

**WEARING MANY HATS: ROLE IDENTITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP OVER
TIME**

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DEDICATION

To my late father, Glen Mathias, whose pursuit of entrepreneurship changed the lives of many,
including my own.

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ABSTRACT

In today's organizational life, individuals wear many hats. These hats reflect the many roles and responsibilities individuals must take on throughout the course of their lives. These hats, or roles, help guide individuals toward what they should do in their organizations and how they should do it, and their corresponding role identities help define who they are. However, we know little about how and why role identity changes over time. Given that the research is clear that organizational members not only wear more hats in today's challenging environment but that they also more frequently transition between these hats over time, understanding the processes through which role transitions occur over time is both timely and warranted. Using a multi-method qualitative approach in an entrepreneurial context, this study addresses how and why the role identities of organizational leaders change over time. My findings reveal that entrepreneurs follow one of three distinct identity paths that both influence, and are influenced by, firm growth. Most notably, I reveal the path of *craft identity*, which challenges the conventional wisdom regarding how firms grow and an entrepreneur's role in the process. Ultimately, I discover that entrepreneurs possess a myriad of role identities that change as they progress with their firms.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Overview

Who people are and what people do are central questions not only to identity research but also to life in organizations. In this dissertation, I explore these fundamental questions by uncovering why individuals assume certain roles, and corresponding role identities, throughout the course of their organizational lives. While roles reflect what people do (i.e., the hats they wear), role identities concern how these roles (hats) reflect an important part of who they are; together, roles and role identities shape behavior and form the basis for one's identity. I examine how certain organizational, group, and individual-level forces work to shape role identity, and in turn, the way in which these role identities influence entrepreneurs and the course of their respective ventures. Specifically, through a multi-method qualitative study, I investigate the effect of organizational growth, group socialization, and individual life cycle dynamics on organizational leaders' role identities. In so doing, I address the following research question: *How and why do the role identities of organizational leaders change over time?* In this chapter, I introduce the literature and research domain that will be used to provide a foundation to study this question. In addition, I highlight why this question is worthy of study, and introduce the research design and expected contributions from addressing this research.

Research Agenda

In today's organizational life, individuals, especially leaders, wear many hats. These hats reflect the many roles and responsibilities organizational leaders must take on throughout the course of their lives. These hats, or roles, help guide leaders toward *what* they should do in their organizations and *how* they should do it, and their corresponding role identities help define *who*

they are as individuals. The growing interest in role identity research demonstrates that these hats are not only critical to the personal development of individuals but also to the development of the organizations within which they are embedded (Ashforth, Rogers, and Corley, 2011; Petriglieri, 2011).

Given this interest, researchers have examined a wide-range of identity phenomenon. For example, scholars have examined how individuals transition into different roles throughout the course of their careers (Hall and Mirvis, 1995), such as by transitioning between roles as they progress through the hierarchy of the organization (Louis, 1980; Sluss, van Dick, and Thompson, 2010) or by seeking out positions that provide more meaning to their lives (Pratt, 2000). Research also highlights the impact of socialization processes on role identity (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Ashforth and Saks, 1996). This stream of research acknowledges the importance of role models (Ibarra, 1999) or co-workers (Ostroff and Kozlowski, 1993) in guiding identity formation as well as the formalized practices organizations engage in as they bring newcomers on board (Griffin, Colella, and Goparaju, 2001).

Increasingly, scholars have begun to adopt a more active interpretation of role identity by suggesting that identity is not something merely imparted to individuals by an organization but actively constructed and managed by the individuals themselves (Peters and Gawronski, 2011; Pratt, Rockmann, and Kaufmann, 2006). Furthermore, these research efforts approach identity questions from different levels of analysis, including the institutional (Lok, 2010; Rao, Monin, and Duran, 2003), organizational (Cornelissen, 2012; Zimmerman and Ravishankar, 2011), or individual (Murnieks, Mosakowski, and Cardon, 2012; Petriglieri, 2011) forces that converge to help shape individual role identity (Chreim, Williams, and Hastings, 2007). Together,

organizational research on role identity is well-established and extensive, and has contributed much to our understanding of both individuals and organizations.

However, many shortcomings in the literature still exist. A major shortcoming, which is the focal point of this dissertation, is in understanding how and why the role identities of individuals, and particularly organizational leaders, change over time. To date, empirical examinations of role identity over time have been exceedingly scarce (cf. Pratt et al., 2006). Given that the research is clear that organizational members not only wear more hats in today's challenging environment but that they also more frequently transition between these hats over time (Ashforth et al., 2011; Peters and Gawronski, 2011), understanding the processes through which role transitions occur over time, and the implications they have, is both timely and warranted.

Expected Contributions

As such, this dissertation will shed light on how organizational growth impacts the role identity of organizational leaders. Although scholars are clear that organizational actions, such as socialization practices, influence role identity, little is known about how organizational developments, such as organizational growth and change, impact role identity transitions over time. Given that growth is a central goal of most organizational leaders, especially entrepreneurs, (Baum, Locke, and Smith, 2001; Wiklund, Davidsson, and Delmar, 2003), understanding how it influences (or is influenced by) the identities of those leaders remains an important gap in extant literature.

Second, this dissertation will highlight how group-level influences impact the role identities of organizational leaders. Although research has demonstrated that groups can influence role identity, it is often assumed that individuals either select-into or are selected into

organizational units, and thus, *experience* socialization. Many organizational leaders, however, are charged with creating the conditions through which socialization experiences occur. In other words, they select their board of advisors, managers, and co-workers, who can both influence and be influenced by the organizational leader. Therefore, viewing socialization and role identity formation from the lens of organizational leaders, rather than just the professionals embedded within those organizations, has the potential to offer unique insights to the field.

Third, although most identity research acknowledges that role identities can change, few studies offer insight into the individual-level forces shaping role identity development over time (cf. Jain, George, and Maltarich, 2009; Pratt et al., 2006). This dissertation will contribute to identity theory by exploring how an evolving identity can dramatically impact the course, or direction, of their respective ventures. Specifically, I will examine how life cycle dynamics and career concerns alter the role identities of leaders throughout the course of their organizational lives.

Finally, beyond what factors influence role identity and role identity changes, I explore how role identity transitions occur throughout organizational leaders' careers. In particular, I examine what hats entrepreneurs wear in the early stages of their entrepreneurial ventures as well as which hats they are willing to relinquish and which ones they continue to wear as they progress through their respective venture(s). Together, I will provide a process model for how organizational leaders adopt and exit role identities over time.

Proposed Research Design and Context

In light of the paucity of research toward understanding organizational leaders' role identities and role transitions over time, I use a two-study, multi-method approach to address these questions. Specifically, in Study One, I conduct semi-structured interviews, verbal

protocols, and diary/calendar assessments with entrepreneurs. In Study Two, I leverage my findings from Study One by using the emergent themes to content analyze biographies and autobiographies of exemplar entrepreneurs.

I have selected organizational leaders, and specifically, entrepreneurs as the context for this study for three important reasons. First, entrepreneurs stand out as a group of individuals who “wear many hats,” meaning they take on many roles throughout the course of their work lives. Second, as the leaders of their respective organizations, entrepreneurs have considerable discretion over the advisors, or role models, they surround themselves with as well as the role identities they assume. In fact, Haslam and Reicher (2007), in illustrating the importance of the relationship between organizational leaders and identity, refer to organizational leaders as the “entrepreneurs of identity.” Third, studying young, entrepreneurial firms could offer a clearer picture on the relationship between organizational growth and role identities as the link between the organization and the individual might be more direct and organizational turning points more distinguishable than in larger, more established firms.

In sum, organizational leaders, and specifically entrepreneurs, present a specific, timely, and highly-relevant context, which may offer unique insights to role identity. However, to date, scholars have focused almost exclusively on the role identities of organizational members who are not organizational leaders, such as physicians (Chreim et al., 2007; Pratt et al., 2006), nurses (Goodrick and Reay, 2010), or investment officers (Ibarra, 1999; Lok, 2010). Although important, this research is largely silent on the role identities of organizational leaders, such as top management teams, entrepreneurs, or CEOs. Given that role transitions are likely different for organizational leaders and organizational members (non-leaders), this research offers a way forward for understanding role identity among a critical group of individuals.

Together, this dissertation will guide the field toward a better understanding about how and why the role identities of organizational leaders in general, and entrepreneurs in particular, change over time.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this dissertation is to better understand how and why roles of organizational leaders change over time and what factors are associated with these role changes. Therefore, in the following sections, I will review the literature concerning role transitions and highlight forces from multiple levels of analysis that influence role transitions over time (Ashforth et al., 2011). Because the primary focus of this dissertation is on *changes over time*, I will draw attention to the institutional, organizational, and individual forces influencing role identity change over time and where gaps in the literature exist. Then, I will explain why entrepreneurs represent a particularly important context in which to address many of the questions in the role identity literature. I begin with an overview of role identity theory.

Role Identity Theory: Definitions

In today's society, all people possess multiple identities by assuming multiple roles and responsibilities in their everyday life. Within the organizational literature, two principal identity theories of individuals exist: social identity theory and role identity theory (Stets and Burke, 2000). *Social identity theory* concerns how individuals see themselves as members of various social groups, such as organizational memberships, religious affiliations, teams, gender, educational background, or age cohort (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Tajfel and Turner, 2004; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, and Wetherell, 1987). Therefore, possessing a particular social identity means having common characteristics with others in a group, being like group members in some way, or sharing a perspective with a group (Stets and Burke, 2000). Although social identity theory has contributed significantly to our body of knowledge, it mainly involves

understanding identity by comparing *across* individuals in different social groups. Since this research concerns how identity changes occur *within* an individual's life, role identity theory fits better with the overall aims of this dissertation.

Role identity theory concerns how roles shape individual behavior and the construction of individual identities (Powell and Baker, 2014; Stets and Burke, 2000). In many ways, role and identity are two sides of the same coin: while roles look outward toward the interaction structure in a setting, identities look inward toward the self-definition associated with role enactment (Barley, 1989, p. 50). Roles are positions that carry expectations for behavior, goals, values, beliefs, time horizons, and action (Ashforth, Kreiner, and Fugate, 2000; Chreim et al., 2007; Jain et al., 2009; Stets and Burke, 2000), while role identities are socially constructed definitions of what it means to be in that role (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 475). Put simply, roles reflect “something one does,” whereas role identities reflect “roles that are an important part of who someone is.”

Roles are situated in that they reflect a set of expectations for goals and behavior cued by a specific situation (Ashforth, Harrison, and Corley, 2008). Accordingly, when individuals adopt a role, they generally behave differently than when they assume another role (Mathias and Williams, 2014). For example, although most scholars possess an identity of “academician,” nested within this identity are several role identities, including the role identities of teacher, researcher, and service provider (Mathias and Williams, 2014). Some role identities are *salient* to individuals. Role salience reflects the likelihood that an identity will be activated in a situation (Murnieks et al., 2012; Stryker and Serpe, 1994). Other role identities are *central* to individuals. Role centrality reflects the importance of a given role to one's identity relative to other roles (Callero, 1985). While certainly related concepts, role salience and centrality can be independent

for some roles, but overlap for others (Stryker and Serpe, 1994). Thus, the presence of role salience does not imply role centrality for the same role, and vice versa. Again, using the example of the academician, colleagues and students may frequently seek help or guidance from a given professor who readily enacts a “service” role (i.e., role salience). However, when this same professor highlights the important role(s) that define who he or she is, the “service” role may not be emphasized; instead, this individual might suggest that being a “researcher” is his or her most important and defining role (i.e., role centrality).

Given the constantly changing and evolving nature of roles in today’s society, researchers have increasingly explored the dynamic nature of role identity—focusing both on micro and macro-role transitions (Ashforth, 2001). Micro-role transitions are the psychological and physical movements between *simultaneously* held roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). Most individuals assume many micro roles throughout the course of their daily lives (Marks, 1977). These roles reflect a fundamental reality of life that individuals must simultaneously deal with, sometimes conflicting, sets of behavioral expectations. Thus, one often must balance roles in different aspects of life (e.g., parent and employee) or work, such as in-role (behaviors directly related to a job or task) versus extra-roles (discretionary behaviors not directly related to the individual’s task or job) (Ford, Heinen, and Langkamer, 2007; Schreurs, Hetty can Emmerik, Günter, and Germeys, 2012).

In contrast to micro role transitions, which are reflective of the daily activities individuals engage in and how they may change on a day-to-day basis, macro role transitions are more reflective of significant role changes that occur over time. Macro-role transitions are the psychological and physical movements between *sequentially* held roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). Most individuals assume many macro roles throughout the course of their careers (Black, 1988;

Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010). These roles reflect a fundamental reality of life that individuals often transition between different organizational positions (e.g., supervisor to middle manager), companies (e.g. Pepsi to Coca-Cola), or even careers (e.g., military officer to office professional), that carry unique role expectations. With the increased pace and instability of organizational life (Klarner and Raisch, 2013), researchers have begun to acknowledge the importance of both micro and macro role transitions and that identity is not something merely ‘possessed’ by individuals, but that identity is dynamically constructed and constantly changing (Ashforth et al., 2011; Peters and Gawronski, 2011).

Taken together, individuals are constantly transitioning, or balancing, between micro-roles, and also, although less frequently, transitioning between macro-roles. These role transitions and enactment form the foreground for role identity. However, each of these transitions are embedded in a background of life cycle dynamics and career concerns (Ashforth, 2001). This background, or context, is critical to the understanding of role identity because it helps identify patterns of role adoption and transition. For example, early in their academic careers, professors might be research-oriented as the merits of landing a good job and obtaining tenure are often center stage. After a job is secured and tenure attained, these academics might transition from a researching role to roles more centered on teaching or service. It is not that later-stage academics cease to be researchers (although some may argue otherwise), many of them still have to daily balance the micro-roles of teaching, research, and service, but that the relative emphasize they place on the ‘researcher’ role identity may change over time. In other words, role transitions might not be unique to the individual or organization *per se*, but rather can reflect a general pattern of life cycle dynamics. Although important differences exist between

micro and macro roles, for sake of clarity, throughout the Literature Review, I will refer to each more broadly as “roles.”

Origins of Role Transitions

The explanation for how and why roles change has been a focal point for identity researchers over the past few decades (Ashforth et al., 2011). Various literatures, such as careers research (Jain et al., 2009), socialization (Allen and Meyer, 1990), and identity work (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010), all provide guidance as to why individuals’ roles shift. For example, careers and role transitions research focuses on how identities change in an organizational context as individuals’ careers progress; socialization research examines how co-workers, groups, and organizations actively engage in shaping individuals’ identity; and identity work focuses on individuals’ active construction of identity in social contexts (see Pratt et al., 2006). Although each of these literatures offers diverse explanations for role identity transitions, collectively they point to the importance of context to role identity by suggesting that different forces shape identity construction—namely, institutional, organizational, and individual forces (Chreim et al., 2007). Table 1 lists empirical studies that have examined role identity development over time. The next section reviews the findings of many of these studies and notes important gaps at each level of analysis.

 Insert Table 1 about here

Institutional. An institutional lens provides a macro-level view of how institutions can work to shape professional organizations and boundaries. From an institutional perspective, certain values and norms are assigned to positions, which lead to the adoption of certain roles (Scott, 2008). In most professions, highly institutionalized beliefs and values define what it

means to be in a given profession (Powell, Brock, and Hinings, 1999). For example, ‘doctor,’ ‘professor,’ or ‘lawyer’ are all professions that have unique sets of norms, beliefs, and expectations, and thus, unique sets of embedded role identities. In other words, institutions provide largely ‘institutionalized’ roles.

However, institutions change. Through formal education and training, social movements, governing bodies, or environmental shifts, the roles associated with certain professions can gradually evolve over time. For example, Rao and colleagues (2003) explain how institutional logics and role identities were replaced by new logics and role identities by studying how the *nouvelle cuisine* movement in France led elite chefs to abandon classical cuisine during the 1970s-90s. They found that sociopolitical legitimacy of activists, theorization of new roles, prior defections by peers to the new logic, and gains to prior defectors all led chefs to adopt new role identities associated with the *nouvelle cuisine* movement. By examining a health care unit in Canada, Chreim, Williams, and Hastings (2007) found that the institutional environment of physicians was a source of interpretive, legitimating, and material resources that both enabled and constrained the reconstruction of professional role identity. In another study of the healthcare industry, scholars point to the importance of educational material and training in shaping role identity transitions (Goodrick and Reay, 2010). Through discourse analysis of textbooks published from 1950-1992, Goodrick and Reay (2010) show how new professional role identities for registered nurses were legitimized. Their findings indicate that the legitimization of a new role identity involves naturalizing the past, normalizing new meanings, altering identity referents, connecting to institutional environment, and referencing authority.

Scholars have also examined how societal pressures influence shareholder role identities (Lok, 2010; Wäger and Mena, 2013). Lok (2010) highlights the importance of everyday actions

to role identity. He discovered that management and institutional investors reworked their identity in response to efforts by change agents and explained how this shift led to a new logic of shareholder value in the United Kingdom. Similarly, Wäger and Mena (2013) reveal how Swiss shareholders translated the American model of shareholder role identity. Through institutionalization of shareholder activism, altered relationships with fund managers, and changed communication tactics adoption, shareholders and institutional investors constructed a new shareholder role that was more active and engaged in decision-making processes than their previous identity.

Taken together, numerous studies emphasize the importance of institutional factors in shaping role identities across a variety of professions. These institutional forces influence role identities through two paths—a direct path, in which the institutional environment has a direct link to individual role identity reconstruction, and an indirect path, in which the institutional environment enables or constrains certain organizational-level structures and mechanisms, which in turn, influence individual-level identities (Chreim et al., 2007). Given this influence, understanding the impact institutional forces play in the formation of individual role identities is clearly important. However, rather than examine how the institutional environment impacts a single profession (e.g., nursing), which has been a mainstay in prior studies, this research will deviate from that approach by focusing on role identities across multiple industries and professions. In doing so, one of the key contributions of this dissertation will be to compare the role identities among professionals and an oft-neglected group, non-professionals. Accordingly, institutional factors will play a unique role in the dissertation. Rather than incorporate institutional forces to understand role identity changes *within* a profession, this dissertation will leverage our understanding of institutions to compare role identities *across* professional and non-

professional industries, or at a more general than industry-specific level. As such, although I will compare role identity formation among professionals and non-professionals, institutional forces will not be a focal point of this dissertation, since providing deep-level insights into changes occurring in myriad industries would be beyond the scope of any one study. Instead, in order to provide deep-level insights into a few areas rather than surface-level insights into many areas, I will concentrate primarily on how organizational and individual forces influence role identity—topics I address in the following sections.

Organizational. Organizations impart roles—analyst, front-line supervisor, middle manager, vice president, or CEO—that carry expectations for their members. In many ways, these positions form the basis for understanding who individuals are and what they do. While a front-line supervisor may be responsible for directly overseeing employees in a manufacturing assembly line, the responsibilities of the CEO are quite different (Jain et al., 2009). In addition to within organizational role identities, roles identities also vary across organizations. What it means to be the CEO of Johnson and Johnson might be quite different than what it means to be the CEO of Patagonia. Thus, the organizational context represents a critical part of role identity (DeRue and Ashford, 2010).

Of course, these organizational roles, and corresponding role identities, are not fixed. Both the positions and the individuals filling those positions are subject to change. These changes occur, in part, because organizations do not simply assign individuals roles that they blindly and universally accept. Rather, individuals dynamically construct role identities within the organizational context through interacting with other organizational members and adapting to the organizational unit as a whole (Ashforth and Mael, 1989). Although ultimately individuals

customize their own roles, the organization provide the guidelines, or boundaries, for role development.

The literature exploring role identity and organizational influences is well-established (cf. Ashforth et al., 2008). Researchers have highlighted the importance of physical structures, team mechanisms, socialization processes, and strategic decisions to role identity construction and transition. Two specific streams of research that have shed considerable light on the organizational aspects of role identity formation are careers/role transitions research (e.g., Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010) and socialization research (e.g., Ashforth, 2012; Saks and Ashforth, 1997).

Careers and role transitions research focuses on how identities change in an organizational context as individuals' careers progress (Pratt et al., 2006). For example, in espousing the notion of "sub-identities," Hall (1968, 1971, 2002) suggested that individuals must move or transition into new roles as they progress through their careers. These transitions, he argued, fostered changes in individuals' career sub-identities, or one's conception of him or herself within a career. In a seminal work, Nicholson (1984) explored the interplay between organizational conditions and personal role adjustments and found four unique outcomes of role transitions: absorption (change in person), determination (change in role), exploration (change in role and person), or replication (minimal change). In a more recent study, Zimmermann and Ravishankar (2011) investigated how employees in a large German technology firm with an Indian subsidiary reconfigured employees' professional role identities. Specifically, they found that the IT offshoring work arrangement altered career aspirations and strategies on both the German and Indian sides.

Together, a careers perspective is linked to individual role identity transitions in two fundamental ways. First, a careers perspective illustrates a near certainty of organizational life—organizational conditions change (e.g., M&A activity, new leadership, outsourcing) and individuals must transition into new roles (Sveningsson and Alvesson, 2003). Thus, organizational changes, which are largely beyond an individual's control, can have a significant impact on one's role identity. Second, a careers perspective demonstrates the general progression of career role identities by describing how organizations provide individuals with different, and often career-ordered, roles, such as from analyst, to front-line supervisor, to middle manager, to vice president, to CEO (Ashforth, 2001; Pratt et al., 2006). Thus, even in stable organizations, employees find new jobs, quit, or retire, which opens the door to role transitions for those members who remain in the organization. In sum, careers research showcases how role identities shift via changes in the organization itself as well as through promoting (or demoting) individuals through the established hierarchy of the organization.

On the other hand, socialization research examines how co-workers, teams, and organizations actively engage in shaping an individual's identity (Ashforth, 2012; Pratt et al., 2006). Socialization can occur rapidly, such as through intense on-boarding training programs, or through more gradual means, such as through formal annual seminars or informal on-the-job training. Regardless of means, socialization involves the practices organizations use to provide meaning and expectations for roles as well as the techniques used to shape role identities in the image of the firm (Pratt, 2000).

Many studies in the socialization literature focus on newcomers' experiences, as these early experiences have been shown to have a profound impact on individuals' roles throughout their organizational tenure (Buchanan, 1974; Hall, 1971; Jones, 1986; Van Maanen and Schein,

1979; Wanous, 1980). Together, these studies suggest that the more ‘socialized’ employees are—that is, the more they are collectively exposed to sets of formal and informal experiences used to set expectations—the less flexibility they will have in their roles, and the less likely they will be to engage in role innovation (Allen and Meyer, 1990; Jones, 1986). In other words, socialization provides role expectations for what individuals should do and who they should be.

In a seminal work, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) proposed six socialization tactics that reside on a bi-polar continuum: collective (vs. individual), formal (vs. informal), sequential (vs. random), fixed (vs. variable), and investiture (vs. divestiture). *Collective* socialization refers to grouping newcomers and putting them through a common set of experiences. *Formal* socialization involves segregating newcomers from other organizational members during a socialization period. *Sequential* socialization refers to a fixed sequence of steps that leads to a new role, rather than an arbitrary order. *Fixed* socialization provides a timetable for role adoption. *Serial* socialization implies an experienced organizational member trains the newcomers. Finally, *investiture* affirms the newcomer’s existing identity, rather than stripping it away (see Ashforth and Saks, 1996). With the exception of the investiture tactic (vs. divestiture), which empowers the individual, together the socialization tactics of collective, formal, sequential, fixed and divestiture tactics work to form an *institutionalized socialization* process that reflects more structure to role adoption, and less latitude to form an individualized role identity (Ashforth and Saks, 1996; Jones, 1986).

Socialization processes are a necessary part of the organizational experience. They provide a set of expectations, so that individuals learn and understand what is expected of them within their role(s). A central tenet of role identity is that “possessing a role identity means acting to fulfill the of expectations of the role” (Stets and Burke, 2000, p. 226). For many,

socialization is the process through which role expectations are set. Thus, socialization is critical to the understanding and adoption of role identities (cf. Ashforth, 2012).

As such, scholars continue to emphasize the importance of socialization to role identity adoption. For example, Cornelissen (2012) explores how individuals, through language use and socialized discourse within the organization, align themselves with the expectations of others and mark particular roles for themselves that strictly meet those expectations. Additionally, Pratt and colleagues (2006) highlight the importance of prior socialization experiences (i.e., other organizational experiences) to the identity customization of physicians. They suggest that rather than adopting a whole new identity that is imparted by the organization, an individual can enrich an existing identity, patch together two (or more) identities, or use another identity as a temporary splint. In doing so, they address the important question of whether individuals change to fit their jobs or change their jobs to fit themselves. In another study of physicians, Chreim et al. (2007) found that physicians experienced difficulty in divesting themselves of aspects of their roles ingrained through socialization processes. Thus, even among individuals who have the authority to make life-altering decisions (i.e., physicians), the effects of socialization processes on role identity can be strong.

