreneurship, I’m quite plugged into the eco-system at a bit of a distance through my partner and the kind of exposure that that’s given me to entrepreneurs but particularly within start-ups.

**Ivan:** Okay, great. So we’re going to be talking about extreme success here and extremely successful entrepreneurs. So what or who crosses your mind when you think about an extremely successful entrepreneur? Can you describe such person?

**Participant 6:** How would I describe them? So, normally, to be honest, in our society it’s normally a man and they tend to be white, which I think is changing but when you first kind of mention it, that’s what springs to mind. I think that’s the stories that we hear the most. It’s somebody who’s normally involved in lots of things. So they have a success story, but they’ve also been in this company, in this one and they’ve got that kind of journey having been through lots of high-profile organisations or companies and in different roles. You often hear the term ‘serial entrepreneur’ so a lot of the successes we hear are associated with having more than one entrepreneurial success and to be honest, because of the area that I’m in, the entrepreneurs that I think of tend to be involved in tech startup rather than business moguls, I suppose. But that’s just because of the sort of people I interact with. So I think more and more I’m thinking about, you know, people who have launched, I don’t know, tech for, so FinTech, kind of you know, people involved in sustainable technology, looking at, you know measuring CO2 and selling it to corporations and, you know this kind of stuff. So this sort of new generation of successful entrepreneurs. Hopefully, a bit less white and a bit less male.

**Ivan:** So can you give any particular example of such extremely successful entrepreneur that you can think of?

**Participant 6:** Yeah, so, it’s really funny because they are obviously really famous ones but actually, the one that springs to mind is one of the students that I used to work with, who’s now like a multi-millionaire, who’s only a few years out of university. There’s a lot of these, kind of younger entrepreneurs coming through. So he started by setting up a kind of a search engine for research papers and he now runs a Silicon Valley based sustainability, making business sustainable, sort of start-up which is, you know, constantly on my LinkedIn. And it’s really funny because I knew him before he was an entrepreneur. So, it’s amazing to kind of see him get to this stage that he’s in. But then there’s also, you know, kind of people that you hear about all the time, so James Dyson, and you know people at the top of their game. So, yeah, a few different names kind of spring to mind but I think the kind of because of where I am. I’m actually thinking about some of the people I met personally and how they’ve succeeded.

**Ivan:** Yeah, interesting you mentioned James Dyson. Have you heard a story about him recently or?

**Participant 6:** Oh yeah, about tax evasion, his support for Brexit and his plans to move out to Luxembourg, yes. And a few other controversial things figures.

**Ivan:** OK. Like who?

**Participant 6:** So, well, less kind of controversial I suppose for their, I don’t know, there’s this kind of line, isn’t there, between sort of being somebody who’s extremely successful and then kicking their ladder away and I think that is, when you think of those really famous people, it’s hard to look at it and kind of think, you know, you didn’t just… you didn’t get there off your own bag, as much as you say you did and there are exceptions to that, I’m trying to think what his name is. We have a… oh his name has escaped me. So we have an alumnus of the University who’s one of the UK’s wealthiest people. And he’s an entrepreneur. And he’s background’s really… really tough actually! His name’s completely escaped me… and he’s an SBS alumnus. And he came from, you know, working class family in Sheffield and he’s just worked his way up. So he’s doing, you know, really amazing things now… George Buckley! And then you’ve also got a, you know, other people, who are much less keen to be in the light and, you know, trying to use their success, to again another SBS alumnus, who is, actually I’ll find his name and send it to you afterwards, if that’s OK. But yeah, he rarely appears in the press, but he uses his kind of entrepreneurial success and his millions of pounds to just put things, like, emissions and climate change and he just directs things for good. So, you don’t have to be a controversial money-grabbing maniac, you can also be somebody who says, do you know what, whilst I’m happy to be a superstar entrepreneur, I don’t want to use my, you know, vast millions to make the world better only for myself. So, yeah, it’s nice to see the contrast actually. In fact I’ll tell you his name right now because I want to. His name is… I was reading about him in the Guardian and then an email in my inbox came: did you know this person was from Southampton? His name is Chris Hohn. He’s one of the… yeah… again, the wealthiest people in the country, extremely successful, but very very rarely offer interviews, hasn’t kind of been in the limelight, hasn’t tried to, you know, win off the back of their entrepreneurial success but has in fact fed into, you know, trying to reduce harm around the planet, which I think is fantastic.