In addition to socialization at the organizational level, identity formation also plays out at the group, or team, level (Ashforth and Mael, 1989; Brewer and Gardner, 1996; Moreland and Levine, 1982). Organizational members are embedded within organizational units, such as departments, divisions, teams, or groups, whose socialization tactics and role expectations might differ from those of the organization as a whole. Historically, scholars viewed organizational members as recipients of role identities, or individuals who were influenced by the groups in which they were embedded. However, more recently, research has shown that individuals might

self-select into these organizational units based on the fit between their intended role identities (i.e., who they want to be) and the role expectations of the unit (i.e., what the organizational unit wants them to be) (Ibarra, 1999; Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010; Johnson, Chang, and Yang, 2010; Markman and Baron, 2003); thus, individuals may play a more active part in socialization processes and role identity formation than previously considered.

Still, there remains a missing link in this group-level identity literature pertaining to socialization. Although research has demonstrated that groups can influence role identity, it is often assumed that individuals either select-into or are selected into organizational units, such as teams. Some individuals, however, do not simply participate in teams and the socialization process—they establish the process and create the teams. These individuals, such as CEOs, entrepreneurs, or other organizational leaders, often make determinations for who their firms partner with, who they rely on for professional advice and guidance, who they bring into the firm, and how these processes are managed (Bird, 1988; Schein, 2006). Thus, organizational leaders are likely influential in creating the socialization experience not only for others in the organization but also for themselves. Given the distinct influence of organizational leaders on the socialization process (Bono and Anderson, 2005; Schein, 2006) and the impact of group socialization on role identity (Burke and Tully, 1977; Stets and Burke, 2000), socialization may have a unique group-level effect on organizational leaders' role identities compared to other professionals.

Together, extant research, such as the socialization and careers literatures, points to the importance of organizational and group-level phenomenon to role identity. Whether it is through role models and training or by providing a new position because of promotion or restructuring, organizations and their members have the ability to both enable and constrain individual role

identity as well as initiate role transitions. Researchers, by emphasizing these important organizational actions, provide valuable insights into the adoption and transition of role identities. However, sometimes the influence of organizations on role identity might be less direct than previously conceived; rather than a specific set of organizational *actions* (i.e., socialization processes), role identity could be influenced by a set of evolving organizational *developments*. I posit that organizational growth is one critical development that creates significant changes for organizations and their members that is missing from the literature.

The idea that firms change as they grow is far from new. For example, in an important work, Penrose (1959) suggests that organizations change so much as they grow that scholars must, “look at them differently” (p. 19). Accordingly, scholars have dedicated significant efforts to understanding the relationship between firm growth and organizational features, such as age (Evans, 1987), size (Hall, 1987), structure (Lewis and Churchill, 1983), control (Shane, 1996), and management priorities (Smith, Mitchell, and Summer, 1985). In other words, research on organizational growth has focused on just that—organizations.

If organizational growth indeed changes organizations (Churchill and Lewis, 1983; Greiner, 1972; Miller and Friesen, 1984; Penrose, 1959), then it also likely alters what is expected of individuals (i.e., role identities) in those organizations. Although extant research has examined the relationship between firm growth and organizational identity, it has largely disregarded the relationship between organizational growth and individual role identities (cf. Ashforth, 2001; Davidsson, Achtenhagen, and Naldi, 2007; Nandram, Born, and Samson, 2007). This paucity of research is perhaps not surprising considering that understanding the interplay between organizational growth and role identity involves examining individuals over time, and

most empirical role identity studies have been conducted in large, well-established firms, where changes, such as organizational growth, unfold more slowly than in nascent firms.

Given that (1) growth is a primary goal of most organizations (Baum et al., 2001), (2) scholars have shown organizations have a profound influence on role identity, and (3) identity research has not yet addressed the impact of organizational growth on role identity, understanding how organizational growth affects the role identities of individuals, especially organizational leaders, remains an important but under-researched topic for scholars to explore. As such, in this dissertation, I go into further detail as to how both organizational growth and group-level socialization processes might impact role identity adoption and transition.

Individual. Ultimately, and perhaps most importantly, to adopt a professional role identity, the *individual* must select a profession, an organization, and a position within an organization. Once selected, role identity plays out through a dynamic process involving interpretation, action, and interaction that is influenced by both institutional and organizational forces (Chreim et al., 2007). As this process unfolds, individuals continually search for, and question, meaning and satisfaction in their respective role identities (Ashforth, 2001). If meaning is not found or if personal life changes render other role identities more satisfactory (e.g., professional to stay-at-home mother), individuals may elect to transition into new, or different roles. Thus, it is the individual who resides at the heart of role identity.

As individuals lead intricate and complex lives, the individual forces influencing role identity transitions are myriad. Yet, broadly speaking, the individual-level forces shaping role identity could be put into two general classifications: revolutionary and evolutionary. Revolutionary studies focus on the process of how certain events—having a baby (Ladge, Clair, and Greenberg, 2012), switching jobs (Hall, 2002), or experiencing a traumatic incident (Haynie

and Shepherd, 2011)—foster role identity transitions. These punctuated changes may not always be drastic and immediate, but they do occur more quickly than evolutionary changes, which tend to develop more gradually over time through general processual changes.

In contrast to research at the organizational-level, which centers on how changes in the workplace impact role transitions, research at the individual-level centers on how changes within an individual and his or her life alter role identity. The work/life, or work/family, balance is one of the most notable streams of research in this area (Ladge et al., 2012; Louis, 1980). Largely, the work/life literature focuses on the balance and transition of roles across work, home, and other places. These efforts suggest that as events transpire in an individual's life, such as marriage, having children, pursuing a hobby, losing a family member, individuals are faced with competing demands and difficult choices, which often lead to role entries and exits. The extent to which these life events alter role identity formation can be influenced by a variety of factors, including gender (Bielby and Bielby, 1989; Milkie and Peltola, 1999), dual-career status (Aryee and Luk, 1996), country (Toh and DeNisi, 2007), and culture (Sussman, 2000). Together, these studies suggest that “life happens” outside of work, and individuals adjust their work and non-work role identities accordingly.

Ashforth and colleagues (2000) demonstrate that work and non-work roles exist on a continuum that spans from high segmentation to high integration. Although high segmentation (i.e., when work roles and non-work roles are inflexible and impermeable, or different) decreases the blurring of roles, it also increases the magnitude of change an individual must undergo to transition between roles, which renders boundary crossing increasingly difficult. On the other hand, high integration (i.e., when work roles and non-work roles are flexible and permeable, or similar) increases the blurring of roles, but decreases the magnitude of change an individual must

undergo to transition between roles, rendering boundary crossing less difficult (Ashforth et al., 2000; Hartmann, 1997; Nippert-Eng, 2008). Given the increasingly fast-paced and dynamic nature of modern society, innumerable studies examine how individuals balance and transition between work and non-work role identities, such as family, peer, romantic, or religious roles (Jackson, 1981; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006; Ng and Feldman, 2007; Staines, 1980).

Contrary to work/life research that often looks at identity change as secondary, or as an outcome of a life-altering event, “identity work” focuses on how individuals actively, and directly, construct and transition between roles. For example, in their six-year qualitative study, Pratt and colleagues (2006) demonstrate how work-identity integrity violations and learning cycles worked to shape medical residents’ identity as they progressed through medical school. They suggest residents employ customization mechanisms, such as patching, enriching, and splinting, to develop their professional work identities. Thus, as people gain experience in their work, the likelihood of engaging in certain roles (i.e., salience) as well as the value placed on those roles (i.e., centrality) is likely to shift (Ashforth et al., 2008; Stets and Burke, 2005).

Similarly, other scholars note how mentoring relationships (Kram and Isabella, 1985) or role models (Ibarra, 1999) provide individuals with professional role identity templates. Through observation and interaction with these role models, individuals can test out certain role identities in a search for what role(s) fit or what roles they aspire to assume (Ibarra, 1999). Thus, identity work centers on an individual’s cognitive awareness and evaluation of “who they are” and “who they aspire to be.” From this identity perspective, individuals are not merely passive *recipients* of role identities from an institution, an organization, or a life event that may (or may not) have been within their control, but active *initiators* of role identities, capable of constructing roles and transitioning between roles in order to provide meaning and satisfaction to their lives (Ashforth,

2001).

Although important, these examinations of role change within the work/life and identity streams of research have tended to neglect the more situational aspect of roles and the changes in cognitions and behaviors evoked when individuals must navigate multiple roles within the same domain, such as work (Ashforth et al., 2008; Leavitt, Reynolds, Barnes, Schilpzand, and Hannah, 2012). Instead, empirical efforts primarily assume that individuals possess a singular professional identity, such as an “entrepreneurial identity” (Farmer, Yao, and Kung-Mcintyre, 2011) or a “nursing identity” (Goodrick and Reay, 2010), and that they must balance this professional role identity with a non-work role (e.g., mother). Researchers have not examined how individuals assume multiple within-work roles (e.g., academic: researcher, teacher, service provider), or how these roles influence individual outcomes. Given the numerous roles individuals must take on within their respective organizations as well as the importance of role identity to individual behavior and action (Mathias and Williams, 2014), understanding the influence role identity variations have on individuals and their decisions remains an important but under-researched area (cf. Leavitt et al., 2012, p. 1330).

These revolutionary changes and multiplicity of role identities play out against the backdrop of a life cycle and an envisaged career (Ashforth, 2001, p. 226). In other words, as noted in his book reviewing and extending the role identity literature, Ashforth (2001) suggests that role identity and role identity transitions are embedded within a personalized historical context. This historical context reflects gradual changes in an individual’s life, such as the natural process of aging or the general progression of a career. These processes, although unfolding slowly, can significantly influence what, how, and why individuals elect to adopt or abandon certain roles (Ashforth et al., 2011; Black, 1988; Erikson, 1980). For example, how a 24

year-old approaches a role identity might be significantly different from how a 54 year-old might approach the same role. Thus, historical context represents a critical component of *evolutionary* role identity change.

The notion that individuals move through life and career phases is far from new. For example, Super and colleagues (1957, 1980) divide the life cycle into five stages: growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline; Erikson (1963, 1968, 1980) organizes life into eight stages that extend from birth to death; and Levinson (1986) posits that the life cycle is divided into four seasons, each lasting approximately twenty-two years and incorporating unique psychological, biological, and social aspects. Although researchers differ slightly on the nomenclature of individual life cycle frameworks, together these studies suggest that careers and life usher in changes that follow a common pattern of stages – such as birth, growth, exploration, stabilization, and decline.

There exists two vital components of historical context and life cycle frameworks that are particularly relevant to role identity: *chronological age* and *career age* (Hall and Mirvis, 1995). Chronological age is just that—one's numeric age. As the example above illustrated, a 24 and a 54 year-old will likely not only adopt different roles but also adopt those roles differently. On the other hand, career age reflects one's position within a career. For example, two individuals at age 55 might be in quite different places in their career; one may be winding-down and nearing retirement, while another might be gearing-up to take on new challenges and move-up to a more senior-level position. Historically, most life cycle studies have focused on chronological age as the yardstick for individual change, but increasingly, scholars have realized that career age might be more relevant to individual decision-making and role transition (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996; Ashforth et al., 2008; Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010; O'Mahony and Bechky, 2006). In other

words, where people believe they are in their life cycle, including their future career motivations, might be more important than age. In short, the social construction of age may matter more than the physiological changes associated with age (Ashforth, 2001).

Unlike studies examining institutional-level phenomenon, which have tended to focus on evolutionary changes in professional role identities rather than punctuated changes, studies on evolutionary role identity change at the individual-level are sparse. This is perhaps not surprising given that life-cycle stages may take years, or even decades, to unfold, rendering systematic evidence highly challenging to obtain. With few exceptions (e.g., Jain et al., 2009; Pratt et al., 2006), most studies offer little insight into the individual-level forces shaping role identity development over time. “This idea suggests the need to view the identity customization of people at various stages in their career processes” (Pratt et al., 2006, p. 259). Therefore, in addition to being tied to personal needs and preferences, role entrances and exits may be tied to “social clocks” that reflect one’s personal historical context (Ashforth, 2001).

Conclusion. In summary, a plethora of research has explored the institutional, organizational, and individual forces impacting role identity. Yet, many opportunities of theoretical import still exist. At the organizational level, researchers are clear that organizational *actions*, such as training / mentoring programs or other socialization practices, provide a framework for what is expected from their respective employees (i.e., their role identities). What is less clear is how organizational *developments*, such as organizational growth and change, can have a significant, but perhaps more gradual, impact on role identity transition. Put differently, we know a considerable amount about how organizational growth impacts the organization, but little to nothing about how growth modifies the role identities of individuals, notably organizational leaders, embedded within those organizations.

Second, we know little about group effects on role identities of certain individuals—a topic I explore in greater detail in the following section. Although the group level identity effects of “professionals,” such as through team interactions or role models, is well understood, the implications these interactions have for organizational leaders is less so. With considerable discretion over selecting co-workers and advisors as well as an influential role in setting the tone for the organization, organizational leaders offer a unique perspective to role identity that extant literature has not yet seen.

Finally, research opportunities abound at the individual level as well. Contrary to studies of institutions and role identity which concentrate on evolutionary change, individual-level investigations of role identity tend to focus on how punctuated events in an individual’s life alter roles (e.g., Haynie and Shepherd, 2011; Ladge et al., 2012). As such, evolutionary changes reflective of an individual’s life cycle represent an important, but largely under-explored, phenomenon of role identity. Furthermore, the conundrum of individual role balance and between-role transitions have been at the forefront of identity research for years (cf. Ashforth, 2001). However, such studies overwhelmingly focus on the extent to which individuals possess a specific (single) work role identity and how that relates to other, non-work roles (Ashforth et al., 2011). Few studies center on variations in roles individuals must endure within their daily *work* lives, which represents an important way forward for future research (cf. Leavitt et al., 2012).

 Insert Figure 1 about here

Taken together, several critical role identity questions remain in extant literature; thus, this research holds promise for contributions to role identity theory across various levels of analysis. To address these limitations in the existing identity literature, I examine a particular

group of organizational leaders, entrepreneurs, because they represent an ideal context that could offer numerous insights and advantages over other samples of professionals. First, entrepreneurs stand out as a group individuals who “wear many hats,” meaning they take on many roles throughout the course of their work lives. Second, as the leaders of their respective organizations, entrepreneurs have considerable freedom of choice over the advisors, or role models, they surround themselves with as well as the role identities they assume. Third, studying entrepreneurial firms could offer a clearer picture on the relationship between organizational growth and role identities as the link between the organization and the individual might be more direct and organizational turning points more distinguishable than in larger, more established firms.

In the following section, I go into further detail as to how entrepreneurs represent an ideal context in which to study these important identity questions. I delve further into specific research concerning entrepreneurship and identity, and I explore numerous avenues at the intersection of the identity and entrepreneurship literatures.

Entrepreneurship and Role Identity

Role identities represent a fundamental, and increasingly multi-faceted, element of the modern work world (Ashforth et al., 2011; DeRue and Ashford, 2010; Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010). Two trends underlie the growing importance of role identities. First, “many employment situations now involve multiple occupational identities embedded in a single occupation, such as physician-administrator, engineer-manager, environmental scientist-actuary” (Leavitt et al., 2012). In other words, employers, partners, and co-workers do not expect the modern-day professional to fill and perform a single role; rather, professionals are expected to satisfy the various needs of their respective organizations by taking on many, and oftentimes varied or even

conflicting, role identities. Second, through the growing transience of the modern professional, movements into new careers, companies, or positions renders role transition and adoption more common than ever before. These two movements suggest that not only do professionals transition between macro-roles more frequently than in the past, but they also dedicate more time to balancing among micro-roles (i.e., within a single occupation).

However, extant research largely considers professional role identity as a singular identity possessed by individuals rather than a set of identities assumed by an individual (Leavitt et al., 2012). Given that working professionals assume many role identities, this “single identity” assumption is problematic as the need to navigate multiple work roles is a mainstay in many professions, including physicians, engineers, and entrepreneurs. Within the broad study of organizations, entrepreneurs stand out as individuals for whom the need to make such a wide range of decisions is so concentrated, and thus, the need to ‘wear many hats’ so critical (Teoh and Foo, 1997; Williams, 1985).

Like the identity literature, much of the entrepreneurship research also implicitly assumes that entrepreneurs always ‘think’ entrepreneurially, and thus, possess a singular entrepreneurial role identity (e.g., Farmer et al., 2011). However, in an increasingly dynamic environment, entrepreneurs often take on different roles throughout the course of their ventures (Mathias and Williams, 2014; Teoh and Foo, 1997). As they go about their work lives, entrepreneurs face a wide range of actions and decisions that initiate distinct role identities (Powell and Baker, 2014). Unlike most professionals, many entrepreneurs “do it all,” and accordingly, have to think and act in a variety of ways that individuals in other, more specialized fields do not (Williams, 1985).

Recent research demonstrates that entrepreneurial roles “are critical elements within entrepreneurs’ self-concepts that drive behavior” (Murnieks and Mosakowski, 2007, p. 1) and

that entrepreneurs often have several distinct roles that define who they are (Farmer et al., 2011). Hoang and Gimeno (2010) illustrate how entrepreneurs transition from professional and non-work roles to an entrepreneurial founding role, highlighting how the founder role stimulates behaviors, attitudes, and values they view as appropriate to a role. Additionally, research posits that founders may have passion for different aspects of being an entrepreneur that lead to and reinforce specific roles (Cardon, Wincent, Singh, and Drnovsek, 2009). These roles influence goal-related cognitions, and thus, specific entrepreneurial behaviors and outcomes (Cardon et al., 2009, p. 519). Further, Corbett and Hmieleski (2007) link specific role differences among different entrepreneurs to differences in decision-making and entrepreneurial action. For example, individuals in a corporate context, assuming the role of ‘corporate entrepreneur,’ will more often focus on protecting new ideas but are less likely to take actions to start a new venture than an independent entrepreneur assuming the stereotypical ‘entrepreneur’ role. Thus, Corbett and Hmieleski (2007) argue that individuals assuming different entrepreneurial roles initiate different sets of cognitive processes that influence their venture-related decisions. Taken together, this research suggests that roles influence the goal-related cognitions of the individual, and correspondingly, their cognitive processes and decision-making.

However, in contrast to research on roles that focuses on inter-domain roles (e.g., work and family), extant research concerning entrepreneurs and roles (or identities) centers on variations in *entrepreneurial* roles and identities (e.g., how do differences in entrepreneurial passion lead to different role-related goals, behaviors, and cognitions? do potential entrepreneurs’ perceptions of role characteristics influence their aspirations to become entrepreneurs and thus their efforts to discover, evaluate, and exploit opportunities?) (Cardon et al., 2009; Farmer et al., 2011). This parallels work in entrepreneurial decision-making and

cognition that implicitly focuses on entrepreneurs as a discrete group of people that may differ from others, such as managers (e.g., how do entrepreneurs think differently? what common attributes do entrepreneurs share? do entrepreneurs' risk propensities differ from managers?) (Alvarez and Busenitz, 2001; Baron, 1998; Stewart and Roth, 2001). Although important, this research often assumes that entrepreneurs fundamentally differ from other individuals, and/or primarily think and act 'entrepreneurially' as they identify and exploit opportunities while founding and growing their business(es) (cf. Cardon et al., 2009; Mitchell et al., 2007).

However, entrepreneurs wear many hats. These hats reflect the various roles entrepreneurs must assume, some of which are certainly entrepreneurial, but many of which are non-entrepreneurial in nature. For example, in a large corporation, a Vice President of Marketing may be responsible for various decisions related to marketing, and Vice Presidents of Operations, Finance, or Human Resources will likely make decisions in their respective areas. On the other hand, many entrepreneurs may not have the human capital to employ leaders over various departments, so instead many "do it all." From selecting marketing mediums and personnel to pursuing business strategies and new venture opportunities, entrepreneurs take on different roles as they identify, evaluate and exploit new opportunities (Eckhardt and Shane, 2003; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000).

Accordingly, if (1) entrepreneurs necessarily assume many roles in order to start, develop, and grow their new ventures, and (2) roles reflect distinct sets of goals, cognitions, and expected behaviors, then we might expect significantly different behaviors over the course of entrepreneurs' work lives. Recent research partially corroborates this assertion by suggesting that not only are the entrepreneur, manager, and investor roles salient to entrepreneurs, but that these roles also significantly impact the way in which entrepreneurs make opportunity-related

decisions (Mathias and Williams, 2014). Thus, each of these entrepreneurial and non-entrepreneurial roles appear critical to entrepreneurs as they delve into the identification, evaluation, and selection of opportunities that are central to models of entrepreneurial action (cf. McMullen and Shepherd, 2006; Shane and Venkataraman, 2000).

In addition to the myriad roles entrepreneurs assume, we also know that entrepreneurs can both profoundly influence, and be profoundly influenced by, their respective organizations (e.g., Murnieks et al., 2012; Mathias and Williams, 2014; Powell and Baker, 2014). For example, some research shows that employees' role identities are influenced through socialization processes (cf. Ashforth, 2012), while a more active perspective suggests that employees seek out role models or mentors within the organization to guide their behavior (e.g., Ibarra, 1999). However, to date, this research has yet to address how certain organizational members, notably leaders, construct their role identities, and assumes that professional role identities are organizationally constructed and confined.

First, given their vital role in establishing socialization practices as well as their discretion over major strategic decisions (Hoang and Gimeno, 2010; Schein, 2006), it is likely that leaders might exhibit significantly different role identity construction processes than employees embedded within an organization. Put differently, past research illustrates that professionals and their respective role identities are by-products of organizational context, but as both *creators* (who influence) and *consumers* (who are influenced) of the organizational context, organizational leaders, such as entrepreneurs, and their role identities are not a well-understood phenomenon. Secondly, while role models and mentors are certainly important to professional role identity development, an implicit assumption is that these processes occur *within* an organization, such as how junior employees model the behavior of certain, more senior

employees. However, in addition to within-organization role models or advisors, organizational leaders may actively seek out professional advice from members outside the organization, such as from board members, advisory councils, consultants, or business coaches. Thus, with greater discretion, or agency, over both advice-seeking behaviors and decision-making efforts, organizational leaders likely play a more active role in the development of their role identities than research has previously conceived among other professionals.

Although organizational changes clearly impact all organizational members, this link is perhaps most notable among leaders of organizations. With respect to identity, many scholars have demonstrated how organizational identity is often a reflection of its founder, or leader (Gioia, Price, Hamilton, and Thomas, 2010; Stinchcombe, 1965). However, on the other side of the coin, few scholars note how leaders' role identities are shaped by their organizations. Given the tightly-bound nature of the organization-leader relationship (DeRue and Ashford, 2010; Hoang and Gimeno, 2010; Miller, Le Breton-Miller, and Lester, 2011), leaders present a ripe context in which to explore how organizational changes, such as punctuated organizational events or organizational growth, impact role identity.

Taken together, we know numerous identity questions exist within the identity literature, such as how organizational growth, life cycle dynamics, and the multiplicity of roles impact role identity among professionals. We also know that entrepreneurs stand out as professionals for whom the need to assume many roles is imperative, and who can both profoundly influence, and be profoundly influenced by, their respective organizations. In other words, entrepreneurs represent a particularly important, and relevant, context of professionals in which to address many of the significant questions of identity research, such as how organizational growth is related to role identity construction.

As strategic leaders, entrepreneurs also stand out a group of individuals who make critical decisions on behalf of their organizations. By definition, role identity reflects the set of goals and behaviors expected in situations (Ashforth et al., 2008; Stets and Burke, 2000). Put differently, role identity shapes how one thinks they should act or behave. Therefore, the ‘hat’ (role identity) an entrepreneur wears at a given time could impact the way in which they make decisions, and correspondingly, the course of their respective ventures (Mathias and Williams, 2014).

In sum, organizational and individual factors, such as organizational growth, group socialization, life cycle dynamics, and the multiplicity of roles, can likely impact the construction and transition between role identities, and in turn, these role identities can likely impact the way in which entrepreneurs make decisions over time. By examining these three factors—organizational growth, group socialization, and life cycle dynamics—I hope to address the research question regarding “*how and why do the role identities of organizational leaders change over time?*” Yet, this study also may shed light on several important ideas nested within this research question, such as *how do these three factors influence role salience or centrality? How do they impact micro versus macro role adoption? How do they impact the types of hats entrepreneurs wear? The number of hats they wear? Or how they transition between hats?* Figure 2 illustrates the relationships that will be examined in this dissertation.

 Insert Figure 2 about here

In the next section, I explain the methods through which I hope to provide answers to many of these vital questions.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Chapter Overview

This chapter focuses on the methodological choices associated with the sample, research design, and proposed data analysis procedures used to address the research questions. Although partial justification for the context of the study—entrepreneurs—was provided in the previous section, I will go into greater detail regarding the “purposeful sampling” strategy I intend to use and describe the potential participants. In the research design section, I will explain the various aspects of my multi-method approach, which will include the use of semi-structured interviews, verbal protocols, calendar assessment, and biography analysis. Finally, I will discuss how I will analyze and interpret the qualitative data, including how I will address potential biases in the data and software programs used to aid in the analysis. Together, Chapter 3 provides a methods roadmap for how I plan to address the questions identified in Chapter 2.

Sampling Strategy

As noted in Chapter 2, organizational leaders, specifically entrepreneurs, represent a fitting context in which to study identity for many reasons, including their potential to: wear many hats, impact socialization practices, exist in a wide-range of industries (allowing for comparison of professionals and non-professionals), and be tightly-bound to their organizations. However, careful selection criteria for the entrepreneurial sample is needed to capture many of these potential benefits. One of the first considerations is whether the sample should be drawn from a single-industry or multiple industries.