**Ivan:** So is that what success means to you in terms of entrepreneurs?

**Participant 6:** Are we talking about the super successful ones or just in general?

**Ivan:** Yeah, yeah.

**Participant 6:** I think… yeah, I think success, what I measure success as? Or what they would measure success as? It’s probably quite different?

**Ivan:** Yeah, yeah… so what do you think… how do you measure success and how do you think they measure success?

**Participant 6:** I think that when somebody has done something really really successful as an entrepreneur or anything else, a measure of that success is… should be how they give back to the society that helped them get to where they are. So if you think of somebody like Jeff Bezos, who is just, you know, landed, did I read today that they tripled their profits over the last lockdown or something absolutely ludacris? And then you hear that their workers are, you know, underpaid, and treated really badly, you just kind of think… hang on a minute… you know. And I think that, for me personally, the measure of success is what you can, what you can give back as much as, you know, what you can make for yourself and how well you can do. And I think you have a responsibility when you are doing something at a level that has a wider impact, and where you’ve benefitted from a society, be it through, being in your 50s now, so you went to university for free, or people buying your products because there was a pandemic, or anything like that, I think there’s a responsibility and we should be measuring success accordingly.

**Ivan:** So what do you think makes such extreme success possible?

**Participant 6:** So I’ve just went to LinkedIn Learning course where they were talking about this and why these people are successful. I think that there is a… I think there’s a level of recognizing opportunity, I think there’s also a level of adaptability. So, I’m trying to remember the case study that they talked about and I want to say it was, I want to say it was Skype that we’re talking about… so they were saying that… you know, a rigidly launched, you know, this kind of video conferencing but actually it was quite a credit market, you sort of had, this amongst businesses, and they were sort of, you know, competing. What they noticed was there wasn’t anybody covering sort of the ordinary person market and then actually if you adapt your business model when you notice that opportunity, you have the opportunity then to go and have something really spectacular. And I think a lot of what we’re looking at people who had, not necessarily a greater deal at the beginning but were able to see how I plug that into the current need. And I think that’s where things like Amazon come, isn’t it? I also think that there’s got to be a lot of creativity involved, you know, to recognise that need, know how to adapt to it, and probably… I’m not one to believe that all these people get up at 4 in the morning, do 4 hours of yoga and then they only check emails on a Wednesday, you know, people like Richard Branson, that we hear about all the time, that’s got an island and they don’t take leave. But I think there has to be a certain tenacity to continue, sort of with your work and a real commitment to what you do. I don’t think anybody could be that successful. It’s not all luck. I think there’s probably an element of luck, but I do think that, you know, you’ve got to really believe in what you do, and I think that’s why people like Steve Jobs did tremendously well because they’ve got it. They had an idea, and it was their thing. I don’t just think it’s entrepreneurs but when you look at any leaders, one of the things you notice is they always come back to where they do fit in, so what’s the take for me, how does it work for what I do, and I think that’s how you build a really really successful business. I also think there probably is… there definitely is an element of being sort of half-way up the ladder before you even start. So, you know, what do you have access to. What networks are you plugged into, by, you know, default, it could be because you are born into it, you know, what kind of money you are able to access, you know, what are you able to leverage around you. But I think it takes creativity to know how to leverage it.

**Ivan:** OK. Can you think of…Do you think all extremely successful entrepreneurs have had this ‘half-way up-the-ladder’ by default thing?

**Participant 6:** No, it’s just the ones I’ve mentioned, you know, there’s certainly things that people have to overcome. I do think, I think… I’d hope we’re moving away from that and that things are more accessible but yeah, I’d say probably most of them have had some sort of connectivity. I know certainly looking at… they’re not extremely successful but the entrepreneur, kind of, start-up eco system might be plugged into, you know so much of that writes on that person that you already know, or that, sort of understanding of that eco system that you are able to know how to manipulate it to your own advantage, and I’m sure that takes people a really long way. But it’s also about being able to sell your brand. So, you know, you can make an incredible business but if you can’t tell anyone about it, people don’t buy into you and you’re not able to put that out there. And I think there’s a certain level of confidence that comes with being half-way up the ladder, that you’re able to present your idea in a way that so many of us low people won’t be able to, I suppose? You know, I’m thinking about someone like, what is her name… Kylie Jenner? She’s obviously come from extreme wealth and she’s kind of labelled a billionaire, a lot of that is also about personal branding, you’re able to sell your business because people buying to you and not just your product. And the fact that we’re able to name these people, you know, it’s not just that I know Amazon, but I know Jeff Bezos. It’s not just that I know Facebook, I know, you know, Mark Zuckerberg. Those names are almost synonymous with the brand. So there’s got to be that level and I think, yes, I think that world of privilege probably makes that easier. And if you’re coming from, you know, your fighting the odds just to be there. It’s kind of hard to have that confidence.

**Ivan:** You mention the business environment as a factor, do you think extremely successful entrepreneurs had any control over that business environment or is it something out of their control?

**Participant 6:** That’s a really good question. I think…entrepreneurs shape the environment; they change the game. So you come up with something like Apple, and it completely changes the eco-system. So, I imagine, the process is that you recognise an opportunity, you begin to exploit it, and as you do, the world around you is forced to change. I might be wrong, I’m not 100% sure, but that’s how I would see it. And then you get your copycats, you get people trying to catch up, you know, if you look at, again going back to someone like Kylie Jenner and look at the impact that she’s had an how social media has almost adapted, I would argue, that things like Instagram and platforms like that have adapted because of people like her, you know, these are all… all of these things are kind of ever-changing platforms and the business world is ever-changing, so I think, you know, when someone or something comes along, that really is a game-changer. It changes everything. So I think the influence on business is huge, so yeah.

**Ivan:** So does your explanation about the different skills that you mentioned… quite a lot of leadership skills, recognizing, adaptability, creativity, tenacity, and so on, do you think they apply to all extremely financially successful entrepreneurs or there are entrepreneurs that are quite different?

**Participant 6:** I reckon they’re probably shared traits. I reckon they must be. Like you look at someone where you’d kind of say, oh they got this whole team of people working behind it, you know, I just don’t know how you could be that successful as an entrepreneur without having these traits. You could be successful at something else, but you wouldn’t necessarily be an entrepreneur. So, yeah, I think they probably are shared, to an extent in different ways. Having a vision I suppose. Maybe being goal-oriented, too. I might throw that in as a trait. You can see what it is. You begin with the end in mind, as Steven Covey would say, you can see what it is you’re trying to get to.

**Ivan:** What in your opinion distinguishes extremely successful entrepreneurs from those that are less successful and those that fail?

**Participant 6:** So I think in our society we only talk about success in entrepreneurship. We really focus on that and people don’t like to talk about failure in anything because you certainly wouldn’t talk about it in entrepreneurship because I think… so I think one of the things that separates extremely successful entrepreneurs is the fact that we focus only on their success and not their failures. And people tend to be quite forgiving in kind of bad things they do. Like James Dyson, people aren’t going to stop buying products because, you know, he’s slightly dodgy or because Amazon… you know… you hear about Amazon all the time and how horrendous it is, but Bezos is still getting rich off the back of everybody else, so it’s a bit like, I think the focus on success makes people more successful. I think in addition to that, it’s probably, I think probably all entrepreneurs have failed at some point, I think failure is a big part of entrepreneurship and there’s a lot that can be learned from failure. But as I said, we don’t kind of, in society we don’t hook success on being able to admit that you failed. I think are extremely successful entrepreneurs are probably able to… are probably known by their names as well. So there’s a bit of a… you can be a successful entrepreneur, but I think there’s something about being a household name, somebody associated with something. Like Steve Jobs is associated with Apple or… do you know what I mean? So you’ve got the person and what it was they were successful in doing. And I think that again elevates them to being extremely successful. That said, there’s probably loads of really really extremely successful entrepreneurs that I wouldn’t even know who they are but I’m using their products every day. So maybe it’s not about the person but it probably doesn’t hurt if people have known who you are. And know what, you know associate with that product or that activity. But yeah, it’s probably, I think we obviously measure success on money as well, so how much they brought in, how much they’re worth, those are all things that people like to talk about, so that’d make you a highly successful entrepreneur and again I think that serial entrepreneur, that’s kind of worn as a badge of pride. Somebody’s done it not just once but like 10 times. That’s kind of seen as, you know, amazing and I think probably the other one is again about changing the game, so, to be a really highly successful entrepreneur, you’ve got to do something that changes the world. Does something really different to what was there before. And transforms and revolutionizes the way that we do XYZ. And I think that’s how you would identify someone who’s highly successful, as kind of just successful or certainly not a failure.