As shown in Table 1, to date scholars examining role identities in organizations have tended to focus on professionals in a single industry, such as physicians (Chreim et al., 2007;

Pratt et al., 2006), nurses (Goodrick and Reay, 2010), or investment officers (Ibarra, 1999; Lok, 2010). Although certainly important, these efforts have largely neglected other organizational members, such as non-professionals. Considering that non-professionals make up the majority of the U.S. workforce (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013) but that the focus has been primarily on professionals, understanding how work role identities among non-professionals is an important way forward for future research.

Entrepreneurs represent an appropriate sample to compare professionals and non-professionals because entrepreneurs operate in a variety of different professional and non-professional fields. For example, some entrepreneurs qualify as “professionals,” such as the optometrist who owns his own optometry firm, while other entrepreneurs qualify as “non-professionals,” such as the landscaper without a college education who owns a landscaping company. Given the lack of recent research on non-professionals, an entrepreneurial sample provides a unique opportunity to not only compare individuals in different professions but also to compare role identity formation among professionals and non-professionals. To achieve this aim and to further enhance the theoretical depth of this study, my sample will be drawn from a variety of different fields, or in other words, it will be a multi-industry sample of both professionals and non-professionals.

Given the theoretical framing and underlying research questions of this dissertation, another consideration centers on how to capture role identity transitions at different growth stages. One approach could be to follow certain entrepreneurs for years as they transition between macro roles. However, this approach has a number of drawbacks; most notably, given the interest in life cycle dynamics, this sampling strategy would require monitoring entrepreneurs over their entire careers, which could last from 20 to 40 years. On the other hand, the study could

be conducted with a sample of older, experienced entrepreneurs by asking them about their identity experiences throughout their careers as entrepreneurs. This too, presents a number of limitations; most notably, it opens the door to the potential for retrospective bias by relying solely on one's account of activities and identities that may have been salient a number of years prior.

Another approach is *purposeful sampling*. Purposeful sampling is a technique in which samples are drawn to specifically include certain groups of the population (Kerlinger, 1986; Patton, 2005; Pratt, 2009; Short, Ketchen, and Palmer, 2002). Scholars have used purposeful sampling to select specific studies in order to replicate prior work (Lubatkin and Rogers, 1989), to select companies in dynamic and stable industries (Keats and Hitt, 1988; West and Schwenk, 1996), or to exclusively select key participants involved in a project in order to compare those not in the project (Chreim et al., 2007). Purposeful sampling is a theoretically-driven sampling procedure in which the selection criteria is based around a specific variable of interest (e.g., static or dynamic industries) that is incorporated into the study, often for comparison purposes. For example, purposely sampling successful and unsuccessful firms could be used to better understand the factors leading to success (or failure).

Since discerning the impact of organizational growth (or decline) on role identity is a key concern of this dissertation, using a sampling strategy centered around this construct matches with the dissertation's theoretical aims. Accordingly, the primary selection criteria for the sample will be organizational growth. Although no well-established cutoffs exist to distinguish low from moderate and high-growth ventures, in line with previous studies that set boundary conditions to compare high and low-growth firms (Feesser and Willard, 1990; Jarillo, 1989) or employment growth and entrepreneurial activity in cities (Acs and Armington, 2004), the sample will include

four groups of individuals with varying growth levels: (1) nascent entrepreneurs with no growth history, (2) entrepreneurs with low-growth—those who have experienced less than 5% annual sales growth over the past 5 years, (3) entrepreneurs with moderate-growth—5%-15% annual sales growth over the past 5 years, and (4) entrepreneurs with high-growth—15% or greater annual sales growth over the past 5 years. Operationalizing growth over a standardized period of time (5 years prior) allows for incorporation of both time and growth elements that are central to this study, and 5 years has often been used a critical time frame within entrepreneurship, such as the notion that the first 5 years of a venture is critical to the long-term success and viability of the organization (Fiet, 2001; Greve and Salaff, 2003; Knight, 2001). Together, the primary sampling criteria will involve drawing entrepreneurs who have diverse growth experiences (low to high), as well as from those individuals who are in both professional and non-professional areas.

By accessing entrepreneurs at different stages in the growth process, this study will capture role identities in-situ and allow for comparisons both within individuals and across the sample at different growth stages. Although I can examine how and why a successful and experienced entrepreneur's role identity may have evolved over the years, I can also draw inferences based on entrepreneurs who are currently in those earlier and/or lower-growth stages. In sum, the purposeful sampling strategy will offer a number of benefits. Most importantly, by sampling at different stages in the growth process, this study will allow for a comparison of entrepreneurs and their role identities over time while limiting impracticalities and biases.

Sample

Given the purposeful nature of the sampling procedure, a basic understanding of each individual will need to be acquired before they are included in the sample. First, to meet the inclusion criteria as an entrepreneur, the individual must be both a *founder* and an *owner* of an

existing business. Second, I will intentionally sample people who are at different growth stages. Individuals will continue to be drawn from each of the four entrepreneurial groups—no history, low, moderate, and high-stage growth—until marginal knowledge is gained from including additional participants (Eisenhardt, 1989; Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This procedure, also referred to as theoretical saturation, remains a well-accepted approach on deciding when to end the sampling process (Andriopolous and Lewis, 2009; Ravenswood, 2011). Table 2 lists the selection criteria that forms the basis for my sampling strategy.

 Insert Table 2 about here

These entrepreneurs will be accessed through a variety of channels, including through: entrepreneurial organizations located in the Southeast United States, accessing entrepreneurs with an established relationship with the author's university, professional industry associations, and personal affiliations of the author with entrepreneurs in the Midwest. This diverse sample will draw in entrepreneurs from a variety of different industries, growth stages, and geographic regions. Although some of the entrepreneurs may be known to the author or known through third-party affiliations, careful attention will be given to obtain diversity in the sample. Accessing entrepreneurs from different geographic locations and through different social networks will help limit biases of the sample, such as regional bias (i.e., having participants come from the same place) and endogeneity concerns (i.e., having participants who all know one another).

Justification of Research Design

Historically, extant research on role identity has taken various methodological approaches; however, most research usually employs strictly quantitative techniques (Ladge et

al., 2012). One popular approach assesses role identity as the extent to which individuals possess a specific (single) identity or role, such as a blood donor identity (Charng, Piliavin, and Callero, 1988) or an entrepreneur aspiration identity (e.g., Farmer et al., 2011) and the implications of this salient role or identity. Another approach examines roles vis-à-vis other roles – assessing the salience of a role with respect to a counter-role, such as ethnic role identity among white and black students (Burke and Tully, 1977), masculinity versus femininity (Heilbrun, 1976), and young versus old (Mutan and Burke, 1979) and what this means for definitions of ‘who I am.’ Yet another approach addresses the presence of multiple roles or role identities, but in the context of both work and non-work roles such as family, peer, romantic, and religious roles (Jackson, 1981). These past efforts have helped us understand “do people possess identity *x* or identity *y*?,” whereas more recently, scholars have begun to adopt qualitative approaches to the study of role identities because they provide rich insights into *how* and *why* people develop and transition between these role identities (Chreim et al., 2007; Elsbach, 2009; Ladge et al., 2012; Pratt et al., 2006).

From a number of perspectives, a qualitative approach appears warranted. First, the goal of this research is to develop novel theoretical insights regarding the phenomenon of our study, specifically in light of the paucity of research on this topic. Thus, this study strives toward building and elaborating theory at the intersection of role identity and entrepreneurship (Eisenhardt, 1989). Considering how little is known regarding multiple work role identities (Leavitt et al., 2012), this study intends to build theory in this relatively under-explored area, rather than test existing theory. Second, given that prior research has identified role identity as important to entrepreneurs, this study seeks to answer a question regarding *how* and *why* such identities change over time—such process-related questions point to a qualitative approach.

Finally, the research question suggests an area where extant research is incomplete and inadequate (Golden-Biddle and Locke, 2007); the phenomenon of role identity over time is neither well elucidated nor understood, and thus, a qualitative approach can add value by addressing shortcomings in the extant literature. Thus, taking into account the research questions (i.e., exploring how and why identity changes occur over time), prior work (i.e., the relatively unexplored phenomenon of multiple work role identities), and the intended theoretical contributions (i.e., theory development rather than theory testing), an inductive, qualitative research design appears to exhibit good “methodological fit” with the current state of the literature (Edmondson and McManus, 2007).

Data Sources and Analysis

Consistent with prior research, this research relies on an inductive, field study to examine the research questions of interest (Huy, 2002). Specifically, this investigation will be comprised of two studies. Study One will be an inductive, field study, which will employ several qualitative data collection techniques, including (1) semi-structured interviews, (2) verbal protocols, (3) diary / calendar assessments, and (4) supplementary data gathering (e.g., archival data, notes from observations). For each participant entrepreneur, the interview, protocol, and calendar assessment will occur at the same time, and together, should last roughly two hours. Study Two will enhance the reliability of the findings from Study One by content analyzing existing autobiographies and biographies of previous entrepreneurs.

Study One: Field Study

The field study will begin with a broad interview, followed by verbal protocols, then followed by a diary/ calendar assessment. Each of these techniques will be conducted with all participant entrepreneurs. In the following sections, each of these approaches, and their benefits

and limitations, will be discussed in turn.

Interviews. The field study will begin with a semi-structured interview, which will be conducted with all the study participants. The use of interviews has a rich history in management research (Gephart, 2004) and has also been used to uncover many vital questions in the role identity literature (e.g., Elsbach, 2009; Jain et al., 2009; Ladge et al., 2012). For example, in a seminal work, Isabella (1990) conducted in-depth interviews with managers to unveil how evolving interpretations of key organizational events unfold and influence organizational change. Although not without limitations, in-depth interviews can provide deep insights into understanding the processes and/or mechanisms behind human behavior (Creswell, 2013). Given the nature of the research questions of this dissertation—i.e., that they concern understanding the processes and/or mechanisms through which leaders transition between roles—an open-ended interview approach appears apposite.

The interview will center on addressing the research questions of this study: *How and why do the role identities of organizational leaders change over time?* As such, the element of time will play a central role in the interview. Particularly, “psychological time,” or how individuals make sense of time in the present while simultaneously being influenced by both their past and anticipated future (Huy, 2001; Gray, Stensaker, and Jansen, 2012), will be a focal point in the study. By focusing on psychological time, this study will highlight the importance not only of how things change over time, but perhaps more importantly, how time is understood by the participants and rationalized as a mechanism influencing role identity changes.

As aforementioned, by intentionally sampling entrepreneurs at different stages of the entrepreneurial growth process, the interview will allow for comparison *across* organizational leaders by providing snapshots of the entrepreneurs. Also, the interview will allow for

comparison *within* an organizational leader's life by uncovering how their role identities have changed as their firms have grown and/or evolved. Thus, through both the sampling strategy and the research design, this study will offer different perspectives on the impact of time on role identity. Appendix A.1 lists the specific questions to be included in the interview.

Verbal Protocols. In an important work, Stryker and Serpe (1994) used a verbal protocol to assess role identity salience, or the likelihood that a role identity would be enacted. With this protocol, university students were asked how they would introduce themselves to different groups of people for the first time in different contexts. Specifically, the students were asked to explain how they would convey what they did and who they were to others, when introducing themselves for the first time. In doing so, the study provided an understanding into why university students chose to enact a particular identity.

Although verbal protocols have been criticized for their lack of validity due to their often "hypothetical-nature" (van den Haak, De Jong, and Schellens, 2003), one of the key benefits of conducting verbal protocols is that they offer insights into the thought patterns behind why individuals make certain decisions, such as assuming a given role identity (Cornelissen and Clark, 2010; Mathias and Williams, 2014). Because of the unique insights that verbal protocols offer, numerous scholars have applied this research design to the study of organizational leaders (e.g., Grégoire, Barr, and Shepherd, 2010; Williams and Grégoire, 2014). Additionally, some scholars have specifically adapted the protocol format of Stryker and Serpe (1994) to assess role identity among organizational leaders (see Murnieks et al., 2012). Given my interest in understanding why leaders enact certain role identities, presenting organizational leaders with different scenarios by adapting the Stryker and Serpe (1994) protocol could shed light on why entrepreneurs assume certain roles. Thus, Appendix A.2 includes the protocol, as well as the

different contexts that will be presented to the participants. Although the protocol is the same as that conducted by Stryker and Serpe (1994), the contexts will be adapted to fit the purposes of this study. Specifically, the scenarios will emerge from the interview. That is, rather than pre-specifying three critical people (or scenarios) for each participant entrepreneur, the interviewer will identify three critical people based on the participant's interview responses. Thus, the presented scenarios will be driven by the interviewee's responses, which will help further ensure that the scenarios reflect relevant contexts to the entrepreneur.

Diary / Calendar. While calendars illustrate how individuals spend the inherently limited time available to them, diaries showcase how individuals feel as certain events in their life unfold (Bolger, Davis, and Rafaeli, 2003; Freedman, Thorton, Camburn, Alwin, and Young-DeMarco, 1988). Therefore, personal diaries and/or calendars offer a glimpse into the everyday life of an individual. However, despite their unique insights and great clarity into the thoughts and actions of individuals' lives (Wynalda, 2010), diaries and calendars have been sparsely used in the management literature (cf. Travers, 2011). The dearth of research applying this qualitative method represents an opportunity not only to shed light on role identity but also to further explicate and develop this under-utilized method for use in organizational settings.

With this approach, the entrepreneurs will walk through a typical week to provide an understanding of how they typically spend their time, and more specifically, how much time they spend in the different role(s) they assume. If they consent, the participants will also share their past calendar information, such as the schedules of events they keep on their phones, computers, or with a personal assistant. If they do not consent, calendar alternatives will be presented to the entrepreneurs, including either having them fill out a blank calendar with the previous week's activities or having them put their time into 4-5 buckets. Together, these efforts have the

potential to garner great depth into the life of the entrepreneur and provide an objective view of how entrepreneurs spend their time and on what activities they are most concentrated (see Smith, Plowman, and Duchon, 2010). The Appendix, Section A.3 includes the questions the participants will be asked related to the diary/calendar assessments.

Supplemental Information. In addition to these three sources of information, supplementary information, when available, will also be gathered. For example, access to organizational websites, social media sites, meeting notes, financial data, or any other information relevant to the entrepreneurs and his or her respective venture will be gathered. Furthermore, when permissible, these interviews be triangulated with interviews of investors, customers, spouses, partners, or friends (i.e., third-party sources) to ensure that an accurate depiction of the entrepreneur and his or her respective role identities is captured.

It is possible that these third-party sources may offer descriptions of the focal entrepreneur and his or her respective roles that differ from those provided by the entrepreneur him or herself. These instances might provide opportunities for further exploration. For example, comparing potential mismatches between the entrepreneur's *intended role identity(ies)* (i.e., what entrepreneurs claim is important to who they are) and their *perceived role identity(ies)* (i.e., what others think is important to who they are) could be an interesting line of inquiry. Although this line of inquiry might be outside the primary thrust of this dissertation, it has the potential to further advance the role identity literature and will be considered as part of the overall research design.

Further, a self-reflective journal will be kept by the interviewer(s). The self-reflective journals will be used to highlight the important aspects of the interview, note any particularly interesting insights, and assist in the improvement and refinement of the format and content of

the study. The journals will be also be leveraged to aid in the development of emergent themes. As the journals provide a short and immediate “snapshot” of the interview, they can represent useful tools for identifying patterns in the data.

Data Analysis. Characteristic of qualitative research (Gioia and Thomas, 1996; Miles and Huberman, 1994; Pratt et al., 2006), we (the author and coding partners) intend to go back-and-forth between the data and the emerging theoretical framework through a highly iterative process. This data analysis process will largely rely on the “Gioia methodology,” which is a holistic approach that is designed to bring qualitative rigor to inductive research (Gioia and Pitre, 1990; Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton, 2013; Langley and Abdallah, 2011). Rather than linking constructs to dependent variables, such as performance, the Gioia methodology emphasizes the essence of experience, and focuses on the *processes* by which organizing and organization unfold (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton, 2013; Langley, 1999). Given the interest in understanding how role identities unfold over time, the data analysis will involve a three-pronged process of narrative strategy (see Pettigrew, 1985), visual mapping (see Meyer, 1991), and theme development (see Pratt et al., 2006) (cf. Langley, 1999).

First, with a focus on time, the narrative strategy concerns construction of a detailed story from the raw data (Langley, 1999). This strategy will be used to recreate a short (~ 2 page) story of the focal entrepreneur and the major events that have meaningfully impacted his or her life (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). These narratives will then be sent to participant entrepreneurs, who will respond back with comments. This process, referred to as “member checks,” will help ensure the entrepreneurial story captured is accurate (Nag, Corley, and Gioia, 2007). Second, the visual mapping strategy is a useful tool for visually representing how certain events and processes occur throughout the passage of time as well as how certain elements affect processes;

in other words, it provides an “event chronology” (Langley, 1999; Miles and Huberman, 1994). The visual mapping strategy will be used to graphically demonstrate the process through which role identities of entrepreneurs evolve over time and the effects of specific factors on the process. Thus, visual mapping represents an intermediate strategy that will link the raw data and the overarching theoretical model. Finally, we will explore certain themes that emerge from the data. This process will involve the establishment of “first-order” (i.e., an analysis using informant-centric terms and codes) and “second-order” (i.e., one using researcher-centric concepts, themes, and dimensions) codes (Gioia, Corley, and Hamilton, 2013; Van Maanen, 1979). The first- and second-order codes will be derived through two primary phases: (1) discovery and narrowing, and (2) enriching and validating (see Pratt and Rosa, 2003). Figure 3 summarizes this process.

 Insert Figure 3 about here

To discover and narrow, we will first read through and analyze the transcripts of the participants’ interview responses, looking for commonalities and differences across respondents. This process will unfold through on-going examination of the transcribed data and reflective journals as well as frequent discussions and meetings among research team members. In examining the text at a high-level, we will search for certain themes emerging from the data, specifically as they relate to different mechanisms influencing role identity. Although several potential sources of role identity influence exist (e.g., organizational growth, group socialization, life cycle dynamics), these “proposed” sources of influence might play a less significant role in the formation of one’s identity, or additional themes may emerge from the data (Eisenhardt, 1989). In other words, we will be open to exploring emergent themes, rather than limiting ourselves to those themes prescribed in the literature review. Thus, while the second-

order themes will be compared with the initial literature review of identity research and linked back to role identity theory, we will also explore potential linkages to other literatures through an “alternate templates strategy,” in which alternate interpretations of the second-order themes will be examined to see their fit with data (Allison, 1971; Langley, 1999).

We will assign working names and definitions to these themes, or categories (e.g., organizational growth) and begin to apply first-order codes to certain pieces of text using CAQDAS (computer assisted qualitative data analysis software). For example, if we come across interview quotes, such as: *“In the beginning, it was really tough. It was just me. I was doing it all. I had 1 girl [sic] hired, but I couldn’t afford to pay her, so she actually left.”* We might note that this statement highlights the concept of “resource constraints” (a first-order code), while we might assign a second-order, theoretical code to the notion of “wearing all the hats,” which could explain why some entrepreneurs adopt an accounting role even though it might be a role they do not enjoy.

After identifying numerous categories, we will continue in this fashion by inductively coding phrases, sentences, or paragraphs, with these emergent themes, and comparing how these themes relate to one another and extant theory (for list of studies using this approach, see Gioia et al., 2013, p. 27). If themes are not found consistently across cases (for entrepreneurs in similar stages) or if too much overlap exists between emergent themes, the theme will be merged or dropped (Eisenhardt, 1989). Thus, through a highly iterative process, we will narrow the entrepreneurs’ discussion of their role identities, and the motivators behind those identities, into a limited number of general themes. In doing so, we will create two groups of themes: (1) the antecedents to role identity (e.g., organizational growth) and (2) the role identities (e.g., accounting role identity) of entrepreneurs at various individual and organizational stages.

We will take a number of steps to enhance the trustworthiness and reliability of the study's findings. First, Study One will be pre-tested on 3-4 entrepreneurs. These pre-tests will be used to refine the questions asked in the interview and protocol, and ultimately, improve upon the study's design. Second, field notes from the interview will be reviewed and transcribed within 24 hours of the original interview. These field notes will involve keeping a self-reflective journal that will chronicle lessons learned from both the interviewee and the interview process. Third, multiple coders will be used to further ensure that the emergent themes are not an artifact of the researcher, but an accurate representation of the analyzed data. Specifically, two coders will analyze the data independently, and with the aid of data analysis software, tests will be run to compare agreement levels between the coding of the emergent themes. Discussions will be conducted if and when thematic coding discrepancies persist. In conjunction with this process, the data will be fully interrogated to rule out any potential alternative explanations. Finally, "member checks" will be performed with the participant entrepreneurs to gain confidence that the emerging interpretive scheme makes sense to those (already interviewed) participants who experience entrepreneurship on a daily basis (Dacin, Munir, and Tracey, 2010; Locke and Velamuri, 2009; Nag et al., 2007).

Together, the use of (1) multiple sources of data (interviews, protocol, diary/calendar, supplementary info, third-party interviews), (2) multiple strategies to analyze/showcase the data (narrative strategy, visual mapping, first and second-order themes /CAQDAS), and (3) multiple approaches to enhance trustworthiness (pre-tests, timely transcription, multiple coders, data interrogation, and member checks), will offer significant reliability in the findings of the study.

Study Two: Content Analysis of Biographies and Autobiographies

Study Two will use both biographies and autobiographies (hereafter referred to simply as biographies) of organizational leaders as a source of information. Although the interviews, verbal protocols, diary/calendar assessments, and supplementary data gathering will be conducted with all sample participants, the biographies will represent a fully independent data collection effort. Similar to diaries, biographies provide a detailed description, or account, of an individual's life (Miles and Huberman, 1994; Van Fleet and Petersen, 1995). To be sure, biographies present some shortcomings and biases. For example, because biographies, unlike journals or diaries, are intended for external consumers, they are subject to filtering, and correspondingly, social desirability bias. Further, biographies, especially of organizational leaders, are often written toward the latter-part of a leader's life or posthumously; thus retrospective bias might also be a concern.

Despite these limitations, biographies offer a number of benefits to researchers. Most notably, biographies often provide a nuanced account of the people, events, and experiences that shape an individual's life, and in the case of entrepreneurs, the course of their respective ventures (Flick, 2009; Forbes and Kirsch, 2011). Biographies can also elucidate the thoughts and emotions of entrepreneurs as they reflect on certain events or experiences (Langley, 1999). Given (1) their depth and richness in discussing the most salient experiences of an individual, (2) their central goal in conveying to readers who an individual was (or is), and (3) their incorporation of events transpiring over time, biographies represent a potentially valuable, but largely untapped, resource for exploring role identity, especially as it relates to understanding identity over time (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010; Locke, 2001). Thus, biographies offer a "secondary" data source that can provide a holistic yet detailed perspective of organizational

leaders—one which complements first-person interviews and data gathering.

Study Two will be conducted after Study One and will employ a replicative logic; meaning, we (the author and additional coders) will test whether the themes that emerged in the field study also persist in the independent biographies. We will examine 4-5 texts, including autobiographies and biographies, that were written about entrepreneurs in different industries and across different periods of time (i.e., 1980s-2010s). These biographies will be analyzed using the multiple-step approach to inductive content analysis advocated by Short and colleagues (2010, p. 327). Content analysis allows researchers to enrich, validate, and develop theoretical insights from emergent themes (Krippendorff, 2004), and thus, has been used throughout entrepreneurship research (cf. Moss, Short, Payne, and Lumpkin, 2010; Short, Broberg, Coglisier, and Brigham, 2010). Many scholars note the numerous benefits it provides to analyzing interviews and other qualitative texts (D'Aveni and MacMillan, 1990; Short, Payne, Brigham, Lumpkin, and Broberg, 2009; Weber, 1990).

Despite its use in the entrepreneurship and organizational literature in general, inductive content analysis has been an under-utilized technique in the role identity literature. Instead, the use of content analysis has been primarily limited to looking at existing texts (e.g., textbooks, letters to shareholders) and deriving how institutional factors influence role identity (e.g., Goodrick and Reay, 2010). Thus, the application of content analysis to original texts at the individual and organizational levels represents an important way forward for the role identity literature (McKenny, Short, Zachary, and Payne, 2012; Navis and Glynn, 2011).

The qualitative software program QDA will aid in this process as it allows identification of frequently used words or phrases and the comparison of total word counts across responses. Ultimately, this program will be used to help discover and code the emerging themes. Rather

than letting the themes fully emerge from the data, the analysis of biographies will begin with a baseline of themes that were discovered in the field study. Thus, the analysis technique will rely on “pattern matching,” in which the themes from the field study will be overlaid with those of the biographies to examine whether the themes hold (Langley, 1999; Yin, 1994). Put differently, the analysis of biographies will be more deductive, and more a “test” of the theory that emerges from the field study. Since Study Two is more a test of the interpretive scheme, the content analysis procedure will involve the establishment of dictionaries for all second-order themes (e.g., organizational growth). Put simply, the themes from Study One will be the basis for the creation of dictionaries in Study Two. The use of dictionaries will help ensure greater reliability of these themes and will also allow for statistical tests within and among the entrepreneurs and the second-order themes of interest.

In summary, this multi-method research design will provide several different perspectives toward understanding identity among organizational leaders. The interviews will reveal how evolving interpretations of key organizational, group, and individual-level events unfold, and in turn, how these events impact the “hats” entrepreneurs wear as well as the importance of these hats to an entrepreneur’s identity. The verbal protocol will highlight role salience, which is the likelihood that an individual enacts a particular identity. Specifically, these protocols will shed light on whether entrepreneur’s transition between (micro) roles based on the context in which they find themselves. The diary/calendar assessment will explore how entrepreneurs actually spend their time, and in particular, how much time they spend wearing certain hats, also referred to as “time in role” (Callero, 1985; Stryker and Serpe, 1994). The supplementary data will be used to support and triangulate the information provided from the participants. And finally, the biographies will offer an independent, big-picture account of the (macro) roles that leaders

assume as well as how they change throughout the course of their entrepreneurial careers.

Together, these data sources should offer a robust and comprehensive view of role identity among entrepreneurs. Table 3 lists some of the questions raised by this research and which data source will be used to address each question.

Insert Table 3 about here

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Chapter Overview

This chapter focuses on the findings from the data collection efforts, namely entrepreneur interviews and reviews of entrepreneurial biographies and autobiographies. Specifically, I highlight the process regarding how entrepreneurs move from assuming all the roles in their ventures to focusing on just a few. I discuss the factors influencing these role transitions, including but not limited to attitudes toward growth, critical events, and identity conflicts. I reveal that transitioning out of certain tactical roles and into more strategic roles is a critical, but often difficult and emotion-laden process. The findings suggest that the ability to successfully navigate this role transition process might explain why some entrepreneurs' ventures grow while others flounder. I compare and contrast those entrepreneurs who successfully 'give up the hats' to those who struggle to do so.

However, one fully unexpected finding is that the benefits of this role transition process do not hold true for all entrepreneurs, particularly for *craft entrepreneurs*. I further develop the notion of craft entrepreneurs, and explain how their negative attitudes toward growth, obsession with quality, pride, and attachment to their organizational identity, stymies their ability to give up certain roles and responsibilities. Although venture growth is often a central goal for most entrepreneurs and traditionally viewed as an important predictor of growth outcomes (Baum et al., 2001), contrary to expectations, I discover that craft entrepreneurs' negative attitudes toward growth and their unwillingness to give up certain, quality-oriented roles result in highly satisfied customers, highly-regarded products, and ultimately, impressive growth and performance

outcomes. I explore this paradox of growth and what it means for entrepreneurs and their ventures.

Additionally, it is important to note that as is often the case with inductive, qualitative research, many things I expected to find did not necessarily emerge in the Findings. With respect to content, both comparing identity formation between professional and non-professionals (institutional factors) and the socialization practices of entrepreneurs (group factors) played a less central role in the Findings than expected. Instead, my Findings center on the individual and organizational factors influencing entrepreneurs' role identities. Similarly, with respect to methods, the verbal protocols and calendar/assessment worked less favorably than expected, and thus, my Findings center primarily on the results from the semi-structured interview questions. I further discuss the differences between my expectations and actual findings in Chapter 5.

Final Sample

The final sample included interviews with 45 entrepreneurs spanning numerous industries. These interviews ranged in duration from approximately 30 minutes to 3 hours. The transcription resulted in 777 pages of single-spaced text. Given the purposeful sampling strategy, entrepreneurs possessed varying levels of growth—low (<5%), moderate (5-15%), and high (>15%), with 9 entrepreneurs experiencing low growth, 11 moderate growth, and 18 high growth. Growth rates were unavailable for 7 entrepreneurs, who were in the early stages of the venture and did not yet have growth data (note: 1 of these nascent entrepreneurs showed strong signs as a craft entrepreneur and was grouped accordingly). On average, the entrepreneurs were 43 years old, had 13 years of entrepreneurial experience, and had started 2.5 ventures. Table 4 contains additional descriptive information about the entrepreneurs included in the study.

 Insert Table 4 about here

In exploring the process of role transition and growth, I found that entrepreneurs followed one of three distinct identity paths: (1) Shedding Path (i.e., giving up the hats), (2) Retaining Path (i.e., holding on to the hats), and (3) Crafting Path (i.e., maintain quality hats). This distinction does not reflect different *types* of entrepreneurs, but three different *processes* through which entrepreneurs transition (or fail to transition) between role identities. In doing so, I compare and contrast the unique actions taken by entrepreneurs on each role identity path and what this means for their respective firms' growth.

Among the 45 entrepreneurs, 6 were at such a nascent stage that it was too early to chart them on a specific path. 19 “give up the hats,” which I refer to as the Shedding Path. This is comprised of entrepreneurs who have a willingness to shed their hats by delegating responsibilities and assuming managerial and strategic leadership roles. These entrepreneurs tend to have high growth ventures. A select group of these individuals—8 of the 19 entrepreneurs—follow an Exiting Path in which they “get out” of their highly successful venture, such as by selling their company or exiting leadership positions. 10 “hold on to the hats,” which I refer to as the Retaining Path. These entrepreneurs exhibit overconfidence and control issues that prevent them from delegating responsibilities, and their ‘do-it-all’ mentality limits the growth of their respective ventures. Although I find patterns in the role transition process that set entrepreneurs with high-growth ventures (Shedding, Path A) apart from others (Retaining, Path B), this does not hold true for the group of 10 craft entrepreneurs, which I refer to as the Crafting Path (Crafting, Path C). Interestingly, I find craft entrepreneurs’ refusal to relinquish certain roles actually benefits their firms. Despite negative attitudes toward growth, the majority of craft

entrepreneurs have, contrary to expectations, experienced significant venture growth. I refer to this as a *paradox of growth*. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate this process. Specifically, Figure 4 lays out the general path model and explains the major phases that entrepreneurs progress through in the identity formation process, while Figure 5 provides more detailed information and shows how the three identity paths differ in fundamental ways. These models will provide the general outline for this chapter.

 Insert Figure 4 about here

 Insert Figure 5 about here

There are a few important notes with respect to Figure 5. First, many entrepreneurs along the Shedding Path mentioned that they struggled with issues of control and overconfidence before overcoming these obstacles and being able to delegate, which explains why Box B1 includes 29 entrepreneurs (Shedding, Path A + Retaining, Path B). Next, 3 entrepreneurs never mentioned “wearing all the hats,” and seemed more focused on balancing role identities with others from the start of their venture. Finally, 2 entrepreneurs did not reference family, financial resources, or life stage as having a particularly important impact on their role identities; this does not mean that these were not important but simply that they did not emerge from the interviews.

As the figure suggests, almost all entrepreneurs begin their ventures and corresponding role identities at a common starting point—i.e., they “wear all the hats.” However, they then diverge along three distinct identity paths. They make different choices about whether to delegate roles to other, whether to focus or broaden their role sets, and whether to adopt new role identities. In the following sections of this chapter, I describe how and why entrepreneurs elect to

follow one of the distinct identity paths, their perceptions underpinning these decisions, and ultimately, how these choices lead to different venture growth outcomes.

Biographies and Autobiographies. After I conducted interviews with entrepreneurs in the coffee roasting, beer, and other artisan-oriented industries and the notion of *craft entrepreneurship* emerged, I selected 7 biographies and autobiographies of entrepreneurs in craft businesses—that is, business strategies centered around craftsmanship and quality. The entrepreneurs' and their respective books selected for analysis include: Yvon Chouinard of Patagonia in *Let My People Go Surfing*, Howard Schultz of Starbucks in *Pour Your Heart Into It* and *Onward*, Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head Brewery in *Brewing Up A Business*, Ken Grossman of Sierra Nevada Brewing Company in *Beyond The Pale*, Greg Koch and Steve Wagner of Craft Stone Brewing Co. in *The Craft of Stone Brewing Co.*, and Steve Hindy and Tom Potter of Brooklyn Brewery in *Beer School*. While some of these entrepreneurs operate in craft-oriented industries (e.g., craft beer), craft entrepreneurship reflects more the process of *how* things are made (i.e., with a focus on quality and craftsmanship) rather than *what* things are made. Thus, certain businesses, such as Patagonia, could be classified as craft ventures even though their industry (e.g., clothing, outdoor equipment) may not traditionally be considered craft-oriented. Although these books will be a primary focus in a later section that further develops the concept of craft entrepreneurs, I have also integrated their illustrations in the following sections because they provide valuable insights into the process of role identity transition.

Wearing Many Hats: The Beginning of the Venture

Figure 4 shows that regardless of what identity path entrepreneurs pursue, at the onset of their ventures, most entrepreneurs wear many, if not all, of the hats in their organization. In fact,

42 of the 45 entrepreneurs in my sample referenced assuming numerous and varied roles when they first launched their venture. As the entrepreneurs below describe, they are the accountants, the salesmen, the phone installers, and even the janitors.

When you start, you have every hat, you're accounting, you're the janitor, you're the sales guy, the phone installer. I'm in bucket trucks putting lights out at intersections, having a ball.

Various Tech Start-ups, Owner

I started off being a jack-of-all-trades.

Web Design, Owner

In part, entrepreneurs start off wearing all the hats because they feel they cannot afford not to. These individuals decide to take on numerous roles in their organization in order to preserve their limited resources. For example, a microbrewery owner described how his venture's undercapitalization left him with only a brewer and his cousin, leaving "everything else" for him to do, while a franchising consulting owner contrasted his deep resources in corporate America to his limited resources in his new venture.

When you start out, you're either undercapitalized or overcapitalized. And you can truly never be overcapitalized, but you can be undercapitalized. We were undercapitalized. So that really dictated my role from day one. Because when you're undercapitalized, you're doing everything on a shoestring budget. You can't afford employees. So I had my brewer and I had me. My cousin, having a law degree, handled all the compliance, licensing, permitting, compliance, and regulations. So what that left me with was everything else.

Microbrewery, Owner

I came out of corporate America with resources that were very, very deep. Then, you come out into an entrepreneurial mode, and all of the sudden, you do not have any depth. There is no depth. Your depth is you... You are emptying your own garbage. At one point, we were vacuuming our own floors... You cannot just sit in a chair and delegate. It does not happen.

Franchise Consulting, Owner

Additionally, many entrepreneurs feel they gain a certain knowledge about their business by wearing all the hats. Rather than citing resource constraints, these individuals suggested that taking on various roles in their organization allowed them to learn about themselves and their

strengths in certain roles as well as learn about their organization as a whole. For example, many entrepreneurs noted that they endeavored to be a jack-of-all-trades, particularly early in their venture's life, because it would help them later in their venture.

[In the beginning], I was the accountant, I was the marketer, I was the statistics person, I was the lawyer, you know I was all of those things. Then as you get bigger and bigger and bigger, you hire accountants, you hire marketing people, you hire lawyers and you kind of shed those things. But you have a great understanding of them because of the way you organically grew the company, and however good or bad you did those things at least in principle you understood them.

Lighting Products, Owner

You need to start out being a jack of all trades, willing to do whatever you do. Then when you start farming stuff out, at least you have got an idea of what you are expecting, as far as level of excellence, cost and all of that kind of stuff. I think to a degree the beginning entrepreneur does have to be a jack of all trades and have a willingness to do all of that stuff.

Digital Imaging, Owner

Still others wear all the hats simply because they want to do so. They find enjoyment from having a varied work life, and engaging in the many roles and responsibilities of their venture feels like taking care of “their baby.” Whether it is being the janitor or the receptionist they just “like all of it.”

The reason I wanted to open up this business, part of the reason was to get back into selling... I do the accounting, and yes, [I am] the janitor, the receptionist...I really have never even hired an assistant like a lot of agents do because that stuff is so easy for me. I love working on the computer. I like the paperwork, so I just like all of it.

Real Estate, Owner

In the beginning, I was here to open and close 7 days a week for the first 8 months. I wasn't leaving. This was my baby and I was going to take care of it. So I was doing everything from opening to closing, scrubbing toilets, mopping floors. Whatever had to be done, I would do it.

Beer Retail / Franchising, Owner

Together, the interviews provide strong evidence that most entrepreneurs start off doing it all — i.e., they wear all the hats. Sometimes, the decision to do it all reflects entrepreneurs' interest to conserve resources, other times it reflects entrepreneurs' motivation to learn about

various aspects of their business, and still other times it reflects entrepreneurs' desire to be involved in all aspects of the venture. Although these three motivations of resource constraints, knowledge acquisition, and personal enjoyment do not compose an exhaustive set of potential reasons as to why entrepreneurs start off 'doing it all,' they provide three particularly important explanations regarding why entrepreneurs adopt myriad roles and role identities. Table 5 provides additional quotations demonstrating these three important motivations.

 Insert Table 5 about here

Regardless of why entrepreneurs take on countless roles when they first launch their ventures, these roles, at least for many entrepreneurs, change. For some, giving up certain roles is a "nice feeling" and one they do once given the "first opportunity."

I never enjoyed the finances of it, like watching money. You always knew you were about to run out of money, you know? I didn't enjoy all the financials. That just isn't how I am wired. It was neat when [name], who was our CEO, came to work for us. It was a nice feeling just being able to turn that all over to him.

Healthcare Software, Owner

The finance side entirely [is a role I will give up]. It is one that I am equipped to do, but it is not one that I enjoy. I enjoy engaging the marketplace...The first opportunity that I have to just hand sales, finance and even some elements of operations, I can see those being first to go. In fact, the CFO that I just brought on has experience on both of those areas. He is already beginning to pick up many of those [roles].

3-D Printing, Owner

However, many entrepreneurs have a "hard time letting go." They find that giving up certain roles is a complex and challenging process.

I had a hard time letting it go. Because like I said, it was my baby. It was.

Beer Retail / Franchising, Owner

It's hard for me to let go. It's hard to let go. It's hard to carve out the piece of it that I'm going to let him do and see.

Coffee House / Roasting, Owner

In the following section, I explain in greater detail how entrepreneurs follow three distinct paths of role identity transition, which lead to different venture growth outcomes. In doing so, I describe how entrepreneurs successfully navigate the role transition process and highlight what actions allow entrepreneurs' ventures to evolve, and ultimately, grow.

Shedding Path and Retaining Path: Identity Differences

Many entrepreneurs, including 19 of the 45 in my sample, manage to “give up the hats.” That is, they successfully navigate from assuming all the tactical roles in their business to assuming a few roles that are more strategic in nature. These entrepreneurs engage in certain actions and make certain role-related decisions that set them apart from other, less successful entrepreneurs. In fact, all 19 the entrepreneurs in the grouping have either profitably exited their ventures or experienced (or are experiencing) growth rates above 5% per year. Additionally, more than two-thirds have growth rates that exceed 15% per year. On the other hand, 10 entrepreneurs in my sample have a tendency to “hold on to the hats.” They make role-related decisions (or fail to make decisions) that stymie their venture's growth. In fact, none of the 10 Retaining Path entrepreneurs have high-growth rates and 80% are experiencing little to no growth. I begin by comparing and contrasting the actions these entrepreneurs take regarding delegation and what this means for their respective ventures.

Delegation (Shedding) or Control/Overconfidence (Retaining) [Fig. 4: A1, B1].

Because of our growth, we have 2 project managers and an office manager, and then everything else we have subcontracted out...Right now, and this has just kind of happened at a younger age than we thought, but we're not having to put many hours in.
Construction, Owner

For years and years and years, people have asked me, “Why haven't you started another store?” I just tell them I can't imagine. I have a hard time keeping up with one. And I can't to this day imagine running 2, 3, or 4 stores.
Coffee Shop / Roasting, Owner

Entrepreneurs view time, especially their own time, as a valuable resource (Bird and Jelinek, 1988). The two quotes above highlight two drastically different viewpoints on the consequences growth has for entrepreneurs' time and their roles in their respective ventures. While the first entrepreneur (Shedding Path Entrepreneur) explains how growth has allowed him to hire managers, thereby decreasing his workload and freeing up his time, the other entrepreneur envisions growth as consuming his already stretched time. These differences highlight one of the most significant reasons why entrepreneurs fail to transition out of certain roles—the “nobody can do it better than me” mentality.

Assuredly, some entrepreneurs may truly have trouble finding the right employees to fill certain key roles in their organizations. Attracting and retaining human capital is an important and often challenging task for entrepreneurs (Davidsson and Honig, 2003), and not every employee brought into an entrepreneurial venture will fit with the culture of the organization or the nature of the entrepreneur. Still, it appears that entrepreneurs have a particularly difficult time with delegation, in part, because they feel that no one can do their job as well as they can.

I would like to back out even more out of the company, because I would like to do other things...The problem is I'm the guy who gets the sales, who makes the sales. I wish I could get my guys to bring in business, but they just don't have that...Sometimes, I put a mirror across my desk and delegate.

Retail Consulting, Owner

I've got an advantage over most people. I mean if you gave them my business, even now as it being a successful business and train them as best you could, they couldn't do it... I have hired five, six jewelers and fired every one of them.

Jewelry, Owner

Overconfidence is an often-cited bias that influences why some entrepreneurs evaluate opportunities differently from others (Forbes, 2005; Keh, Foo, and Lim, 2003). Overconfidence reflects an entrepreneur's over-estimation of his or her own knowledge and abilities, which often leads to ill-structured decisions and business failure (Simon and Houghton, 2003). Although the

notion of overconfidence has been traditionally applied to decisions about new opportunities and ventures, the concept also applies *within* the organization, as entrepreneurs' struggle to delegate their roles and responsibilities because of overconfidence in themselves and/or lack of confidence in others.

Early on I realized that I had to hire people smarter and ore qualified than I was in a number of different fields, and I had to let go of a lot of decision-making. I can't tell you how hard that is.

Howard Schultz, Starbucks CEO, in *Pour Your Heart Into It*

I'm not a very good delegator, so I try always to be really hands-on, but it's hard to do.

Coffee Shop / Roasting, Owner

In my former companies and even into the companies that I participated in with the universities, building a team and delegating responsibilities was done as an act of God. Obviously, once you open that door, your capacity dwindles a great deal because you have so many hats on. I have always found it difficult to relinquish those roles and responsibilities until we absolutely had to. So looking back at some of my weaknesses, delegation is one of them.

3-D Printing, Owner

If entrepreneurs struggle to delegate and cannot overcome the notion that others can suitably perform their roles, then their expectations will be that venture growth leads to an exponentially greater workload. In turn, this prevents entrepreneurs from 'giving up the hats,' negatively impacts growth attitudes, and ultimately leads to burned out entrepreneurs whose ventures will struggle to grow.

We got up here in 2004 and I was killing myself. I was sitting here until 9, 10, 11 o'clock at night working on repairs. I was sitting here one night and I thought, I'm not going to do this anymore.

Jewelry, Owner

You have some days that you come in and you have so many balls in the air you don't know which one to grab. You are just overwhelmed.

Building Products / E-Commerce, Owner

The bias of overconfidence and issues with control and delegation do not simply apply to a select few entrepreneurs. Many seasoned, and highly successful entrepreneurs (i.e., several

entrepreneurs along the Shedding Path) also report that they too once struggled with overconfidence, delegation, and the perception that growth would mean spending considerably more time in their ventures. Yet, over time these entrepreneurs' changed their perceptions by surmounting both resource-based and cognitive-based constraints.

From a resource perspective, entrepreneurs must first acquire the necessary financial resources necessary to bring in talented employees that can fill critical roles within the company. Entrepreneurs often reference an event, such as acquiring an investment or bringing on a partner, as a seminal moment that allowed them to overcome delegation issues. Additionally, from a cognitive perspective, entrepreneurs must be willing to acknowledge that there are individuals who are capable of doing what they do. Among highly intelligent and eventually successful entrepreneurs, this internal acknowledgement—or overcoming one's biases and delegating responsibilities—can be more punctuated, such as by finding the perfect employee or intentionally stepping away from the business for an extended period of time.

Usually, there is a lot of difficulty with an entrepreneur who is sort of turning control over to someone else. There were some challenges with it, but the fact that he [other employee] and I were so both simpatico just really made it work well.

Healthcare Software, Owner

I think being in Norway for a month forced my hand. I just chose to not have time. I just said, "You know what? I'm not even going to have an international [phone] plan." "If you need me, I'll be on Wi-Fi at least once a week. Then I was gone for 4 weeks. I was like, "Manage it like I'm dead, you know. Just go with it." So I do think it was a milestone for the company for me to be able to step away. I think they realized that they could not only meet and keep up the business, but heck, they signed 2 clients, and I'm like "What just happened?"

Video Production, Owner

The reality was that I just had to walk away at a certain point and trust my new employees to deal with our disgruntled customers. We would try to give them the same attention we'd always offered; it would just be coming from a new member of our brewery family. The transition, therefore, was somewhat complicated but necessary.

Steve Hindy, Brooklyn Brewery Owner, in *Beer School*

This internal ‘achievement’ can also occur more gradually, as entrepreneurs slowly realize the need to decrease their involvement in the company. For example, one entrepreneur posited that in order to be successful, entrepreneurs need to “make the leap” to give up some of the details. He also claimed that he was intentionally “putting fences around himself” in order to focus on more important facets of the business. Another entrepreneur referred to himself as once being a “helicopter manager,” who gradually realized that his micromanagement was not only consuming large amounts of his time but also preventing his firm from growing.

We now have a very capable team in place, and this is where a lot of entrepreneurs are not able to make the leap. You know, they become so involved in the details that they cannot pull themselves away, and that’s where I’ve been sort of stretching myself in the last six months, where I’ve been essentially putting fences around myself and saying “I’m not going to get as involved in these particular enterprises anymore because it just takes time away from business development of other opportunities that I’m trying to pursue.”

E-Commerce / Real Estate, Owner

I was a helicopter manager. When I started off, I was really low to the ground and saw all of that stuff. Through time, I have gotten higher and higher and higher. You get further away from these things. I hovered low for a long time until I realized, I am keeping the company small. I was micromanaging and once I realized that we can’t grow if I micromanage, because we can only get as big as I will let us, so the higher up I get the better off.

Lighting Products, Owner

Given that these realizations may occur gradually over time, prior entrepreneurial experience appears to play an important role in fostering role identity transitions and moving entrepreneurs from the Retaining Path to the Shedding Path. This is not to say that more experienced entrepreneurs are necessarily more likely to delegate roles, as many along the Retaining Path have 20 or more years of entrepreneurial experience; however, prior experience affords entrepreneurs the opportunity to reflect on their strengths and shortcomings and find people who they can entrust to fill requisite roles. In other words, prior entrepreneurial

experience allows entrepreneurs more time to step back from their ventures to understand how their actions might be limiting the growth potential of their firms.

Frequently, nascent entrepreneurs expect growth to exponentially increase their workload (i.e., wear more hats). Whereas, those in the Shedding Path see growth as an opportunity to hire employees and delegate, allowing them concentrate on other activities. As Table 6 indicates, entrepreneurs have very different perceptions of what firm growth means to the amount of time they will devote to the roles in their ventures.

 Insert Table 6 about here

Shedding Path entrepreneurs, or those entrepreneurs with high-growth ventures, strive to “work themselves out of a job” or “walk out of here and come back in 30 days” while entrepreneurs with low-growth ventures cannot envision anyone else filling their roles in the organization, and accordingly, restrict their venture’s growth by holding onto roles for too long. This does not mean entrepreneurs of high-growth ventures work less, but that their mentality is such that they have overcome or avoided overconfidence and have the ability to successfully delegate. Thus, although most entrepreneurs suggest they struggle with delegation early on, Shedding Path entrepreneurs overcome these issues while Retaining Path entrepreneurs fail to do so, which limits the growth potential of their firms.

Narrow Focus (Shedding) or Broaden Focus (Retaining) [Fig. 4: A2, B2].

Entrepreneurs have different perceptions about giving up a specific role, or set of roles. For some, the act feels like an *identity gain*—that is, by giving up a role, they feel as though they can focus on more important things and that they are multiplying, or imprinting, their identity on others by training their employees to fulfill certain roles. Whereas, for others, the act feels like an

identity loss—that is, they feel as though giving up a role would mean sacrificing a critical aspect of who they are. In part, these unique perspectives lead to either a narrowing or broadening of role focus.

Although most entrepreneurs start off doing it all, many would prefer to give up some roles sooner than later. As aforementioned, scrubbing toilets and mopping floors are part of what often comes with the title of “nascent entrepreneur,” yet for some these still rank above the necessary roles of administrative work, accounting and taxes.

I hate paperwork. God, I hate paperwork! I still don't like accounting. The basic administration of a business, I hate. I just can't stand it. It's tedious and meticulous and feels like busy work. That part of the business I absolutely loathe.

Logistics, Owner

I hate all that admin stuff.

Business Lab, Owner

Accounting is my arch nemesis.

Business Coach, Owner

However, many entrepreneurs believe that growth will allow them to give up certain work tasks that they simply do not enjoy doing, such as accounting or taxes, and focus on more favored roles.

I love what I'm doing. If I tell you I'm not interested in doing it, I've got one or two issues--either I'm not accepting what my role is or I need to change this. You either accept it or change it. I'm not a guy that's, "Oh man, you know, you can't hire people." You can hire people. You've got to figure out the system and do it. Yeah, you can make a business grow.

Financial Staffing, Owner

Some business owners end up doing what they have to do instead of what they really enjoy. I don't want to give up what I really enjoy...I think if you have your own business, shouldn't you be able to do what you really want to do?