**Ivan:** Do you think it’s… do you think influence has any part in someone becoming extremely successful, or someone becoming less successful?

**Participant 6:** Yeah, so when I say changing the world I think influencing change in our behaviour, habits and the business world is one side, I do think that, I’m not going to say that all highly successful entrepreneurs are in there with the respective government of their country because I don’t necessarily know that that’s true, but I’m imagining they have invested in a lot of things and they probably do have the opportunity to engage with people at a senior, you know, governmental level that the rest of us just don’t. So, I’m sure that contributes to their success because nobody is going to make decisions or lobby for them if they do things that go against them. So yeah, I think the… so it depends on what you mean by influence. But yeah I would imagine, yeah… so I guess I kind of said everything for that one.

**Ivan:** You said they have become household names, so you can easily recognise them, you easily make the relation between the person and the company. Do you think that is a distinguishing factor for those that are less, middle ground and those that are extremely successful, like Mark Zuckerberg, for example? Do you think becoming a household name made him that extremely successful and rich from the boy that started his company in the bedroom in Harvard?

**Participant 6:** Yeah I think so, because they don’t think… what others reason is there for us to know who he is if that makes sense? I could totally tell you who he is but I couldn’t tell you… it’s probably the same person, I couldn’t tell you who founded or started Twitter, or Instagram. But I could tell you him because he changed the game. There was not a social network before that one came along. And I think, you know, that then is somebody who is given a whole lot of status by society, it’s not just the company, it’s the person. And I think you can’t separate the two. So, yeah, you know I think also people love to talk about Bill Gates, when he started Microsoft…and it’s kind of a bit like that whole story kind of becomes like legendary and that person kind of becomes legendary and then that whole thing feeds into itself, you know, every time you watch any kind of business training, or anything that, you know, that person is kind of presented as being one and the same with their entrepreneurial success and their companies and their businesses, you really can’t separate the two out. So I think becoming a household name is a sign that you’ve really really made it.

**Ivan:** So what do you mean about having this ‘legendary’ status? What in your view is a ‘legendary’ status of an entrepreneur?

**Participant 6:** So, somebody who’s story kind of is used in a way to demonstrate, you know, how they got to where they are, and as I said it’s kind of having a business and the person are kind of synonymous with each other. So, they’re not separated out. You don’t kind of talk about Microsoft without talking about Bill Gates. You always bring the two together. So, in that way kind of legendary. I also think, again, we focus only on the success. Can you imagine someone woke up in the morning one day and just kind of had this idea, made it happen, look… you know, 30 years later this is where they are and it’s incredible, but they got to where they were. And you don’t hear about everything that might have happened in between, or sort of before, how that process really happened. They kind of just are. There’s just him and that’s this and it’s just there. So, legendary in a way that you don’t really imagine Robin Hood was born and grew up and, you know, went to school. It’s like, he’s here, this is his story and it’s all amazing. Do you know what I mean? It’s kind of like, you’ve got the person, you’ve got their amazing success and you just talk about the two and you only have to talk about them in the context of that success. As if they were born, they just happened, and there’s nothing in-between. So I guess this is what I mean by legendary.