Dairy Products, Owner

As their ventures further develop, Shedding Path entrepreneurs often begin to narrow their focus on certain roles in order to emphasize their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. This could

mean finding new employees to take on previously-held roles or outsourcing those roles to specialized firms.

I don't do the accounting. I'm not an accountant. I have people that help me do the marketing. I know a lot about marketing, but I'm not in it every day, and it's not my forte. So I have folks help me do that. I'm a believer that you focus on what you're good at. You spend your time on what you're good at, and you maximize that. What you're not good at you pay somebody else to do it, and have somebody else do it for you.

Beer Retail, Owner

My whole focus is to maximize your strengths. If you are not good at it, do not do it. Don't even try. There are people out there that can do it really, really well, and that extra bit of money that you pay is well worth it.

Franchise Consulting, Owner

Beyond the mere personal satisfaction of giving up less-favored roles or focusing on roles that represent personal strengths, Shedding Path entrepreneurs also realize the importance of giving up the tactical, or technical roles, to focus on the seemingly more important leadership, or strategic roles.

Most people find themselves comfortable, including myself, with the busy work. Whatever you are good at is what you gravitate to. I think you need to get to that next [strategic] level.

Franchise Consulting, Owner

If you only work technically you'll never work strategically to get where you are going. Ultimately, you have to have balance. It needs to be about 50/50 strategy and tactics. Right now, it's about 90% tactics and 10% strategy if it's a good idea. That's my concern now. We've grown to the point that it's stressing the infrastructure we have, so we've got to make that leap at [company].

Logistics, Owner

Although not all entrepreneurs possess such a positive view of firm growth, most entrepreneurs believe that growth will allow them to (1) get rid of less-favored roles to focus on roles they enjoy, (2) emphasize strengths while deemphasizing weaknesses, or (3) move from tactical to strategic roles. These entrepreneurs perceive that venture growth and profitability affords, or will afford, them the luxury of deciding how to reallocate their limited time. In other

words, many entrepreneurs find venture growth and profits alluring because they believe it will offer them the ability to make strategic choices regarding their time; they can engage in roles: they enjoy, they excel in, or they perceive are expected from a leader.

However, while the initial *perception* of growth is almost universally positive, the actual *experience* of growth often differs. For example, one entrepreneur, who was initially excited about growing his company, cited that transitioning into a new role did not necessarily mean he could give up his old responsibilities.

The transition of a role doesn't necessarily mean you give up your old responsibilities. You just take on new ones.

Logistics, Owner

Additionally, a dairy products owner—a craft entrepreneur—claimed that although she was happy to grow her business and sell all the milk she produced, in the process of growing her business, she got away from many of the things that she really loved doing, such as “making ice cream.”

When I started milking cows and getting into milk more, I was like, No. We don't need that. We don't need more cows... With more cows comes more work. More manure. More everything... I don't think you should try to do more. The last two years I haven't been making ice cream. Someone else has been. I felt like why am I teaching someone how to do that job that I really want to do?

Dairy Products, Owner

This finding suggest that many entrepreneurs may initially pursue growth blindly. They grow (or attempt to grow) because that is what is expected of them and their ventures, and they believe growth will allow them to ‘wear the hats they want to wear.’ However, many entrepreneurs are ill-suited for the roles they must adopt (or give up) in a growing organization, such as managing employees or giving up creative roles. Oftentimes, this realization is only learned through prior entrepreneurial experience, as entrepreneurs engage in retrospective sensemaking (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014; Weick, 1993). Through this sensemaking process,

entrepreneurs reflect on the fact that growth has, contrary to their expectations, led them away from the activities they most enjoyed. However, without this entrepreneurial experience, entrepreneurs engage in prospective sensemaking, in which they mentally construct a future in which growth allows them to do whatever they want in their ventures (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014; Weick, 1995).

On the other hand, more seasoned entrepreneurs hold mixed perceptions about what prospective growth might mean for their respective work roles. With the knowledge of prior experience, experienced entrepreneurs often understand that growth can allow them to offload some less-favored roles but it also can move them away from more-favored roles. Through the knowledge of prior entrepreneurial experience, Shedding Path entrepreneurs engage in both prospective and retrospective sensemaking about work tasks and growth, which is largely absent among Retaining Path entrepreneurs. Instead, Retaining Path entrepreneurs largely rely on prospection, or future-oriented thinking about growth, that tends to be overly optimistic. In other words, Shedding Path entrepreneurs—through prospective and retrospective sensemaking—perceive growth as allowing them to move on to new challenges and responsibilities, whereas Retaining Path entrepreneurs hold highly positive perceptions about what prospective growth might mean for their respective work roles, as illustrated by Table 7.

 Insert Table 7 about here

Assuming Leader/Manager Identity (Shedding Path) or Maintaining a “Do It all” Mentality (Retaining Path) [Fig. 4: A3, B3]. In the previous sections, I suggest that most entrepreneurs start off doing it all and that in order to facilitate the growth and continued development of their ventures, entrepreneurs must give up, or delegate, certain roles and

responsibilities. However, this role transition process may lead entrepreneurs into adopting new roles that they might not expect, and for which they be ill-prepared. To be sure, the roles of a nascent entrepreneur and the roles of an entrepreneur of a growing organization can be vastly different. Although both may share a social identity as ‘entrepreneurs’ and identify themselves as such, their commonalities may end there. One major role identity difference that emerges as entrepreneurs’ firms grow involves leading people.

I had always avoided thinking of myself as a businessman. I was a climber, a surfer, a kayaker, a skier, and a blacksmith. We simply enjoyed making good tools and functional clothes that we, and our friends, wanted. Malinda’s and my only personal assets were a beat-up Ford van and a heavily mortgaged soon-to-be-condemned cabin on the beach. Now we had a heavily leveraged company with employees with families of their own, all depending on our being successful. After we had pondered our responsibilities and financial liabilities, one day it dawned on me that I was a businessman and would probably be one for a long time.

Yvon Chouinard, Patagonia Founder, in *Let My People Go Surfing*

Yvon Chouinard’s quote exemplifies the critical shift many entrepreneurs must make as they begin to think beyond themselves and realize their responsibility to their employees. As Chouinard explains, he always thought of himself as a “climber, a surfer, a kayaker, a skier, and a blacksmith,” being a businessman and a leader of people was not something he envisioned himself as, or something he really aspired to be. Put simply, his company’s great success led him to an identity he did not necessarily want or intend—a businessman and a leader.

Likewise, many entrepreneurs launch a business with a passion for what they do, and the added responsibility of employees, at least for many entrepreneurs, challenges their identity. Recent identity work suggests that entrepreneurs have passion for different aspects of the entrepreneurial process (Cardon et al., 2009; Fauchart and Gruber, 2011). For example, some entrepreneurs possess an *inventor identity*, in which their passion is for activities involved in identifying, inventing, and exploring new opportunities (Cardon et al., 2009). While these

individuals are passionate about the creative process, managing employees is less central to their core identity. Thus, the growth of a venture can often lead to incongruencies between who individuals are (or want to be) and what their ventures force them to become.

For example, famed graphic designer Milton Glaser in the book *Beer School* discusses how building an empire made him feel more like a “director of personnel” and took away from what he loved to do, which was the “creation of the work.” An owner of a photo products company also described how he really enjoyed the “creative aspect of what he was doing” but “hated having to manage other people.”

Years ago, I thought I wanted to build an empire. I wanted a big office with lots of designers. But when I had the big office and all the designers, I realized that I was no longer involved in the creation of the work, which is what I love. I was more like the director of personnel.

Milton Glaser, Milton Glaser Inc. Owner, in *Beer School*

My wife and I are photographers and very image based. We love little pictures and great imagery and art. I think that the generally creative aspect of what we're doing is really what we enjoy the most...I hate having to manage other people, honestly. Some people really like that, having authority and being over people. That's not what I love to do.

Photo Products, Owner

Similarly, two self-reflective and successful entrepreneurs (Figure 4: “Shedding/Exit, Path”), who had started several companies and had been through the venture development process numerous times before, acknowledged that inventing new products and founding companies around those products were an important part of who they were. In other words, they understood their passion was for the creative process, and so rather than develop and grow their ventures, they intentionally found others who were better-suited to run their ventures. One entrepreneur, referring to himself as a “serial starter,” described how he always positioned his companies to be bought out by other companies within four or five years. He did this because he knew that he did not function well once things became routine, and that his role would need to

become focused on the structured management of people—a task he was not particularly interested in doing.

I like to think of myself more as a serial starter than serial entrepreneur... I am an initiator. I am good on the initial structuring of the company and engaging the clients, but once you get to the structured process side of things, I start to lose some interest. It is creating something from nothing that intrigues me; the figuring it out. It is that element of it, the mental puzzle, the intellectual puzzle of it all, intrigues me...it ceases to be fun if I cannot do those things.

3-D Printing, Owner

Another entrepreneur, suggesting that the term “serial entrepreneur was just a nice way of saying severe ADD,” also acknowledged that the formalized structure of a larger company and the management of people was “not his forte.” Rather than target his companies to be bought out, this individual referenced working with a close friend and important partner, who he knew had the requisite skills to “take the company from \$5 million to \$100 million.” He mentioned starting a few companies with this particular partner, in which he would be heavily involved in the initial stages of the company and developing the technology, but gradually hand over the company to his partner, who he knew was great at developing the business and growing the people within it.

You’ve heard of the word serial entrepreneur? That’s just a really nice way of saying severe ADD. I focus and understand something and when I feel alright, either I want to do something else or I’m not the right guy. [My partner] is the right guy, for example, to take this company from \$5 million to \$100 million...I couldn’t have done that; that’s not my forte; that’s not what I like to do...I’m an engineer; I love that part of it. I literally live in a workshop; I actually live beneath my laboratory.

Various Tech Startups, Owner

His partner, too, mentioned the importance, and intentionality, of role balance between the two of them.

The guy who co-founded the company, he and I have done four companies together. I usually try to find somebody like him [when I start a company]. I am sales and marketing, and he is technology, so we are a nice combination when we do things.

Traffic Management Systems, Owner

Together, these entrepreneurs highlight the importance of role balance and identity alignment, or aligning what you do with who you are. Although neither enjoyed managing employees in a larger, more formalized structure, their self-reflection and strategic planning allowed them to emphasize their preferred and salient identities, while not inhibiting the success, or continued growth, of their respective organizations. Therefore, these entrepreneurs follow the Exiting Path (see Figure 4: Path X). They are entrepreneurs who, through the process of self-reflection, recognize they are not well-suited for the managerial and leadership responsibilities as well as the formalized structure necessitated by a large and growing organization. Accordingly, they work to coordinate their venture exit.

However, not all entrepreneurs want to cede control of their organization to another individual or organization. They want to grow and develop their business, but they often run into hurdles when it comes to managing employees. Some equate managing employees to “babysitting” or as an exercise in “tolerating the nonsense.”

There was a point where I had 3 employees, full-time, but it was like babysitting. It was a completely different company and I didn't have the experience to handle them, I was hiring the wrong people, I was looking for these stray dogs that needed help and I hired them and they'd bury me. So two years after hiring employees I got rid of them and down-sized the company.

Construction / Business Coach, Owner

Many people enjoy working with people. I will leave them if I have to. I shouldn't say that. I will manage them if I have to. I just can't tolerate that nonsense. I don't need people to manage; I need other leaders. Managing people is just a part of business. It's just something you have to do. The whole leadership role, mentoring, and things like that... I just don't like.

Logistics, Owner

A plethora of research has sought to explore fundamental differences between entrepreneurs and other individuals, such as managers (Busenitz and Barney, 1997). However, one issue with this line of thinking is that in the process of growing their ventures most

entrepreneurs are (or must become) managers—that is, managing and leading people represents a critical part of who entrepreneurs are and what they do.

One of the most important attributes of a successful entrepreneur is the ability to attract, and motivate, key employees.

Steve Hindy, Brooklyn Brewery Owner, in *Beer School*

As a company grows, so too grows the importance of the ‘manager’ role to the entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurs of growing ventures begin to refer to themselves as “leaders,” “coaches,” or “cheerleaders” in which they fill a teaching, facilitating, and/or inspirational role among their employees.

It’s [having employees] really changed the dynamic for me, because I’ve had to take on a coaching aspect a lot more than I had when I started [the business] ... It’s changed probably about 4 or 5 major phases between learning how to do myself and teaching others how to do it.

Financial Planning, Owner

I know people who have come onto entrepreneurial companies, and they want to stick to the business side or it might be operations or marketing or whatever it is. They want to be the marketing guy for that startup, which is good, but that’s a different role than the role I’m trying to fill which is a leadership, CEO-type role.

Social Networking Website, Owner

I’m the head cheerleader a lot of times.

Financial Staffing, Owner

Although individual differences might help explain why some individuals make the initial decision to become an entrepreneur versus work as a manager in a large corporate setting, the actual roles and responsibilities might become somewhat blurred over time, as entrepreneurs take on increasingly salient managerial roles. Table 8 demonstrates the increasingly important role identity of the leader/manager.

Insert Table 8 about here

Some entrepreneurs, particularly Shedding Path entrepreneurs, appear well-suited for these managerial roles, while others less so. This does not imply that entrepreneurs of high-growth ventures need to be great at managing people (see Figure 4: Exiting Path entrepreneurs step away from their firms to help facilitate growth). Rather, it appears important for entrepreneurs to have a clear and realistic expectation for what growth, and the addition of employees, means to their role in the organization. Although most entrepreneurs want to grow their companies, many do not have the foresight or entrepreneurial experience to fully understand what employee growth will mean for their role in the organization, specifically as it relates to managing employees. The added responsibility is often not what entrepreneurs want, or intend, and for many, they feel that growth prevents them from further exploring their creative identity. In sum, managing employees might not be critical to the success of the entrepreneur but it is critical to the success of their respective organizations. Shedding Path entrepreneurs adopt a managerial or leadership role, or find someone else who can, while Retaining Path entrepreneurs maintain a ‘do-it-all mentality’ and do not make the leap to become strategic leaders.

Summary: Comparing Differences Between “Shedding” and “Retaining” Entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurs on the Shedding Path exhibit a number of key differences from those on the Retaining Path. One of the first, and most important, is that Shedding Path entrepreneurs have addressed this fundamental question:

I think the difference is for all those years when I was self-employed I didn't fully understand myself. You know we are discovering ourselves our whole lives and I was doing what I was doing without having taken the time to say, “Why am I doing this? What makes me happy? How am I really wired?”

Business Coach, Owner

Largely, Shedding Path entrepreneurs have mapped out a strategic plan not just for their organization but also for themselves in their organization. It is interesting that exit strategies are

becomingly an increasingly important topic in today's business plans, but many entrepreneurs, particularly those on the Retaining Path, do not have plans for their own exit. Instead, they assume that their exit will coincide with their organization's exit, when in actuality, many entrepreneurs, especially those that are highly successful, work themselves out of the day-to-day operations of their organization before they officially exit. Thus, it also appears important for entrepreneurs to have a good understanding of how they will exit roles before they even start their venture.

I think every CEO of every company should be sitting there for the sole reason of starting companies to work yourself out of a job. You want to own the company, not have the company own you.

Wireless Sensors, Owner

Shedding Path entrepreneurs also seem to understand the power of experience, or filling many roles, as a learning tool. They not only have worn all the hats, but they also leverage those experiences to teach themselves about their business. Further, they do not perceive former, more tactical roles as beneath them; instead, they occasionally participate in these roles so that they continue to have a good understanding of their business practices. For example, one business owner mentioned placing orders in a previous business he owned to ensure his products were being properly delivered. Now, in his current business, he rides around in the bucket truck periodically to learn about the installation process and improve upon the design of his product.

In respiratory therapy [a previous venture], there were a couple of times where I would go to somebody else's house, place an order and have it delivered to me without drivers knowing who I was. They would bring it in and talk to me about it.... And now, [in my current venture] I ride in the bucket truck once in a while... Do you think if the CEOs of the airlines actually spent a month travelling in coach, how do you think it would affect their business? If the guy who ran General Motors drove the low end car for a month instead of a Cadillac, what would it do for his business?

Traffic Management Systems, Owner

Shedding Path entrepreneurs also seem to understand the power of people. Rather than the perception that they are “giving up” their role identities to others, they value the importance of delegation and perceive role transition as an opportunity to “share” their individual and organizational identity with others. Retaining Path entrepreneurs perceive delegation as “giving up my baby” and view the action as *identity loss*—in which they believe they are both giving up an important part of who they are and also risking altering the identity of their organization. Others, particularly Shedding Path entrepreneurs, perceive delegation as a sharing opportunity and view the action as *identity gain*—in which they believe that delegation is an opportunity to stamp others with their own identity and the identity of their organization. Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head Brewery equates this to a “pollination” process by using a metaphor of bees. He states that as you guide newer bees through the methods and machinations (that were once part of what you did) you become part of a shared community, and the whole of the community is greater than the sum of its parts. Put simply, most successful entrepreneurs do not perceive delegation as giving up who you are but as sharing and multiplying who you are through others.

I always liked the idea of bees as a business metaphor. When you start a company, it's usually just yourself and maybe a handful of coworkers. The customers are your flowers, and you buzz around them—you know, busy as a bee. In the early days your coworkers are buzzing around beside you, so your enthusiasm and belief in the importance of the task at hand are both infectious and immediately apparent. But, as your company gets bigger, more and more flowers need attention. Some of the other worker bees may not be in the area where you are buzzing. It's important to make sure bees are near every cluster of flowers and that they understand what the mission is and believe in that mission for themselves. These are the bees that will guide the other newer bees through the methods and machinations of their tasks. They are all part of a shared community, and the whole of this community is greater than the sum of its parts. There's a lot of pollinating going on in building a business, and you can't do that all by yourself.

Sam Calagione, Dogfish Head Owner, in *Brewing Up A Business*

Shedding Path entrepreneurs also stand ready to give up control. Somewhat contrary to traditional thought, successful entrepreneurs appear willing to give up leadership roles to those

better suited for the job. Meaning, they acknowledge that they might not be the ideal candidate to fill the role as CEO of their own company; instead, they seek out talented people and stand willing to accept the fact that others could be better at leading the growth of their business. Similarly, throughout the venture, they intensely focus on their role strengths and employ others to fill role weaknesses. Rather than the commonly-held perception that entrepreneurs cannot afford to hire out role weaknesses, Shedding Path entrepreneurs believe they cannot afford *not* to hire out role weaknesses.

Taken together, Shedding Path entrepreneurs generally view delegation as identity gain rather than identity loss. They give up roles by entrusting others who exceed their skill levels in certain areas. They are highly ‘self-reflective’ in that they understand themselves, their interests and abilities, and where their passion in the entrepreneurial process lies. They understand the importance of moving from tactical roles to strategic leadership roles, but they intentionally try on ‘old tactical hats’ to occasionally test their process and/or product. And they possess generally positive attitudes toward growth. On the other hand, Retaining Path entrepreneurs view delegation as identity loss rather than identity gain. They do not trust others to take over their roles and instead believe they can perform their roles better than anyone else. They blindly pursue growth even though they have not thought deeply about what they want from their venture. And they have either negative attitudes toward growth or overly-optimistic attitudes toward growth.

Craft Entrepreneurship

These distinguishing factors between entrepreneurs who pursue the Shedding Path (higher growth) and Retaining Path (lower growth) appear important, albeit not fully surprising. However, I find that a select group of entrepreneurs do not appear to follow the patterns of those

high-growth ventures on the Shedding Path—delegating responsibilities, moving from tactical to strategic roles, garnering positive attitudes toward growth—yet their businesses are wildly successful. In fact, these entrepreneurs have significantly grown their business despite, in many cases, intentions *not* to grow their business. These individuals are craft entrepreneurs.

Craft, or artisan, entrepreneurs are individuals who often possess strong creative motivations and artistic inspirations (Kuhn and Galloway, 2013; Scott Morton and Podolny, 2002). They are strongly motivated by passion for their product and they gain significant meaning and purpose from the production process and quality of their products (Kuhn and Galloway, 2013). Although traditionally found in the arts and crafts industry, craft entrepreneurs also exist in industries in which considerable skill goes into the preparation and refinement of a particular product, such as the food and beverage industry (e.g., gourmet restaurant, craft beer, coffee roasting).

Craft entrepreneurs have been around for centuries, and their presence remains a critical part of the economy in developing or transitional countries (Grimes and Milgram, 2000; Smallbone and Welter, 2001). However, in recent years, their relevance has also grown in developed nations (Kuhn and Galloway, 2013). The proliferation of retail outlets, such as Etsy—a website catering to artisan entrepreneurs which boasted 22 million members and \$1.35 billion in sales in 2013—has opened new markets to artisans allowing them to sell goods to a worldwide market (Dickerson, 2014; Griffith, 2013). Further, the growth in social movements, such as the “Maker Movement” or “Buy Local Campaign,” has driven consumer interest and demand for artisan-made products. In this respect, craft entrepreneurs often play an important role in educating customers about the products they produce, including where they come from, the

components that go into the product's development, and the overall quality of what they produce (Kuhn and Galloway, 2013).

Craft entrepreneurs are similar but distinct from “user entrepreneurs,” who often develop ideas around technology and innovation (Shah and Tripsas, 2007; von Hippel, 1986). Whereas user entrepreneurs are focused on *novelty* in finding a technological solution to a problem, craft entrepreneurs are focused on *quality* in producing superior products for consumers. Despite craft entrepreneurs' strong creative motivations and emphasis on quality over quantity, they are not precluded from also being profit-motivated in their ventures. In fact, many have grown their endeavors to multi-million dollar operations.

Within the total sample of 45 entrepreneurs, 10 could be classified as craft entrepreneurs. They span ages from early 20s to nearly 70 and they represent multiple industries, including photography and photo products, custom jewelry, coffee, beer, dairy, video production, and meat products. Table 9 below provides additional descriptive information about the craft entrepreneurs in my sample, including their seminal quotes concerning venture growth.

 Insert Table 9 about here

Although I have outlined a few characteristics that set craft entrepreneurs apart from other entrepreneurs, there exist several unique features that also set successful craft entrepreneurs apart from successful (Shedding Path) entrepreneurs, in general. To be clear, simply being a craft entrepreneur does not ensure success. Instead, it implies a different path to success. This path challenges the conventional wisdom regarding role identity and transition, and even more interestingly, offers counter-intuitive guidance regarding the growth of their firms.

Craft Identity. Generally speaking, working professionals strive to align who they are with what they do. That is, individuals likely want what they do to be an important part of who they are. Otherwise, one's profession could be just a job, something that provides income, but little meaning or purpose to one's life. Among entrepreneurs, this alignment is critical—as entrepreneurs' ventures and the work they do in them likely reflects strongly on who people perceive them to be, perhaps more so than other professions. For craft entrepreneurs, this appears especially true. Their ventures are not only places to work, but given their artistic motivations, forums to express themselves and their creative abilities. As shown below, two craft entrepreneurs stated they are the “face of the company” and “quickly get associated with their company” whenever they are out in public. Another entrepreneur equated inviting people over to his business to inviting them over to his house, referring to his bar as “a religious living room” and his role in his venture as “his calling in life.”

If I'm ever out anywhere in this part of the [geographical] area, I seldom go anywhere that somebody doesn't know who I am... Today if I'm out in [city], I get associated with [my company] quickly, which, I guess is a good thing.

Meat Products, Owner

For a period of about six years, from 1988 to 1994, I had been the primary public face of the brewery.

Steve Hindy, Brooklyn Brewery Owner, in *Beer School*

It [the bar] is more of a religious living room. I step into a bar, it's my living room. This is where I invite people. This is where I'm invited by people... It [owning a bar] is my calling in life.

Beer Retail, Owner

Thus, craft entrepreneurs' identity is tightly inter-woven with what they do in their organization. For them, their business is not just something that they own but an important part of who they are. Accordingly, they take great pride in what they do and remain uncompromising in altering their identity. In fact, craft entrepreneurs appear to possess a truly *authentic identity*,

or an unwavering commitment to who they are. Rather than cater to the whims of potential customers in attempts to grab greater market share, craft entrepreneurs focus internally on producing something they are proud of and that is true to their identity. As the founder of the Stone Brewing Company claims, “If you don’t care for what we do and how we do it, then you’re not our customer. We don’t need to fashion ourselves to your personal tastes.”

If you don’t care for what we do and how we do it, then you’re not our customer. If you’re not our customer, we don’t need to fashion ourselves to your personal tastes. In fact, we shouldn’t... We get to be creative and inventive, have fun, and make tasty beer without being brought down by some marketing department’s focus group-driven ideas about what beer some random sampling of the populace wants.

Greg Koch, Stone Brewing Co. Owner, in *The Craft of Stone Brewing Co.*

If I tried to be something other than what I am, people would know better instantly. I’m a pathetic little hillbilly that’s fortunate to have a country [meat] business that I enjoy.

Meat Products, Owner

It is not the craft entrepreneurs do not care about, or listen to, customers. In fact, they deeply care about the satisfaction of their customers. However, whereas many successful entrepreneurs do everything to cater to the needs of their customer, craft entrepreneurs approach customers quite differently. They have a highly focused strategy in which they produce the highest quality products they are capable of producing, with little regard for appealing to a mass quantity of consumers.

I never got the sense that quantity was the prime objective. Obviously, there was a critical mass they [the owners of Stone Brewing] needed to achieve, but they really just wanted the beer to come out tasting good. It was never about tapping into a gold mine.

Lee Chase, Stone Brewing Co. Brew Master, in *The Craft of Stone Brewing Co.*

The founders of Starbucks were not studying market trends. They were filling a need—their own need—for quality coffee.

Howard Schultz, Starbucks CEO, in *Pour Your Heart Into It*

Further, craft entrepreneurs’ seem to place much greater emphasis on being part of the local community rather than being part of the mass market. Craft entrepreneurs embed

themselves in their local environments and “take their role in the community seriously.”

When we belly up to this bar or sit down at this table, we are men, and we are people in a community together. That’s what that brings. It takes a village to bring that up. There are children that run around in here. That’s a beautiful thing. But that’s what it’s about. When you come into and drink beer at a bar, especially a beer bar, whatever you think you are outside that door needs to stay outside. Whatever problems you have stays out there. This is where you come to gather. This is the original social network. That’s my belief. That’s what it should always be to its very essence and very core.

Beer Retail, Owner

When we built the brewery, Steve and I were determined that it should be more than just an industrial plant. We could make the brewery a mutually beneficial center of the community.... We take our role in the community seriously. We often allow community groups to hold meetings in the event space at the brewery. Most of our events make donations to local charities and causes...We all believed it was clearly an extension of our role in the community.

Tom Potter, Brooklyn Brewery Owner, in *Beer School*

Surprisingly, this authentic, localized, and non customer-centric approach appears to resonate with customers and media outlets alike. They herald these entrepreneurs for staying true to themselves, and doing so, offering great products and services. The 10 craft entrepreneurs in my sample have received glowing media coverage from well-known outlets, such as *National Geographic*, *Southern Living*, *Fox News*, and the *New York Times*. Additionally, their businesses remain highly regarded based on popular review websites, such as *Trip Advisor*, *Google Reviews*, *Yelp*, and *Urbanspoon*. Table 10 below further illustrates some of the positive attention and reviews from various mediums.

Insert Table 10 about here

Given creative motivations, passion over the quality of their products, an authentic identity, and the strong relationship between their venture and their identity, craft entrepreneurs are usually highly attached to their firms and often have a difficult time “giving up the hats.” Although, as suggested above, relinquishing control of roles and responsibilities is typically

critical for the growth and success of new ventures, the *unwillingness* to give up control of certain roles appears beneficial to craft entrepreneurs. Specifically, because craft entrepreneurs refuse to compromise on the high-quality standards they have set for themselves and their respective organizations, they hold on to creative roles as well as roles pertaining to the quality of their product. Whereas once successful entrepreneurs experience growth, they often sense the loss of creative roles and move on to new ventures, craft entrepreneurs find sustained interest in the refinement of their products and roles that ensure product quality. For example, a coffee roaster suggested that the last role he would give up in his company was the sourcing of his beans. He stated that if he relinquished the buying of the coffee beans, he would risk “losing control of the taste that his brand represents.” A video production owner claimed that he continued to control the vetting of new projects and frequently turned down business if he did not believe the project would meet his quality standards.

It's so key that I stay at the point of buying the beans. Because the quality is really all about the bean. If I relinquish that, then someone else is making those taste distinctions as to this is what our coffee is going to taste like. Taste is a very personal thing. So losing control of the taste that [my brand] represents is something that will be very hard for me.

Coffee House / Roasting, Owner

We get a bunch of calls, and you just have to pick your direction. In your business, you have to say, “Are we going to be quality or are we going to be quantity?” And you have to make that distinction. And you have to know who you are. For a while there, we went through some points where we were like, “Well, we could probably do a lot more,” so we started opening the doors and started getting all this quantity in. We were like, “Nothing has quality in it.” We're just burning and turning, and it wasn't fun for anybody. So we pulled that real quick and said, “Okay, let's focus on quality.” Lo and behold, just a little bit of patience and a couple months of time, you start to gain that quality mindset. That to me is what I got in it for.

Video Production, Owner

Craft entrepreneurs, more so than most entrepreneurs, fear the loss of creativity and quality control, and accordingly, often hold on to these roles even as their companies grow. Although growth can eventually force craft entrepreneurs to give up partial control of these roles,

they make sure to imprint these quality values through employees and in the company's culture and mission.

"If you play the other guy's game, you always lose." My father said, "Make it the best you know how to make it," and that's what he told me. "No matter how expensive the process or what it costs, if it makes it better, the quality will justify it, no matter how expensive." I took heed, and that's what I did. I kind of just focused on quality.

Meat Products, Owner (Recalling conversation with father: circa, 1990)

Maximum attention is given to product quality... Concern over transitory fashion trends is specifically not a corporate value.

Yvon Chouinard, Patagonia Founder, in *Let My People Go Surfing*

Let your products and services earn your brand identity for you...Although there is a bit of a backlash about the seeming appearance of a Starbucks on every corner, the company continues to grow and thrive. Of course it makes great, predictable, consistent coffee. Of course it markets itself well and pays attention to the bottom line. But it also understands that assuring the highest quality sometimes conflicts with a superficial obsession with maximizing profit. Starbucks has a policy to dump out any batch of coffee that has sat for more than a few minutes. It would rather dump money down the drain than serve an inferior product. Of course Starbucks knows that if it picks locations right and runs each store efficiently, very few batches will be poured down the drain. But by sharing this policy of beneficial inefficiency with its customers, Starbucks is forgiven for growing so big.

Sam Calagione, Dogfish Head Owner, in *Brewing Up A Business*

For craft entrepreneurs, role transition is not about moving to strategic roles or leadership roles, but about engaging in roles they are passionate about and which resonate with the core of their identity. Although passion is an important ingredient for any successful business, craft entrepreneurs' pride and passion is for the quality of their products, and accordingly, they tend to focus their attention on their products rather than their ventures. Unlike successful entrepreneurs, many craft entrepreneurs intentionally avoid business-centric or managerial role identities. Instead, many craft entrepreneurs, even those outside the arts and crafts industry, perceive their identity as "artists" as much or more than as "business owners."

I'm an artist...I'm very serious about what I do. I don't try to do things that I can't do. It's like any business—there are masters that create works of arts for kings and queens and I'm not of that level, but what I do, I do as good as anybody can do.

Jewelry, Owner

We've spent 14 years developing the brand as the place where you want... If you have a white tablecloth restaurant, coffee house, and you want to serve the best coffee possible, you buy [our brand].

Coffee House / Roasting, Owner

The artist and the businessperson each have the same ultimate goal: a desire to create something unique that might leave a lasting impression on the world. Both are productive activities of self-expression... Brewing has continued to be a great outlet for my artistic expression.

Sam Calagione, Dogfish Head Owner, in *Brewing Up A Business*

Taken together, this passion and emphasis on the quality over the quantity of their products represents more than a strategy, but more accurately, an underlying entrepreneurial identity that connotes craftsmanship. Whereas many entrepreneurs launch a business with aspirations of growing their business, many craft entrepreneurs possess mixed, or even strongly negative, attitudes toward growth. Some, such as the dairy products referenced below, feel that growth will likely lead to a deterioration in the quality of the products produced.

When you start growing, it's hard to say this is enough. Let's just be happy with this. So you have to say at some point, "This is enough." I think my parents and I both think that you lose quality when you get too big, and it's hard to maintain a quality milk.

Dairy Products, Owner

Other craft entrepreneurs intentionally restrict their company's growth because they find true enjoyment in what they do and feel growth would risk their work and life satisfaction. These individuals engage in a prospective sensemaking process and envision how growth could usher in an uncertain, and potential life-altering, future. Whereas most successful entrepreneurs see *financial opportunity* in growth, craft entrepreneurs also see considerable *personal and non-financial risk* in growth. Meaning, craft entrepreneurs have a tendency to value what they do (and their happiness and satisfaction derived from it) over the potential financial rewards from growth. For example, one entrepreneur declared that he was "putting a parachute behind his

business to slow it down” and that he had turned down offers from major grocery outlets because he didn’t see how growth would make him any happier.

I know that we can grow the business. I have no doubt about that. In fact, what I’m having to do right now is put a parachute behind it to slow it down, because it’s hard not to grow it. We’ve been contacted by huge distributors over the country that would like to distribute our products. It’s so tempting to sell some... We’re talking about expanding the business. I guess the ego part of me would like to say, “Let’s just go down to the industrial park, crank it out, put this stuff all over the country and see what we can do.” I would probably relish that challenge. But I don’t know if I would enjoy myself any more than I am right now, because I enjoy what I do. I can’t say I wouldn’t enjoy that, I just don’t know... It goes back, you know, would you be any happier? I like where I live. I’ve got cornbread taste.

Meat Products, Owner

Still others, such as Sam Calagione of Dogfish Head Brewery or Yvon Chouinard of Patagonia, have tried to restrict growth for more dogmatic reasons. For example, in 2011, Patagonia ran an advertising campaign called “Don’t Buy This Jacket,” which highlighted the problem of over-consumption and encouraged consumers to reduce, repair, reuse, and recycle rather than buy new products. Additionally, Sam Calagione tried to put parameters around his company’s growth in order to maintain his company’s attention to detail and avoid venture capital financing.

We decided to reduce our growth rate to roughly 20 percent a year and see what happens. I know how fortunate we are to be in the position of having to control our growth. We don’t take this luxury for granted.

Sam Calagione, Dogfish Head Owner, in *Brewing Up A Business*

At times, entrepreneurs can stray from their craft origins and follow the blind pursuit of growth. In his book *Onward*, Howard Schultz laments how Starbucks diverted from its focus on quality to one of growth, and consequently, Starbucks faltered in the mid to late 2000s. He cited the abandonment of growth for growth’s sake and a return to a focus on quality as the reasons behind Starbucks’ resurgence. Similarly, a photo products owner referenced the past “pains and pressures of growing too fast” and now is “very careful” about how his company grows.

Success is not sustainable if it's defined by how big you become.

Howard Schultz, Starbucks CEO, in *Onward*

We felt the pains of growing way too fast in the past. We know what it feels like to have thousands of orders and not be able to fulfill them on time. That's a lot of pressure. It's a good problem to have, and it's a bad problem to have... we've learned our lesson to be very careful how we grow.

Photo Products, Owner

Ironically, despite creative rather than growth motivations as well as frequently negative attitudes toward growth, many craft entrepreneurs' ventures grew. The growth of national craft-oriented brands mentioned here, such as Starbucks, Patagonia, Craft Stone Brewery, and Dogfish Head have been well-documented. Further, 6 of the 10 craft entrepreneurs in my sample have grown sales at rates that exceed 10% a year, and 4 of the 10 at rates that exceed 25% a year. This evidence is counter-intuitive and suggests that there might be more than one role identity "path to growth" (i.e., equifinality). Rather than "give up the hats," craft entrepreneurs provide an example of how holding on to certain roles might be highly beneficial to firms. In the Discussion, I further explore craft entrepreneurs' authentic identity and why this paradox of growth might exist among them.

How Non-Work Role Identities, Financial Resources, and Life Stage Impact Entrepreneurs

Despite the critical differences among Shedding, Retaining, and Crafting Path entrepreneurs, there are also a number of important factors that appear to influence nearly all entrepreneurs, regardless of identity path. These common factors, including non-work role identities, financial standing and resources, and life stage, greatly impact the work role identities of both young and old, nascent and experienced, and successful and unsuccessful. In the following section, I examine the many ways in which these affect entrepreneurs' role identities.

Other People Matter Too. The always important question of work/life balance provides particularly unique implications for entrepreneurship. Whereas many (although certainly not all)

employees can go to work, spend 40 hours, and at the end of the week leave work at work, most entrepreneurs' homes double as work-offices, they spend 60-80 hours a week on their ventures (or at least they claim to), and few stop thinking about their companies once the weekend arrives. As one entrepreneur, who only occasionally takes a day off, suggested "you are where the buck stops" and "you respond when the business needs you to respond" because "if you don't do it, it doesn't get done."

When you start a company, you are where the buck stops. You respond when the business needs you to and not the other way around. The thing I love about entrepreneurship is the flexibility of schedule. The thing I hate about entrepreneurship is the requirement that if you don't do it, it doesn't get done. Some weeks you will work 60 to 70 hours and some weeks you will work 40 to 50. Occasionally, you will take a day off.

Logistics, Owner

In fact, it was common for entrepreneurs to reflect on their work week and reveal that they spent well over 60 hours working on their ventures.

I think probably an average week is easily 60 to 70 hours. A busy week is 100.

Non-profit, Owner

How many hours do I devote to [company]? As many as I can stay awake.

Media Sales, Owner

I spend 100 hours a week minimum doing [entrepreneurship] stuff.

Lighting Products, Owner

Although these extensive hours could partly reflect social desirability bias in that entrepreneurs want to claim more rather than fewer hours, I also had them walk through, in detail, a typical work week as well as provide me with a detailed calendar of their schedule, when available. Together, these steps provided further evidence that most entrepreneurs spend an extraordinary amount of time in their ventures. Table 11 provides detailed information about the amount of time entrepreneurs report to spend in their ventures.

 Insert Table 11 about here

This level of devotion to the venture leaves little time for other, non-work role identities that might be important to the entrepreneur's life, such as parent, spouse, or friend. Naturally, the presence of these responsibilities presents significant "challenges" for most entrepreneurs, in which they must choose, or balance, between work and family.

I value highly being a dad first, not screwing that up. I think most entrepreneurs do, even if they're trying really hard not to, they just do. So, I'm not failing at that right now. The problem is some of the projects that I have coming up will require a lot more than 40 hours of work a week. So that is going to be a challenge.

Photography, Owner

The challenge for me is once you have a family. That was fine when I was young and single and my kids were so young. But now my kids are old enough, they want to spend time with dad. They want to talk to dad. They want to do things with dad. It's very challenging to balance that. You still have to take mental time yourself. The challenge is you are your own last priority and ultimately that will catch up with you if you're not careful.

Logistics, Owner

Although the presence and impact of these non-work role identities on work role identities is not altogether surprising, I find that the absence of non-work role identities also has a significant influence on entrepreneurs and their role identities. Rather than reference the balance they struck between entrepreneurialism and life, many discussed the *anticipated* or *future potential* of non-work role identities, such as marriage and family, and how the absence of those identities motivated them to work harder and longer in the present. One entrepreneur claimed that he had worked until 1am the night before and that he was pushing 80 to 100 hours a week because he was not married yet and did not yet have kids. Another entrepreneur also cited that not being married or having children allowed him to be "selfish" and spend his time developing his business.

I'm usually in like 8 to 8:30, and then I work until... last night I was in till 1 in the morning. So I kind of started this year particularly, and right now in my life I'm looking very much towards my personal future and where my life looks for me and my family down the road and what all that has in store. I'm sitting down and talking about my future. I would like to be home, but I'm not married yet. I don't have kids, so I'm going to give this company all that I can while I can. Certainly once I get married and have kids, I would like to have closer to that 40 to 50-hour per week investment. I think that's where I'd like to be. But for now while I can push the 80 to 100 hours.

Video Production, Owner

I mean I'm not married and I don't have any children, and I feel like I would actually be selfish and I prefer that [developing the business] to be accomplished, so this is the best time to actually get it completed.

Healthcare Analytics, Owner

Although these entrepreneurs were young (both were in their early 20s), the absence of non-work role identities can also serve as a motivating factor for entrepreneurs in different life stages. For example, an owner of a compression garments company claimed that she highly valued being a good mother and raising kids who were independent. To her, this identity was much more important than building a successful company.

I think it's important to be there for my kids. So if I built a \$500,000,000 company and my kids were drug addicts and some were impossible to have an independent life, I think I would be the biggest failure in the world. But if I built a \$5,000,000 company and my kids have a sense of independence and they're doing well in life, then I've succeeded. That to me is success.

Compression Apparel, Owner

However, now that her kids had grown and moved away, this same entrepreneur stated that her kids' absence served as a catalyst for her to get more involved in the business and take on additional work roles and responsibilities.

I am happy right now because I am alone. I don't have children. I don't have a husband, so I'm very happy to be here [at work]. I have beautiful people around me. So being here 60 and 70 hours doesn't really matter to me. But if I had a family, children, I would not want to spend that amount of hours here [at the business]. Right now, it's the time of my life.

Compression Apparel, Owner

Another entrepreneur, who like the apparel owner was also in his fifties, noted that he intentionally “kept his business small while raising his sons.” However, now that they were gone and off to college, he had full intentions of changing his strategy and “growing bigger.”

Likewise, an owner of various companies, including a supply chain consulting business, referenced that five years ago he intentionally downsized his businesses to make time for his daughter. However, now that his daughter was going into kindergarten, he would again have the time to ramp up his entrepreneurial endeavors.

I've kept myself small while I was raising sons. Basically, I didn't marry my job. I kept just enough work to keep me flush. But now that they're both... one's a freshman at college and one's gone. Now, I'll expand my business to grow since that responsibility will go away. My strategy is starting to change. Now I'm on a mission to grow bigger.

Environmental Survey, Owner

When you look at wearing many hats, 5 years ago, we welcomed, my wife and I, the birth of our daughter. That has kept me busy as anything, because my daughter is a daddy's girl. I'm it, and there's only 24 hours in a day. I actually had to go 4 years ago, kind of like down my partnership and started cutting ropes away and not doing different things and focusing on some core businesses. [However] my daughter is now going into kindergarten, so I'll have all this free time now to do other things all entrepreneur related. So I have been ramping that up.

Supply Chain Consulting, Owner

Unlike employees, whose schedule is often compared in relation to the traditional 40-hour work week, most entrepreneurs do not treat their ventures as a traditional eight to five job. Instead, their growth motivations and corresponding time in their venture ebb and flow. It is perhaps not altogether surprising that life and family commitments reduce the amount of time entrepreneurs can devote to their ventures; however, it is interesting that many intentionally restrict the growth of their venture, or even downsize their profitable ventures, in order to accommodate non-work role identities. Although previous research suggests that entrepreneurs have unique motivations for starting their ventures (i.e., some people are motivated by growth/profits while others are

not), I find that growth motivations can change throughout the venture's (and entrepreneur's) life.

Taken together, entrepreneurs make difficult decisions about how to balance role identities both inside and outside their ventures. However, it is not only the presence of non-work role identities that influence entrepreneurs' work role identities. Entrepreneurs also take into account the future expectation of non-work role commitments as well as the absence, or disappearance, of other family and life commitments. Thus, entrepreneurs appear to make judgments about balancing work and non-work identities by comparing them to *past* and *potential future* life stages—i.e., they engage in both prospective and retrospective sensemaking when making work and non-work role decisions. If they envision a future with family, kids, and other life commitments, entrepreneurs can have a tendency to overload their present work lives by devoting significant amounts of time to their ventures (i.e., *over-emphasize* work role identities). However, once that envisioned future of a non-work role identity moves increasingly closer to the present (e.g., a spouse is expecting a child), entrepreneurs have a tendency to downshift their work role identities (i.e., *de-emphasize* work role identities). Similarly, if entrepreneurs' non-work identities become less central, they can begin to give greater attention to their work role identities, which often means repositioning their ventures for growth (i.e., *re-emphasize* work role identities). The importance of non-work role identities and these patterns of over-emphasis, de-emphasis, and re-emphasis appear to hold true for all entrepreneurs, regardless of identity path.

How Personal Financial Resources and Life Stage Impact Role Identities and Growth. In addition to critical non-work events—marriage, the birth of a child, or becoming an empty nester—more gradual life changes can also trigger changes in entrepreneurs' work role

identities. It is well-documented that as individuals age, their perspective on life can also change (Ashforth, 2001). As noted in the previous section, some individuals are willing to devote 80-100 hours a week to their ventures at certain stages of their life, but then might downshift their ventures in order to free up more time for family. The value placed on different resources—time, people, and money—changes as people go through life, and these changes can have a direct and significant impact on the role identities of entrepreneurs.

Extant research suggests that individuals possess a *threshold of performance*, which represents a level of performance that an entrepreneur needs to operate above in order to continue his or her operation (Gimeno, Folta, Cooper, and Woo, 1997; Levesque and Minniti, 2006). For example, consider an entrepreneur who is achieving 8% annual return, but has a threshold, or minimum acceptable level, of 20% annual return. According to the threshold model, the entrepreneur would evaluate that return rate relative to his or her specific threshold, and ultimately, decide to dissolve the venture because it is operating 12% below threshold. I find that entrepreneurs also appear to possess *thresholds of wealth*, which greatly impact the amount of time they are willing to devote, and the role identities they are willing to assume, in their ventures.

While many entrepreneurs pursue growth and income generation for their ventures, many eventually approach a threshold where additional financial proceeds only marginally contribute to their overall utility. Thus, once this threshold is reached, entrepreneurs' role identities transition—from roles that they perceive will help them achieve growth and financial success to those that provide them with meaning and enjoyment. One entrepreneur suggested that the time off (from his business) had become “more important than money” and that it “was silly” to spend more of his life in his business just to let the money he earned from it sit in the bank. Another

entrepreneur referenced the notion that “no one can take their money with them,” so it was futile for her to spend any more time in her business than needed.

My philosophy is don't just stop and smell the roses, stop and pick some of them, give somebody a bouquet...if you would have said I'll give you a million dollars, whatever, life is really short. I have enough money to enjoy my time off, ok, so what else could you really want? The time off is more important than the money. If you go back to work on Monday, I'll double your salary. Well, no, I don't care. What will I do with it? Put it in the bank? It's silly.

Jewelry, Owner

It's not about money. Who is able to take their money with them? It's enough to have one car? It's only one car you can drive at a time, right? How many cars can somebody take with them when they were gone? None.

Compression Apparel, Owner

Both these entrepreneurs emphasized the importance of making money, and had at one time, been strongly motivated by it. However, over time, their identities, and corresponding goals for the organization, shifted as they accumulated personal wealth above a threshold either ever envisioned needing. Thus, it is not that entrepreneurs simply give up work role identities as they exceed financial thresholds, but that role centrality, or emphasis relative to other roles, shifts from work to non-work role identities.

Although a substantial body of research examines how entrepreneurs' risk perceptions or risk propensities influence decision making at the onset of a venture, considerably less work examines decision making post-launch and how one's financial standing and life stage impact opportunity-related decisions, such as decisions about growth opportunities (Mathias and Williams, 2014). Furthering the context or situation-specific view of risk (Elsbach, Barr, and Hargadon, 2005; Forlani and Mullins, 2000; Janney and Dess, 2006), I find that entrepreneurs make growth-related decisions by evaluating their financial standing in relation to their stage in life. As one entrepreneur in his sixties claimed, his stage of life was “flavoring his decisions

pretty heavily” and that if he was 30 he would “probably jump out to get capital to fund more accelerated growth” but at 60 he was just not willing to risk his retirement savings.

This stage of my life is flavoring [my decisions] pretty heavily. If I was 30, I would be looking for investors and partners. One, I probably wouldn't be as smart as I am, so I'd not be aware of the pitfalls of partnerships. But I probably would jump out, take on some partners, hopefully like-minded partners, and get their capital to help fund some more accelerated growth... I had a fairly healthy retirement fund from the [company]. We sunk a lot of that into the building, so I guess cash to do the next step is something we're really cautious with. Too close to retirement to let it all go. We're too old to start all over again. If I was 30, I'd be gung-ho enough to figure, "Well, if it doesn't work, I'll just do something else." At 60, I can't do that.

Coffee House / Roasting, Owner

Similarly, another entrepreneur, who had started other ventures in the past, reflected on how a lack of financial commitments, such as paying a mortgage and providing for his family, made it the “best time to start a company.” He suggested that the absence of these commitments allowed him to be aggressive in growing his former company (his venture expanded to several locations and was eventually acquired by a larger company). However, now because he had those financial commitments, he was much more cautious in his decision-making, especially as it related to growth.

The irony was that without some of the adult commitments that we have now such as mortgages, family, and so forth, it was the best time to start a company, right out of school. I did not have some of the concerns [like I do now]. So entrepreneurial risk is also related to the commitments that you have that would fall through if you are unable to meet those [commitments].

3-D Printing, Owner

Table 12 provides additional information about how financial standing and life stage interact and factor into entrepreneurs' willingness to adopt additional work role identities and pursue growth-related opportunities.

Insert Table 12 about here

Similar to the notion that family commitments (or lack thereof) influence role identities, financial commitments (e.g., school, family, or mortgages) and life stage also appear to influence entrepreneurs' role identities and decisions about growth. In addition, once entrepreneurs near retirement or approach a financial threshold where additional wealth is unneeded and current wealth is protected, their positive perceptions of growth begin to wane and they will likely elect to emphasize non-work role identities over work role identities.

How Financial Resources of the Venture Impact Role Identities and Growth.

Although entrepreneurs can rely solely on cash generated from operations to grow their ventures, most entrepreneurs need funding and thus seek outside capital, such as by bringing on partners, angel investors, or venture capitalists, in order to foster the growth of their firms. In young and growing firms, acquiring capital composes an important and highly significant role that entrepreneurs must fill in their company. As Table 13 illustrates, many entrepreneurs—including the overwhelming majority of entrepreneurs in my sample—suggest that obtaining funding serves as a turning point in their venture, allowing them to expand operations, hire additional employees, or pursue a new opportunity. Thus, most entrepreneurs reference fundraising as a challenging but critical role they assume (or have assumed) in their company.