**Ivan:** In your view, what is the contribution of extremely successful entrepreneurs to our society?

**Participant 6:** I think, I mean, the ones that I know of, but I think even beyond that, you know, they are…they are innovating, you know, in ways actually that are incredibly, you know, useful to all of us. To an extent. I think that sometimes, I guess with anyone in the position of power and privilege there is opportunities to abuse that. But I think if we come back, and this is what I’m saying about the two being synonymous. You can’t separate the person and the company. When I think about them, you’re asking me that question, my mind immediately goes to what they’ve created, and not who they are. So from what they’ve created, you know, these are people pushing boundaries, they’re creating things that we use in our everyday life, they are, particularly those who have started this sort of ‘technological revolution’. You know, more and more of these entrepreneurs are doing more and more incredible things. We wouldn’t be doing this today if it weren’t for the fact that we had these people sort of planted the seeds to get us where we are. As individuals, I don’t know, would we get there without these highly successful entrepreneurs, you know. Do they have these kinds of skills we’ve talked about? Are they able to make the most of opportunities and sort of seize the day and, you know, roll this out and think about it in a different way? I guess they have to be because otherwise, I mean, I certainly didn’t invent… anything like Facebook, you know. So yeah. I think some of them have recognised the importance that… and their kind of responsibility that comes with that, something like the Bill and Melinda Gates foundation and they’re doing incredible things. And we’ve talked about before how some of them have used some of that to kind of influence and persuade in ways that make them more profitable. So, I don’t think they’re all very likeable. But I do think that the things that have come out of that kind of entrepreneurial success are really in a lot of cases really incredible and do change the way that we live. I just wish they direct a bit more entrepreneurship towards sort of imputing quotas. But maybe they will as we move forward.

**Ivan:** You say that they’re quite incredible and change the way we live. Is that in a good way or in a bad way?

**Participant 6:** I think the entrepreneurs around us have shaped the way that we live in a lot of ways. So I think about something like Amazon, if Amazon didn’t exist, on the scale that it exists, you know, would we all have pretty much abandoned the high street in the same way? Maybe not. So, I think it shapes it, and so changing it could be I guess both positive and negative depending on how you look at it, you know. Is Facebook at all for good? You know, some would argue that, you know, Facebook brought down entire governments in the Arab spring and stuff like that. You know, and we hear every day about all sorts of dodgy things going on and you know, racist incidents and stuff happening on social media platforms with no regulation from the top. I think sometimes it feels a little bit like things are unleashed on society. And without the regulations needed. I guess it’s really like all things, they sort of start, and then the regulations have to sort of come in to fit around them because they’ve changed everything. When I think about Uber, for example, you know, a company like Uber comes in, and you kind of have no regulations around it and all of a sudden, you know, you’ve got to look at insurance for your drivers and, you know, it’s kind of like… and you’ve got Amazon and the whole conversations about unions and people being unable to join unions. And some of the regulation has to fit around these new ways of doing things as a society. So, not necessarily for the better but it’s hard to say whether or not it’s because it’s what we live with now. It’s our reality.

**Ivan:** Yeah, so probably going back to it in 10 years’ time would be a way to see whether it’s good or bad. Do you think that extreme wealth is a good measure for an entrepreneur’s contribution to society? So for example an entrepreneur being extremely wealthy, does that resonate with the contributions that they’ve put in our society?

**Participant 6:** No, but I think it’s probably an inevitability of our society. And I think that’s probably why you find a lot of extremely highly successful entrepreneurs sort of working in certain fields, the ones which are probably the most profitable. So, I don’t know… I might be wrong, but I can’t off the top of my head name any highly successful entrepreneurs that aren’t trying to sell me stuff. You know, I can’t of anyone who is a highly successful who is changing the way that we feed impoverished children, for example. You know, they’ll go where the money is. I guess that kind of makes sense because if it’s your business then you’ve got to generate income. I don’t think it’s necessarily about contribution in a positive, kind of societal beneficial way. It’s probably more that they’ve found the best way to sell something that people wanted or didn’t know they wanted until it came along and now the want it. I’m left wing, so I’m not sure I’m the right person to ask. My answers are probably being skewed that way.

**Ivan:** No, no, that’s fine. That’s great because it’s good to hear different points of view on this. What should be the measure in your opinion?

**Participant 6:** Of highly successful entrepreneurs?

**Ivan:** Yeah, of what resonates with their contribution to society. If the inevitability of profits and finance didn’t.

**Participant 6:** I think we should look at highly successful entrepreneurs. I think it’s around responding to the ecosystem that they create, so if you are going to set something up, which, you know, let’s think about, let’s think about Facebook as a great example. Mark Zuckerberg, he set this incredible.. and I know the intention was never to be what it is now, but when your platform starts to create hate, or an opportunity, you know, and you’re unresponsive to regulation, I think that is not a sign of success to me, I think the ability to develop something to… it can absolutely revolutionize the way we do things, it can change the way that we interact but also has to recognise the responsibility and the impact that you’re making. So that could be something like having, I don’t know, lower emission, if you’re kind of looking at logistics and deliveries… it could be that you’re looking at sort of using your money for good, so again like Microsoft. It could be that you’re looking at, you know, allowing your workers to get paid a decent minimum wage. But I think if you are going to create something that is in a symbiotic relationship with the communities that you’re creating it in, you should be looking at the impact you have on them, both in terms of what they immediately receive from you but also the wider impact of that. And I think that should be the measure of success. Somebody who can go, I benefitted, but I benefitted off the back of other people and this is what I’m going to do to make sure those people, you know, don’t suffer as a result.

**Ivan:** OK. That’s great. What are your thoughts on the following statement: Some people would say that billionaires should not be entitled to keep all their money?

**Participant 6:** Yes, I agree. That’d be through taxation. In the large part.

**Ivan**: What do you think about another statement: Billionaires should not be taxed much more than others.

**Participant 6:** No, I disagree. I think it should be a percentage proportion of your income.

**Ivan:** Some people would say that extremely wealthy entrepreneurs, such as the ones that you mentioned, Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, Jeff Bezos are simply lucky, and they don’t deserve their profits. What is your response to this?

**Participant 6:** I think. I don’t think they’re just lucky, I think that they’ve probably had, I mean, let’s not pretend that Mark Zuckerberg was at community college, when he started Facebook, you know, this is somebody who had access to Ivy League education, so I think, I think that people… so it’s not even just about being lucky, but about being privileged in the first place. I think that, do they deserve the profits that they’re bringing in? Maybe it’s just a sense of powerlessness, I’m just like, well even if they didn’t I’m not sure we can do much about it. I think it’s a shame that all that money get sucked upwards and kind of stays where it is. Maybe they deserve it more than shareholders. Because shareholders do nothing, they just kind of like sit there, earning some shares. So, I’m not really sure, it’s a good question. It’s a shame if they do hang onto it all. But they deserve to earn something. And it’s probably really hard being the leader of, you know, a massive company, I’m not going to pretend that it’s easy. Richard Branson makes it sound easy, but it isn’t. So yeah, I wouldn’t want to do it, too much pressure.

**Ivan:** So you say the extreme wealth that they receive is proportionate to the effort that they put?

**Participant 6:** No, I think, especially when I think of someone like Kylie Jenner. No, of course not. I think that that is just a broken system that pays people way too much money to do not nearly enough. I think it would much rather see people who are out there, I don’t know, on the front-line saving lives earning more and people like that. But then, I guess, again, I don’t know, it’s really hard to measure. You are talking about contribution to society and if you are building a platform that’s been used by billion people, maybe you do deserve a pretty good pay off the back of it. I don’t know, I still don’t know how I feel about that.

**Ivan:** Is there anything else that you would like to share about extreme entrepreneurial success, anything that crossed your mind recently?