 Insert Table 13 about here

However, acquiring capital often means entrepreneurs must give up partial ownership of their respective ventures. This change in ownership structure can significantly alter the dynamics of an organization and an entrepreneur's role in it. Most notably, dilution of ownership often means a significant loss of control over the company.

Although obtaining additional investors and eventually taking a company public is an achievement many entrepreneurs might dream of, four entrepreneurs—all whose companies went public—lamented about how the growth of their business and dilution of ownership led to a loss of purpose and control in their ventures. One entrepreneur claimed he “got alienated within the company as it grew” while another suggested “nobody was listening to him anymore.”

Once you take somebody else's money, they control the company. You look for the right kind of guys who stay out of the day-to-day, but the reality is they control it at any time they want...you are giving somebody control and basically handing somebody a leash with you on the other end of it.

Traffic Management Systems, Owner

As the company grew, once you get to around 100 people, it seems like people start developing cliques, so the finance people have their people and the sales people have their people. The people that are good are the ones that are good at sort of the political game also. I kind of got alienated within the company as it grew. By the time I left in 2008, I was burnt out with it, kind of sitting there getting a paycheck. I am going to guess maybe 300 employees.

Healthcare Software, Owner

We had another round of financing, so at that juncture I was no longer in a 50 percent position. I had a position on the board still and all that kind of thing, but nobody was listening to me anymore anyway.

Digital Imaging, Owner

After a while you start feeding a lot of people and then you have to really start paying attention. Then it got to the point it [company] was getting so big that we needed to sell because so many things would have been out of our control.

Various Tech Startups, Owner

At these critical junctures, entrepreneurs found their sense of purpose in the business diminished. The importance of the organization to their identity (who they were) largely remained, but they perceived that their organization was no longer dependent on what they did in the company. In other words, from their perspective, their role identities, not just their equity ownership, had become diluted by an organization that had grown well beyond something they felt they could control. Accordingly, each of the aforementioned entrepreneurs stepped away

from the leadership helm before their companies went public. Like giving up the tactical roles to employees, giving up the strategic roles to a new CEO, leadership team, or group of investors represents a challenging, but oftentimes necessary, task for entrepreneurs.

Once [my company] went public, it was no longer really yours to be running. That was always the deal when I started all this. When I raised the money I said, “Look, I’ll be here the first four years and after that you’ll need to find somebody else because I’m the wrong guy to go to that level. I’m the guy to start.

Various Tech Startups, Owner

Rightfully, they shouldn’t have [been listening to me]. I was a geek engineer. This was a mass marketing run it to the public market thing. So there you go. I left [the company].

Digital Imaging, Owner

I tell you what I was really fortunate with, [my company]. The guy who was previously being the president, we ended up making him the CEO.

Healthcare Software, Owner

To a lot of entrepreneurs, hiring more seasoned executives can be threatening, and actually delegating power to them is even more so. In my own case, I have to admit, it wasn’t easy. My identity had quickly become so closely tied up with that of Starbucks that any suggestion for change made me feel as if I had failed in some aspect of my job. Inside my head, it was a constant battle, and I had to keep reminding myself: These people bring something I don’t have. They will make Starbucks far better than I could alone.

Howard Schultz, Starbucks CEO, in *Pour Your Heart Into It*

The history of these successful companies remains a significant source of pride for these entrepreneurs and an important part of the tale regarding “who they are.” However, to achieve this success, entrepreneurs often have to give up “what they do” along the way. As a company grows, entrepreneurs must begin to manage the company on the behalf of all the owners, and accordingly, entrepreneurs’ roles often become far less “entrepreneurial.” Instead, managerial responsibilities to other owners and shareholders begin to crowd out entrepreneurial responsibilities, allowing less time and attention for entrepreneurial activities such as research and development (Ranft and O’Neill, 2001). For some entrepreneurs, this loss of control and shift in roles leads to an identity that is too distant from their desired ‘entrepreneurial’ role

identity, which in turn, can mean giving up leadership over the company or stepping away from the organization altogether. In fact, 6 of the 8 entrepreneurs (see Exit, Path X) who profitably exited their ventures suggested that their dilution of ownership and loss of strategic control over their company guided them toward the decision to exit their venture. This does not imply that entrepreneurs make poor leaders and are incapable of successfully running large organizations but that the requisite role identities needed to run an entrepreneurial venture and a well-established public company highly differ.

Taken together, while external financial resources foster growth, they can significantly change the landscape of an organization. While a sole owner/entrepreneur has relatively free reign in his or her organization, once entrepreneurs give up partial ownership of their companies, they also open the door to giving up control of their desired work roles. In other words, although a sole founder has relative agency over his or her work role identities, entrepreneurs must begin to manage their work role identities in accordance with other owners of the firm rather than their own desires. Thus, as the company becomes big and an entrepreneur's ownership percentage small, entrepreneurs must often forfeit various work role identities that provide them with meaning and purpose.

Chapter Summary

The main findings demonstrate that there are a number of factors driving entrepreneurs' ability to give up (or not give up) certain roles and responsibilities. In part, these factors impact entrepreneurs as they venture through different identity paths. By inducting Figure 4, I illustrate three distinct identity paths—Shedding, Retaining, and Crafting—that lead entrepreneurs to different outcomes. In so doing, I reveal that some entrepreneurs (Retaining Path) can limit organizational growth through their identity-related actions, whereas other entrepreneurs

(Shedding and Crafting Path) can foster organizational growth despite seemingly contradictory identity-related actions. Additionally, I explore how non-work role identities, financial resources, and life stage impact all entrepreneurs and their respective work role identities. Together, the findings create a coherent narrative of how entrepreneurs navigate the role transition process and how growth both influences, and is influenced by, role identity.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Chapter Overview

This chapter discusses the theoretical contributions and practical implications of this dissertation as well as limitations of the study and ideas for future research. I begin by highlighting my theoretical contributions to the role identity, sensemaking, and entrepreneurship literatures. I first explore the relationship between firm growth and role identity—a relationship prior research has not yet explored. Because of its paradoxical implications, I especially focus on this relationship among craft entrepreneurs, and I further examine why craft entrepreneurship represents an interesting and potentially important context for future identity work. I then discuss my study's contributions to the sensemaking literature by revealing how prospective sensemaking impacts the decision making processes of entrepreneurs. I conclude the contributions section by exploring how this study offers a new perspective on understanding entrepreneurial identity, especially as it relates to how the role identities of entrepreneurs change over time.

I then move toward this study's practical implications. In this vein, I emphasize the importance of role balance with partners, the surprisingly positive aspects of a focused, low-growth strategy, and the potential for future qualitative researchers to use biographies and autobiographies. I also highlight the limitations of this study, which includes but is not limited to the generalizability of my craft entrepreneurship findings, the possibility of success bias, and the potential for retrospective bias. However, I leverage these limitations by offering ideas for future research, including expanding upon and further clarifying the concept of craft entrepreneurship, incorporating failed ventures into a study on role identity to overcome success bias, and pursuing

longitudinal research to negate retrospective concerns. Together, this chapter highlights the positive and contributive aspects of my research but also acknowledges its limitations as well.

Craft Identity

The term ‘craft’ or artisan entrepreneur has a long history and has often been used in entrepreneurial typologies to distinguish ‘opportunistic’ entrepreneurs from ‘craftspeople’ (e.g., Das and Teng, 1997; Keh et al., 2002; Kuhn and Galloway, 2013; Smith and Miner, 1983). In this work, scholars have often characterized craftsmen as individuals generally from a blue collar background with limited education and management experience (Woo, Cooper, and Dunkelberg, 1991). Craft entrepreneurs have been equated to owners of “mom-and-pop” shops, who avoid risk taking, pursue technical work over administrative work, engage in limited innovation, and have primary motivations of “making a comfortable living” (Keh et al., 2002; Woo et al., 1991). Historically, they have been relegated in comparison to ‘opportunistic’ entrepreneurs, who have been characterized by broader experiences, higher levels of education, a proclivity for managerial challenges, willingness to take risks, and motivated by financial gains. In other words, prior research tends to cast opportunistic entrepreneurs as the ‘true entrepreneurs,’ whereas craft entrepreneurs represent a lesser breed of entrepreneurs.

Although some previous characteristics of craft entrepreneurs appear accurate, my interpretation of craftsmen deviates significantly from previous conceptualizations. Among these differences, I highlight the importance of an authentic identity and a quality orientation as key elements to craft entrepreneurs’ success. Contrary to expectations, my findings challenge the long-held view that being motivated by goals beyond growth precludes craft ventures from growing; in fact, I assert that today’s economic environment actually rewards firms with a non-growth strategy and that craft ventures often experience greater financial success than their

opportunistic counterparts. Further, I also contest the notion that craft entrepreneurs are less-educated or knowledgeable about their business. Rather, I find craft entrepreneurs are often well-educated in their industry and that consumers consider them as experts in their given field.

Identity Authenticity. Recent research explores the importance of identity to entrepreneurship (Cardon et al., 2009; Fauchart and Gruber, 2011; Mathias and Williams, 2014; Murnieks et al., 2012; Navis and Glynn, 2011). In this vein, scholars suggest that entrepreneurs possess distinct entrepreneurial role identities that are linked to particular activities, such as inventing new products, establishing new ventures, or expanding a business (Cardon et al., 2009). Craft entrepreneurs stand out as individuals with a particularly unique entrepreneurial identity—one in which their identity is inextricably linked with the *quality* of their product.

Unlike other entrepreneurs, craft entrepreneurs envision their product or service as a representation and extension of who they are. Thus, if they believe a decision, such as the decision to grow their firm, will compromise the quality of their product and their organization's identity, they also feel that such a decision compromises their own identity. Accordingly, in line with prior research, I find that most craft entrepreneurs do not make decisions in order to optimize venture growth but instead to heighten (or maintain) the quality of their product. Put differently, they refuse to take actions that might help their firm grow, if it means sacrificing who they are and what they do. Their opportunity-related decisions appear to be guided not by growth but by unwavering principles of quality and craftsmanship. Unless growth opportunities “fit,” or align with these quality-oriented principles, craft entrepreneurs appear to avoid or intentionally restrict their growth potential.

Thus, what appears truly unique about craft entrepreneurs is their *identity authenticity*—or one's ability to stay true to who one is. Identity authenticity reflects self-consistency or

continuity across time and situations (Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010, p. 140). Whereas, other entrepreneurs possess a more malleable set of identities—e.g., their role identities change as their ventures grow and develop—craft entrepreneurs' identities change much less as they refuse to give up certain roles and responsibilities, particularly roles related to the quality of their products. On the one hand, a refusal to change who you are could be considered a rigidity for entrepreneurs and their respective firms (Leonard-Barton, 1992). However, craft entrepreneurs' rigidity, or inflexibility to change who they are in order to capture a broader market, actually appears to serve as a source of competitive advantage. Rather than exude rigidity, craft entrepreneurs and their respective organizations exude authenticity as craftspeople, or individuals who genuinely care about their product and offer only the finest quality products they are capable of producing.

For example, consider the popular outdoor equipment and clothing provider Patagonia. Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia, is an avid environmentalist and rock climbing enthusiast, who has always cared more about preserving the environment than about growing a venture (Chouinard, 2006). When he founded Patagonia, Chouinard imprinted his identity on the firm, and as such, over the years Patagonia has been unwavering in its commitment to high-quality products and to the environment. Recently, with a growing concern for sustainability and corporate responsibility, many organizations have adopted new principles and practices in order to become more responsible citizens, including following many efforts on the process of making clothing that have been led by Patagonia (Reinhardt, Casadesus-Masanell, and Kim, 2010). Given its rich history of environmental activism, Patagonia's craft and environmentally-oriented identity, which stemmed from its founder, appears authentic. It is not an identity that recently emerged to fit changing consumer trends, but one that has remained unchanged and deeply

rooted. In their review of *Let My People Go Surfing*, Inc. Magazine notes how powerful of an organizing force authenticity can be.

Chouinard the antibusinessman is businessman to the bone. Maybe more so. Because it's not a set of clothes he puts on, or an office he shows up at. It's not a role he can pick up or put down. It's who he is. How he thinks. The fly rod was always beside the point. The point, as Surfing shows us, is how powerful an organizing force authenticity can be.

Inc. Magazine, Review on Yvon Chouinard's *Let My People Go Surfing*

As the article notes, "It's not a role [one] can pick up or put down. It's who [one] is. How [one] thinks." Identity authenticity is a core asset that entrepreneurs can bring to their ventures (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011). Contrary to other successful entrepreneurs, who adapt their role identities to fit the needs of their organization, craft entrepreneurs maintain an integrity of self and behavior that is both consistent and authentic (Baumeister, 2010; Ibarra and Barbulescu, 2010). Given that craft entrepreneurs' authenticity resides in their genuine care for the quality of their products, there exists a deeper meaning and purpose within them than simply creating larger or more profitable organizations.

Craft entrepreneurs do not consider being a businessman, founder, or entrepreneur the most critical aspect of their identity. Instead, craft entrepreneurs' most salient identity is what they do. When asked, craft entrepreneurs referred to themselves as "the beer guy," "the coffee roaster," "the dairy farmer," "the custom jeweler," "the photographer," or "the hillbilly with a country meat business." None referred to themselves as entrepreneurs with a [product] business but as product artists who happened to own a business. That is, their business, or entrepreneurial, identity was secondary to their product-oriented identity. From their story-telling and narratives to their day-to-day actions, craft entrepreneurs exude an authentic identity.

Paradox of Growth. Given that some craft entrepreneurs have little motivation to grow and some actually have negative attitudes toward growth, it seems reasonable to expect craft

entrepreneurs' ventures to experience little to no growth. Historically, the conventional wisdom would support this claim, as scholars suggest that growth motivations (Baum et al., 2001) and positive perceptions of growth (Wiklund et al., 2003) lead to venture growth. However, I find this does not hold among craft entrepreneurs. Despite lacking growth intentions and motivations as well as possessing negative perceptions about growth, many craft entrepreneurs paradoxically grow their businesses.

A number of factors could explain this paradoxical growth. First, industry effects could be at play. For example, over the past decade, the craft beer industry has averaged 11% growth annually (Berman, 2014). Given that many craft entrepreneurs have been operating in munificent industries, their success might reflect industry rather than organization-specific growth. Another viable explanation is that the restriction of supply (by limiting growth) can help stimulate demand, albeit indirectly. By creating an “illusion of scarcity,” or the notion that a product is highly difficult to obtain, entrepreneurs can foster greater interest and demand for a product (Quelch, 2007). Limited product availability has frequently helped companies by encouraging word of mouth advertising, especially among beer brand brands. For example, Coors beer had a cult-like status in the 1970's due in part to its limited availability in the eastern half of the United States (Raabe, 2008). Similarly, craft entrepreneurs can help foster word of mouth and the new “word of mouth”—online reviews—by creating highly sought after products and then limiting their availability. For instance, in discussing one of the craft entrepreneurs' in my sample and his respective business located in Tennessee, one online Yelp reviewer suggested that they “traveled all the way from Florida to get the product” while another reviewer claimed that they “loaded up the family to make the pilgrimage [to the business].” Another explanation could also be the emphasis that craft entrepreneurs place on ‘localness’ and ‘community,’ which might resonate

with potential customers. As an example, both Starbucks and Dogfish Head Brewery have extensive websites devoted to community efforts, which are clearly highlighted on their main web pages, while other craft entrepreneurs also stressed the importance of serving the communities in which they live, work, and sell their products.

Rather than a single explanation, it is likely that each of these alternative ideas helps explain why craft entrepreneurs experience growth despite countervailing efforts. It seems that each of the characteristics—nature of their industry, passion for the products, high-quality focus, and community values—work together to help form an authentic ‘craft identity’ that is not only held individually (by the entrepreneur) but also imprinted on the organization, providing it with an authentic identity. As Sam Calagione suggests, craftspersons “work in many different fields, but the successful ones share a few similarities.” They stress quality, share the same high standards and values, and possess a genuine passion for their work. Thus, these individualistic standards help to create an identity—i.e., a craft identity—that appears important to consumers.

By craftsperson, I’m referring not only to the blacksmith wearing a pirate’s blouse at the Renaissance fair. There are craftspersons who run bakeries, hair salons, copy stores, and most certainly small breweries. They work in many different fields, but the successful ones share a few similarities. They have a genuine passion for their work. They believe that what they offer for sale reflects their own high, individualistic standards. They swim upstream against the big business current that emphasizes selling as much of something as cheaply as possible. They craft their brand identity with those same high standards with which they craft their products or services. They can recognize similar values, and their standards are upheld within and by their customer base.

Sam Calagione, Dogfish Head Owner, in *Brewing Up A Business*

To be sure, an authentic craft identity has benefitted from numerous social movements, including three in particular, which have helped to create a munificent context. First, the “Maker Movement” is the umbrella term for inventors, designers, and traditional artisans who tap into the growing admiration for self-reliance and combine that with open-source learning, contemporary design, and powerful personal technology (Bajarin, 2014). The Maker industry has

grown to a \$29 billion dollar industry and is expected to grow exponentially in the coming years (Stewart, 2013). Second, the “Buy Local Movement” represents a larger cultural shift in demand for locally-made products, and today buy local campaigns are at an all-time high in the United States (Lyon, 2014). Craft entrepreneurs’ focus on localness and community permeates their identity, even when they have nation-wide or multi-national operations. Finally, the “Conscious Consumerism Movement” reflects a growing interest in the quality and authenticity of what people consume (McEachern, Warnaby, Carrigan, and Szmigin, 2010). Thus, how things are made appears to be an increasingly important factor for consumers when making purchases (Nielsen, 2012).

Although these three social movements are not mutually exclusive and they do not represent an exhaustive set of current social movements, they do appear particularly relevant to the growth of craft entrepreneurs’ ventures. The relationship between entrepreneurial action and these social movements could also be recursive in nature. For example, although craft entrepreneurs value localness and their role in the community as part of their identity, they might further emphasize these qualities because of current trends in the marketplace. In fact, the dairy products owner mentioned how the “*I Buy Local*” campaign was great for her business. She explained how it allowed her to draw attention to the fact that they were a local dairy farm, which she felt turned people on to her products who normally would not have tried them. Put differently, she did not alter her identity to appeal to consumers, but she did observe these movements, which allowed her to emphasize certain aspects of her identity. In turn, this allowed her business to further prosper.

Of course, simply being a craft entrepreneur does not necessarily imply venture growth. Some craft entrepreneurs take austere actions to ensure their ventures do not grow—e.g., one

entrepreneur went from his business being open 7 days a week to being open just 4. Further, not all craft entrepreneurs, even though they might be oriented toward quality, necessarily produce high-quality products. Still, I find that craft entrepreneurs, perhaps assisted by the alignment of their identity with growing social movements, often grow despite contrary efforts.

This lends credence to a focused differentiation strategy among entrepreneurs in today's society. Rather than achieving growth by offering "more," entrepreneurs can also achieve growth, and often highly profitable growth, by offering "less"—that is, growth through focus (Khosla and Sawhney, 2010). Instead of trying to be everything to everyone, craft entrepreneurs remain authentic to their identity by making counter-intuitive growth decisions and focusing more narrowly on particular products and markets. Thus, craft entrepreneurship is not simply about making decisions by emphasizing quality over quantity, but about decision-making that is guided by one's identity rather than growth. However, in pursuing a non-growth strategy, authentic craft entrepreneurs foster venture growth.

Prospective Sensemaking

Non-Work Role Identities. An extensive body of work explores the challenges of balancing work and life or work and family (Ford et al., 2007). The life of the entrepreneur is not exempt from these challenges. Numerous entrepreneurs referenced family commitments, new interests or hobbies, and various life events that altered their level of commitment to, and role identities in, their organizations. Through a sensemaking process, or the process by which people give meaning to their experience (Weick, 1995), entrepreneurs often described these critical events in detail and how they impacted their venture's history. In other words, entrepreneurs engaged in sensemaking by reflecting on their past experiences and assigning meaning to them. Entrepreneurs got married, had kids, or lost a spouse, and these events or situations triggered

entrepreneurs to think deeply about their role identities (Stigliani and Ravasi, 2012). Thus, in line with prior work (see Maitlis and Christianson, 2014), retrospective sensemaking appears to be an important process that entrepreneurs use in order to assign meaning and understanding to what they do.

However, in addition to retrospective sensemaking, I found that sensemaking among entrepreneurs is also future-oriented, or prospective in nature. Entrepreneurs “consciously and intentionally considered the probable future impact of certain actions, and especially nonactions, on the meaning construction processes of themselves and others” (Gioia, Thomas, Clark, and Chittipeddi, 1994, p. 378). Put simply, entrepreneurs envisioned future life events and made sense of their current lives based on their expectations for the future (Gephart, Topal, and Zhang, 2010; Kaplan and Orlikowski, 2013).

For example, numerous entrepreneurs claimed that they worked well over 60 hours a week in their ventures. When asked why they were working so many hours, they said that they envisioned a future with a spouse and/or children. For these individuals, this envisioned future, although uncertain, would allow for less time to devote to their ventures, and accordingly, led them to justify their numerous venture hours in the present. Alternatively, some entrepreneurs were already parents. Through retrospective sensemaking, they recalled the event of having children and recalled how it had forced them to downshift their entrepreneurial careers. They also, however, envisioned a future where their children went off to elementary school or college. Many of these entrepreneurs contemplated their current actions—searching for new employees, re-establishing old business relationships, or ramping up their hours—and made sense of these actions by imagining this potential future, free from many of the parental obligations they currently faced.

Entrepreneurs' sensemaking process, particularly concerning the balance between work and non-work role identities, was temporally-oriented. They not only considered past non-work situations to make sense of their current work lives (i.e., retrospective: what "has" happened) but they also contemplated an envisaged future (i.e., prospective: what "could" happen), which was considerably important to their work role identities. In other words, the present was not only informed by past and present non-work commitments but also by potentially future ones.

Work Role Identities. In addition to prospective sensemaking influenced by non-work role identities, entrepreneurs also engaged in prospective sensemaking about within-work role identities. What little work that has been done concerning prospective sensemaking and entrepreneurs has examined how entrepreneurs use language to convey meaning about future opportunities (Cornelissen and Clarke, 2010; Hill and Levenhagen, 1995). In line with this research, I also find that entrepreneurs serve as visionaries who are able to imagine a future venture or product that does not yet exist, and convey their vision as a meaningful opportunity to others, such as potential investors or employees. Accordingly, many entrepreneurs consider being a visionary a key role identity and prospective sensemaking as a necessary tool that they employ to help others make sense of their envisaged future.

In this regard, prospective sensemaking is not just about entrepreneurs making predictions for the future but about entrepreneurs developing a shared understanding of what the future means for their ventures. Some entrepreneurs referred to this process as getting people to "buy the juice" or "drink the Kool-Aid." Through their words and actions to internal and external stakeholders, entrepreneurs create and sell a picture of the future, and then explain to others how their venture takes advantage of opportunities that might not exist today, but do exist in their imagined future.

Beyond prospective sensemaking about opportunities, entrepreneurs also participate in future-oriented sensemaking about their work role identities. Prospective sensemaking appeared particularly crucial for serial entrepreneurs. Serial entrepreneurs used combinations of both retrospective and prospective sensemaking about work role transitions. With the benefit and knowledge of past venture experience, many serial entrepreneurs had paused and thought deeply about their ventures, as one entrepreneur suggested this cognitive process of reflection was like “reading a really good novel.” Using the ‘novel’ analogy, entrepreneurs took their previous novel (i.e., prior venture), read it (i.e., engaged in retrospective sensemaking), and decided what character(s) (i.e., role identities) they wanted to play in their next novel (i.e., prospective sensemaking).

Thus, this retrospective sensemaking process gave way to a prospective sensemaking process. Before they launched a new venture, serial entrepreneurs developed a projected future not just for their venture but also their role in it. While many entrepreneurs simply reacted to the events that transpired in their ventures, some entrepreneurs, particularly serial entrepreneurs, had thought seriously about the future progression of their role identities in their ventures. For example, before growth even occurred, these entrepreneurs knew that they did not enjoy managing people, losing creative roles, or operating in a larger organization. By employing prospective and retrospective sensemaking, they did not wait until these events occurred but intentionally structured, and worked toward, their role (and venture) exits based on an anticipated future state.

This prospective and retrospective sensemaking process appeared to benefit entrepreneurs and their respective ventures. Instead of directors, owners, or employees hostilely taking over the company or pushing the founder out of a leadership role, entrepreneurs

positioned their companies to successfully continue in their absence. Largely, entrepreneurs who engaged in both prospective and retrospective sensemaking were not forced to assume role identities they did not want nor were they forced to exit role identities they truly enjoyed. They envisioned the future and moved into (and out of) role identities before role conflict emerged—that is, they transitioned before “who they wanted to be” conflicted with who their ventures “needed them to be.”

Alternatively, my findings offer a cautionary tale for entrepreneurs who rely solely on prospective sensemaking. Many Nascent and Retaining Path entrepreneurs frequently envisioned an overly-optimistic future where growth allowed them to give up work role identities and “spend more time golfing,” “sit back and collect our royalty,” or “devote little time to it [the venture].” Without the benefit of retrospective sensemaking, these entrepreneurs tended to under-estimate the amount of time and requisite identities that growth would require. Accordingly, prospective sensemaking, particularly concerning growth, might be most beneficial to entrepreneurs when coupled with retrospective sensemaking and potentially detrimental if done in isolation.