**Participant 6:** I think you asked really interesting questions and I think that one of the things would be really interesting is to look at sort of whether or not we are going into a time when entrepreneurs will do more or less to shape society, so are we looking at more and more highly successful entrepreneurs because, think about it, we talk about students always having kind of side-hustles. You know, everybody’s the next entrepreneur in making, we’ve got the Apprentice, you know, training up the next generation of entrepreneurs. So it’s all this messaging around why being an entrepreneur is brilliant, and how everybody should be an entrepreneur and study entrepreneurship and you can do all this stuff. So it’d be really interesting to see if that leads to an increase in the number of highly successful entrepreneurs or not. Have we kind of missed the boat. Because you always think like what else could you possibly create or innovate or do but then a pandemic happens and suddenly everything changes again. And so I think it… no I think it’s really interesting to kind of look at how that might change over time. And also the demographic, like I said, you know, are we going to still be talking about the same people in 10 years’ time or we’ll have that sort of new generation of more diverse entrepreneurs, and I think that the only other thing I guess that’s on my mind is probably very different sort of around the world. And I’d be really interested to… In fact I might go and read about highly successful entrepreneurs in other countries, beyond the US and the UK because they’re really the only ones we hear about. But there must be extremely successful entrepreneurs, you know, elsewhere as well and see how different it looks. I do sort of hope that we don’t continue to just measure success by finance and when you in the same breath go yeah, Jeff Bezos, Amazon, six billion dollars, or whatever, those things don’t necessarily go in-hand. And it’ll be really interesting to see how the big players now are more and more regulated as society sort of catches on to the fact that they need to be. So, I don’t think it’s easy to be a highly successful entrepreneur, I think, you know, we’re talking about one in a billion kind of thing, small numbers, but it’ll be interesting to see where all the kind of emphasis on entrepreneurship brings out more or less. That’s just my final little imaginings. Maybe I could be the next PhD.

**Ivan:** So how do you see the current situation. You talked about future; you want to see that in the future, but what about the current state?

**Participant 6:** of what?

**Ivan:** Of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. With regards to extremely successful individuals?

**Participant 6:** I think that we are increasingly living in a time where people, although entrepreneurs do talk about failure now, I think more and more and more it’s about the personal brand and I think what you’re going to see even.. because you know, you’re kind of taught that the two are synonymous. We see those two things being together. So I think it’s, you know, now you’re going to see highly successful entrepreneurs coming out, but it will be about the person as much about what they did, and I think we’ll probably see more and more of that moving forward. The two are sort of again interconnected. And we’ve all got our personal brand these days. So we’ll see. We only have to look on LinkedIn and you’re just surrounded of people who are celebrating, you know… I’ve just… there’s a woman who’s written a book that’s like Time Top 10 best seller and is like working hard or hardly working which is really starting to push those agendas on our current entrepreneurs who are extremely being asked to justify the decision being made and are held accountable for their success, which I think is great, I think, you know, it isn’t why Facebook isn’t doing it, it’s why aren’t you doing it. It’s your company and you sorted it out. In the same breath, Jeff Bezos is just getting richer but…so yeah, I think it’s probably quite a tough time to be a highly successful entrepreneur because that success, society is hopefully starting to wake up to the fact that you can hold people accountable in a way like never before. And that we need to do that in order to make sure that these things sort of benefit everybody. And good for them, I think we should hold them accountable.

**Ivan:** And one last question: Where do you get that information? Do you intentionally seek information about entrepreneurs, or does it come to you somehow?

**Participant 6:** I don’t tend to intentionally seek it, I tend to see it in the news, and I’m a huge Alan Sugar fan but that’s a whole another conversation, so I think yeah, probably just seeing the highlights and I’m completely aware that the sources I read are quite biased, so you know, the BBC is out there, and the Guardian, which, you know is extremely left wing, so it’s a bit, I’m aware that what I’m reading I think is probably not necessarily representative of the whole story. I think from the kind of conversation I’ve had with Sheriff and the people around him, they tend to talk much more about the kind of what’s amazing about this innovation and then I also think, you know, anytime you’re talking about any kind of leadership training, anything like that entrepreneurs are thrown in as because of how you should be and you hear these amazing legends of this person doing this and that so I think it comes from a lot of sources but for me but mostly it’s around the news but it’s pretty much everywhere whether I want them to or not.

**Ivan:** Great, thank you for taking part in this. I will stop the recording now.