Taken together, although on-going debate among scholars challenges the distinctiveness of prospective sensemaking (Kaplan and Orilkowski, 2013; Maitlis and Christianson, 2014) and extant work is limited (Stigliani and Ravasi, 2012), I see considerable value in a temporally-oriented sensemaking perspective that takes into account dimensions of the past, present, and future. Entrepreneurs form and make sense of their entrepreneurial identity not only by examining “who they are” but also “who they were” and “who they want to be” (Powell and Baker, 2014). In other words, the formation of an entrepreneurial identity involves combinations of retrospective and prospective sensemaking. Entrepreneurs’ many and varied experiences

shape their work and life histories; they assign meaning to these past experiences, which in turn, impacts their current and future decisions as well as their conceptions of who they are (Mathias, Williams, and Smith, 2014).

In addition, entrepreneurs' role identities are also influenced by a desired future state of "who they want to be." 'Being an entrepreneur' is not a fixed state of being someone, but a continuously changing state of becoming someone. Unlike employees, who might envision a desired future for themselves but have little control over its fruition, entrepreneurs have considerable control over the future of their ventures and their roles in it. Thus, engaging in sensemaking, particularly prospective sensemaking, might be an important exercise for entrepreneurs and leaders alike.

Identity: Understanding "Who I Am" and "Who I Am Not"

Identity is often about understanding "who I am." However, sometimes identity is also formed out of "who I am not." Throughout life, we try on different hats, and although they might not fit, they often tell us much about ourselves—what we like or dislike, what represent strengths or weaknesses, what we are passionate or apathetic about. Thus, role identity formation appears to be a critical process in which individuals discover both "who I am" and "who I am not."

Almost every entrepreneur suggested that they started their first venture wearing all the hats. Although some did this because of resource constraints, many described this as a time of critical learning and self-discovery. Entrepreneurs had to navigate through the entrepreneurial process and discover which roles they enjoyed, which roles represented strengths, and which roles they needed to fill to meet the needs of their organization. In other words, entrepreneurs sifted through these roles identities to determine both "who they were or wanted to be" and "who they were not."

On the other hand, past entrepreneurial identity research (e.g., Cardon et al., 2009; Fauchart and Gruber, 2011), although important, largely assumes that founders understand their identities prior to launching their businesses. That is, entrepreneurs bring in an identity to their venture that influences their passion and actions in their venture (Cardon et al., 2009) or key decisions in the creation of new firms (Fauchart and Gruber, 2011). For some entrepreneurs, the findings from my study appear to align with the findings from these previous studies—entrepreneurs can certainly “bring in” pre-specified role (or social) identities that impact the direction of their ventures. However, my findings also suggest that this process is often negotiated within the firm. Rather than launching a venture with a clear understanding of their identity or set of identities, entrepreneurs’ identities “emerge” during the entrepreneurial process (Powell and Baker, 2014), particularly as their firms grow. Therefore, my study furthers extant identity work by revealing that although entrepreneurial identities can exist ex-ante, they often are discovered ex-post.

Further, extant role identity work largely assumes that entrepreneurs possess a singular “founder” or “entrepreneurial” identity, which remains largely unchanged throughout their ventures’ existence (Dobrev and Barnett, 2005; Farmer et al., 2011; Hoang and Gimeno, 2010; Navis and Glynn, 2011). However, I advance more recent work that suggests that entrepreneurs possess a myriad of role identities (Mathias and Williams, 2014), and that these identities evolve over time, especially as entrepreneurs’ ventures grow. Entrepreneurs’ early conceptions of what it means to be “an entrepreneur” are different from those at later stages in the entrepreneurial process.

Early on, the “entrepreneurial identity” is, to a large extent, about assuming many micro role identities. Being the marketer, the accountant, the salesman, the operator, and the planner all

represent not only something entrepreneurs do (i.e., roles) but also something that entrepreneurs value as an important part of who they are (i.e., role identities). Put simply, at early stages, the notion of an “entrepreneurial identity” is about possessing and fulfilling role sub-identities. Because most entrepreneurs start off with all these role identities, role identity formation is often about giving up less salient or less favored roles first. Through the interviews, I found that entrepreneurs had a relatively easy time sharing “who they were not.” In fact, when asked, “what is your most important and/or most favored role” and “what is your least important role and/or least favored role,” entrepreneurs much more quickly and definitively responded to the second question than they did to the first. This could be a subtle indication that identity formation is an emergent process in which entrepreneurs discover “who they are” by shedding roles that do not resonate with who they want to be and what they want to be doing—i.e., who they are not. While shedding less salient and more tactical role identities, entrepreneurs of growing firms must often adopt other role identities, such as a managerial and strategic leader role identity.

Taken together, I find that discovering “who I want to be” is a challenging and on-going process which is also informed by building an understanding of “who I am not.” Unlike other working professionals, most entrepreneurs do not have the luxury of settling into a desired role identity and then staying in that position until retirement. Instead, entrepreneurs possess numerous role identities and as their ventures evolve, so too must their role identities. As such, I encourage future work to move from understanding entrepreneurs as individuals who *possess* a fixed and singular entrepreneurial identity to individuals who continually *discover* an evolving set of identities.

Practical Implications

Much is required of entrepreneurs in their ventures. However, this research offers a way forward by explaining how entrepreneurs can enable others to help them in their entrepreneurial journey, and in doing so, navigate the role transition process. I explain that entrepreneurs do not have to do everything, and that they certainly do not have to do everything well. I explore how they can go from wearing all the hats to focusing on a select few. Accordingly, my results offer a number of important implications for entrepreneurs and researchers.

First, this study illustrates the importance of role balance and relinquishing role identities. I find that it is critical for entrepreneurs give up roles and/or balance them with others. Few individuals do everything well—accounting, operations, innovation, marketing, distribution, etc.—yet many entrepreneurs, either to conserve resources or due to hubris, fail to identify their role weaknesses and transition out of these roles. Understandably, entrepreneurs feel they cannot afford to bring in the level of talent needed to fill role voids. However, entrepreneurs can be creative in this respect by employing interns or volunteers, using equity or stock options, or deferring compensation. Alternatively, entrepreneurs can actively seek out partners who offer complementary role sets.

My findings suggest that founders who had pre-specified role identities were often able to hit the ground running. For example, the quotes from the two aforementioned entrepreneurs, who had started four successful companies together, highlight the importance of role balance.

The guy who co-founded the company, he and I have done four companies together. I usually try to find somebody like him [when I start a company]. I am sales and marketing, and he is technology, so we are a nice combination when we do things.

Traffic Management Systems Co-Founder #1 (Business Manager), Owner

[My partner] is the right guy, for example, to take this company from \$5 million to \$100 million...I couldn't have done that; that's not my forte; that's not what I like to do...I'm

an engineer; I love that part of it. I literally live in a workshop; I actually live beneath my laboratory.

Traffic Management Systems Co-Founder #2 (Engineer), Owner

They knew their role identities—one was technology and the other was business management. Armed with the understanding of their strengths and weaknesses as well as previous experience together, they did not waste time figuring out who would do what in their venture but transitioned from venture to venture with a seamless adoption of role identities. Thus, achieving role balance by entrusting others appears paramount to entrepreneurial success.

A second important implication is the importance of a focused, non-growth strategy. Although recent research concerning entrepreneurial identity emphasizes the heterogeneity of venture motivations among entrepreneurs, I find, surprisingly, that many entrepreneurs' ventures grow dramatically despite a lack of growth motivations. This could reflect an emerging business strategy that entrepreneurs may choose to increasingly pursue in the future. Given recent social movements, consumers and employees alike increasingly care about the *how* and *why* behind companies and their products. Meaning, they want to better understand the practices used in production as well as understand the values and identity behind who is making those products and why. I find entrepreneurs who remain committed to their identity and uncompromising in their quality garner respect, and consequently, growth. Thus, entrepreneurs of the future may need to pay increasing attention to ensuring that they, and by extension their organization, stand for something more meaningful than increasing shareholder value or maximizing profits.

A third practical implication of this study is for qualitative researchers. Few studies in the organizational literature have leveraged the rich data available from biographies and autobiographies. By incorporating these data sources into my research design, I offer a new avenue of inquiry for organizational scholars. To be sure, these data sources can have their

limitations, including social desirability bias and potential success bias (as only stories of successful leaders/entrepreneurs are likely to be published), so I would advocate caution in using them as a stand-alone data source. However, biographies and autobiographies can provide greater breadth to a research design and seem appropriate when used to reach theoretical saturation or to triangulate or replicate findings. Scholars studying leadership and entrepreneurship, in particular, can take advantage of the myriad biographies and autobiographies that chronicle the lives of entrepreneurs and leaders, as they hold great potential for unique insights. Specifically, as these data sources often offer fully reflective, developed, and edited thoughts of individuals, they can provide a deeper look into how entrepreneurs make sense of their own lives. Although I used these texts to complement my findings on craft entrepreneurship and treated them, in many ways, like additional ‘participants,’ many other research opportunities exist, such as employing them through narratives, event histories, or vignettes.

Although I strongly encourage future researchers to use biographies and autobiographies, some other aspects of my methods worked less favorably. Namely, the verbal protocols I employed did not provide great insights. Again, the verbal protocols provided participants a series of scenarios in which they told different individuals (e.g., employee, investor, customer) a single thing about themselves. Although entrepreneurs acknowledged (in the interview) that they thought and acted differently based on who they interacted with, when given the protocols, entrepreneurs had a difficult time discriminating between them and provided similar responses across scenarios. Thus, my adaptation of this protocol did not appear to work well in an entrepreneurial context. Also, the calendar/schedule assessment did not fully work according to expectations. First, keeping a formalized a calendar was not a standard practice among

entrepreneurs, while some kept a calendar via phone/computer, most kept no formal calendar, and even another referred me to a white board of Post It Notes which represented his “calendar.” With little consistency and standardization, it was difficult to piece this together in a coherent fashion. Additionally, given that I asked entrepreneurs to “tell me how many hours a week they worked” and “walk me through a typical week,” it seemed to come across as distrusting and intrusive that I should also ask to visually see their formalized calendar after they had already provided this information to me verbally. Therefore, I would encourage future researchers to consider doing one or the other, or alternative ways of accessing their schedules.

Additionally, given the inductive nature of my research, several aspects of my research proposal did not necessarily emerge in my findings. For example, although I discussed examining the socialization practices of entrepreneurs in the Literature Review and Methods, socialization did not fully surface in the interviews, and instead the notion of sensemaking seemed much more poignant to entrepreneurs and their role identities. Also, although I discussed comparing professionals to non-professionals, adopting the notion of craft and non-craft entrepreneurs seemed similar, but much more relevant and insightful. Further, although understanding the difference between *micro* or *macro* roles and *role salience* or *role centrality* is important, elaborating on these nuances in the Findings did not seem fitting given the holistic nature of my inducted process model. In sum, as often the case with inductive, qualitative research, some factors appeared to play a less important role than expected while other critical factors emerged through the data collection process.

Study Limitations and Future Research Directions

Despite the theoretical and managerial contributions of this study, it also possesses a number of limitations. These limitations, however, offer a number of avenues for future research.

Below, I outline three specific limitations which can likely benefit from future research, including expanding upon and further clarifying the concept of craft entrepreneurship, incorporating failed ventures to overcome issues of success bias, and following nascent entrepreneurs over time to ensure retrospective bias is not a concern.

Craft Entrepreneurship. Although I leveraged the autobiographies and biographies to further confirm (or disconfirm) my findings on craft entrepreneurship, my initial theorizing relied on interviews with only ten craft entrepreneurs. Although these entrepreneurs spanned vastly different industries, I encourage future research to explore craft entrepreneurs in additional contexts in order to improve upon the generalizability of my findings. Doing so could address several potentially interesting research questions. For example, one question is the impact that economic factors have played in the growth and success of craft ventures. Are craft entrepreneurs' identity actions truly differentiating them from other entrepreneurs or is their success an artifact of the industries in which they are operating?

A second limitation and opportunity for future research is exploring the causal relationship between craft entrepreneurs' negative attitudes concerning growth and actual growth. Although I postulate that craft entrepreneurs frequently have negative attitudes toward growth prior to venture growth, my findings cannot confirm the direction of this relationship. Perhaps, many craft entrepreneurs' negative attitudes toward growth emerged only once their firms grew, and through this experience, they learned that growth held unforeseen consequences for their role in the firm. Further, although the relationship between growth and identity-related actions certainly appears recursive in nature, it remains unclear whether craft entrepreneurs' negative growth attitudes were an outcome of, or antecedent to, their refusal to give up quality-

oriented roles. Future, longitudinal research that captures craft entrepreneurs before and after venture growth could offer answers to the causal mechanisms.

Another limitation is the importance of craft entrepreneurs' identity to consumers. By drawing on newspaper and magazine articles, online reviews, and informal discussions with members of the community in which these organizations operate, I find preliminary evidence that many customers deeply care about the identity of craft entrepreneurs. That is, customers know and understand the deep passion and care craft entrepreneurs devote to their products, and in part, this is why many choose to purchase products from these individuals and their respective firms. However, a more systematic assessment of the customers of craft entrepreneurs could shed additional light on the subject. For example, to what extent does the identity of the entrepreneur (and his or her respective firm) matter during individuals' decision to purchase certain products?

Together, much more work is needed to expand and clarify the craft entrepreneur concept. In this vein, I think many opportunities abound. Since being involved in the day-to-day operations and quality processes remains an important role for craft entrepreneurs even as their firms grow, extended observation of these entrepreneurs—including following their daily activities—could be particularly insightful and could offer important contributions to the entrepreneurship or strategy-as-practice fields.

Failed Ventures and Success Bias. Although my interviews varied widely with respect to venture growth and profitability, all entrepreneurs and their ventures were, at least to some extent, successful by virtue of their existence. Thus, my research design could suffer from success bias, considering all the entrepreneurs in my sample were entrepreneurs who had not yet failed (with at least one venture) and were still actively engaged in running a business.

Although I compare the role identity transition process for high-growth and low-growth ventures, it remains unclear whether a similar process would exist for entrepreneurs of failed ventures, or ventures that end for non-discretionary reasons. For example, do entrepreneurs whose ventures fail exhibit the same actions and characteristics of Retaining Path entrepreneurs, a more extreme case of refusing to give up certain roles, or something different altogether? Scholars could look *across* cases to compare the role identity processes of successful and failed ventures; scholars could also look *within* cases to compare actions taken by a single entrepreneur in different ventures. Since many entrepreneurs have launched multiple ventures (with some failing and some succeeding), it would be intriguing to compare their actions in those ventures to see what differences, if any, persist.

Longitudinal Research and Retrospective Bias. I intentionally structured my research design to capture entrepreneurs at different stages of the entrepreneurial process. This included capturing entrepreneurs with different growth rates—pre-revenue, low, moderate, and high—as well as different lengths of entrepreneurial experience, ranging from less than one year to forty-six years. Although this provided “snapshots” of entrepreneurs at different points in time, I did not follow these entrepreneurs over time. Instead, my findings of the role process are based on (1) piecing together these “snapshots” in order to develop one coherent picture of the entrepreneurial process, (2) comparing more experienced entrepreneurs recollection of past events and experiences to those who were currently in those earlier stages, and (3) leveraging the narratives within biographies and autobiographies to further corroborate these findings.

Thus, my research design is not truly longitudinal in nature. By asking entrepreneurs to recall past events and explain how their roles have changed over time, the potential for retrospective bias could exist. In this vein, I would encourage future research to track nascent

entrepreneurs throughout time to validate the findings of this study. Further, it would be interesting to see whether the role transition process is different depending on how many prior ventures the entrepreneur has launched. For example, do entrepreneurs “wear all the hats” in their first venture, but then fill a more advisory, non-operations role in subsequent ventures? Although I asked entrepreneurs the number of ventures they launched and had them describe the venture “that was most important to them,” I did not inquire as to the sequence of that venture.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

My dissertation explored a question of both practical and theoretical importance—*how and why do the role identities of organizational leaders change over time?* In addressing this question, I espoused role identity theory. Few studies have examined how role identities change over time and none have focused on the role of organizational growth in this process. By doing so, I provide a deeper understanding for how role identity both influences, and is influenced by, firm growth.

One key finding is the inducted path model, which shows that entrepreneurs tend to follow one of three identity paths—Shedding, Retaining, and Crafting. These paths illustrate the different actions that entrepreneurs can take with respect to their role identities and how those actions can foster or restrict the growth of their firms. For example, delegating roles, narrowing role focus, and assuming a managerial role identity are all identity-related actions associated with venture growth. However, I find that while some actions, such as an unwillingness to give up certain roles, are inhibiting for some entrepreneurs, they actually benefit other entrepreneurs. Thus, this model demonstrates equifinality by revealing that there is not one single identity path to entrepreneurial success.

The study also furthers our understanding of craft entrepreneurship. I posit that the extant view of craft entrepreneurs as simpletons who have “narrowness in education and training, low social awareness and involvement, and who do not offer innovative products” (Das and Teng, 1997, p. 74) is outdated. Rather, I further more recent work (Kuhn and Galloway, 2013) that suggests that craft, or artisan, entrepreneurs make up a growing and important part of today’s modern economic environment, and I adopt the view that they are more complex and

knowledgeable individuals than previously conceived. Further, I advance the notion of craft entrepreneurship as a *process* of role identity formation and transition rather than a *type* of person. With their emphasis on quality, highly focused and differentiated strategy, negative attitudes toward growth, and yet, highly successful companies, craft entrepreneurs, in many ways, challenge the paradigm of how one can achieve venture growth. Thus, craft entrepreneurship holds great potential for future research.

By exploring the evolution of the growing firm and the entrepreneur's role in it, my findings demonstrate, albeit indirectly, the nexus of the strategic management and entrepreneurship literatures. My study illustrates that the requisite role identities of a nascent entrepreneur and those in a growing organization are vastly different. To facilitate organizational growth, entrepreneurs must go from "wearing all the hats," or assuming many micro role identities, to assuming a managerial, and eventually, a strategic leader role identity. While some entrepreneurs can make this leap and bridge between an "entrepreneurial" role identity to a "managerial/strategic leader" role identity, not all entrepreneurs are well-suited for the challenge. Given that I find a strategic leader identity subsumes an entrepreneurial identity in a growing organization, this study offers a step toward further clarifying the entrepreneurial process and understanding how entrepreneurship can evolve into strategic management.

In sum, my dissertation investigated the role identities of entrepreneurs. I reveal that entrepreneurs do not possess a fixed "entrepreneurial role identity" that sets them apart from other individuals, such as managers, nor do I advance a new typology in which entrepreneurs possess a single role identity type that distinguishes them from other entrepreneurs. Instead, I discover that entrepreneurial role identity is defined not only by *people* but also by *process*. Meaning, identity is an emergent process that changes as entrepreneurs' ventures grow and

evolve and entrepreneurs themselves experience life changes. Thus, identity is not a label that we can, or should, attach to a person and his or her firm. Rather, entrepreneurs possess a myriad of role identities that change as they progress with their firms. This research is a first step in understanding these role identities, or the hats that entrepreneurs wear, and how they change.

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APPENDIX

Appendix A.1: Semi-Structured Interview

Primary Questions

Tell me about yourself and your business.

What activities currently consume most of your time?

Which hats do you wear that you wish you didn't have to wear? What hats or activities (business or non-business) do you wish you had more time for?

What activities and/or decisions do you think are most critical (important) to the success of your company?

How happy are you with the hats (roles) you have in your business?

Probing Questions

What hats are currently important to who you are?

If you could put the roles in 3-7 buckets what would they be? Can you give me a specific activity related to each?

Have your hat(s) changed throughout your business(es)' existence? If so, how would you describe the changes—did they occur gradually over time or more suddenly?

What roles do you feel most comfortable or confident in and why?

Have you joined any organizations, attended seminars/classes, or sought any advice to improve your ability in a role?

(If applicable) In reflecting on your years of experience, how have your feelings toward your business(es) changed?

Appendix A.2: Verbal Protocol (Role Salience)

Based on the field interview, select three people who appear most critical to the success of the entrepreneur's respective organization (e.g., Investor, Banker, Partner, Employee, Customer, Potential Buyer, Supplier). Then, present them with the following scenarios:

"Now, we would like you to think about meeting people for the first time in various settings. You want to tell them about yourself so that they will really know you, but you can only tell them one thing about yourself at a time. Think about the activities we have been asking you about for each setting presented below."

Think about meeting:

(1) Most critical person #1

(2) Most critical person #2

(3) Most critical person #3

What you would tell this person about who you are and what you do? First? Second? Third? Anything else you would share?

Appendix A.3: Diary/Calendar (A Day in the Life of the Entrepreneur)

Think about the past week and tell me about how you spent your time. Or could you even show me through your calendar?

Can you walk me through an optimal day of your work life?

Do you keep a schedule or calendar? Do you mind showing me your calendar for the past week? Can I take a photograph of this which will not be reproduced but only used as a research document which will be subject to security and confidentiality?

(Alternatives) **Blank calendar:** Have them fill out a blank calendar with how they spend their time. **Buckets of time:** Have them put their time into 4-5 buckets.

TABLE 1
Empirical Role Identity Studies over Time

Author	Level of Influence on Identity	Sample	Method	Antecedents	Outcomes	Findings
Chreim, Williams, and Hinings (2007) <i>AMJ</i>	Institutional Focus (Multi-level)	Canadian health clinic physicians	Observing meetings, compiling written materials, and conducting 3 sets of interviews at 3 different time periods	Institutional, organizational, and individual dynamics		Reconstruction of role identity is shaped by an institutional environment that provides interpretive, legitimating, and material resources that professionals adopt and adapt
Goodrick and Reay (2010) <i>JMS</i>	Institutional	Nursing textbooks	Discourse analysis of textbooks published from 1955-92	Legitimization (naturalizing the past, normalizing new meanings, altering identity referents, connecting to institutional environment, referencing authority)		Shows how new professional role identities for registered nurses are legitimized by analyzing introductory textbooks
Lok (2010) <i>AMJ</i>	Institutional	CFOs, investor relations directors, CIOs, and senior fund managers from the UK	Secondary data using shareholder value literature from 1984 to 2004 and UK's corporate governance reform reports, and semi-structured interviews with corporate officers and institutional investors	Societal pressures and new shareholder logic		Explains how management and institutional investors in the UK reworked their identity and practices in responses to efforts by influential change agents to shape and control these based on the logic of shareholder value

Table 1. continued

Author	Level of Influence on Identity	Sample	Method	Antecedents	Outcomes	Findings
Rao, Monin, and Durand (2003) <i>AJS</i>	Institutional	Elite French chefs and food experts	Secondary data on the nouvelle cuisine movement from 1970 to 1997 along with a panel of interviews	Sociopolitical legitimacy of activists, theorization of new roles, prior defections by peers to the new logic, and gains to prior defectors	New social movement (cuisine)	Through examination of the nouvelle cuisine movement in France, explains how institutional logics and role identities are replaced by new logics and role identities
Wäger and Mena (2013) <i>EGOS Colloquium</i>	Institutional	Swiss and US shareholder activists	Mixed (archival and interviews) to examine 30-year movement of shareholder activism	The organizational actor's environment	Institutionalization of shareholder activism, Altered relationship with fund managers, Changed communication tactics	Swiss shareholders translated role identity from US to become more active and engaged in decision-making processes
Allen and Meyer (1990) <i>AMJ</i>	Organizational	Recent MBA graduates with jobs	Two-stage questionnaire (given at 6 months and 12 months of employment)	Organizational socialization	Organizational commitment	Newcomers' organizational socialization experiences and commitment were negatively related to role innovation
Zimmermann and Ravishankar (2011) <i>JVB</i>	Organizational	Employees in large German technology firm with Indian subsidiary	Interviews with German and Indian employees	Offshoring arrangements	Altered career aspirations and strategies	Examines how IT offshoring impacts professional role identities and influences individuals' career aspiration and strategies
Cornelissen (2012) <i>OS</i>	Organizational / Individual	Communication professionals working in 13 different organizations	Multiple interviews that spanned over two years	Role-situated commitments and perceived social pressures		Professionals manage their role identities through processes of strategic shifting, framing, and narration

Table 1. continued

Author	Level of Influence on Identity	Sample	Method	Antecedents	Outcomes	Findings
Ibarra (1999) <i>ASQ</i>	Organizational / Individual	Employees of an investment bank and a large securities company	Interview of transitional employees	Observing role models, experimenting with provisional selves, and evaluating experiments against internal standards and external feedback	Speed of role adoption, degree of self-concept change, degree of role innovation, effectiveness in new role	Provides conceptual framework in which situational and individual factors influence adaptation behaviors and guide self-construction
Ashforth and Saks (1995) <i>JOOP</i>	Individual	Business school students/graduates	Three-stage questionnaire (given during final semester and at 4 and 10 months of employment)	Role requirements, motivational orientations, prior occupational socialization, socialization processes		Personal and role adjustments following work-role transitions are a complex function of both dispositional and situational characteristics
Charng, Piliavin, and Callero (1988) <i>SPQ</i>	Individual	Blood donors	Blood donor records and mailed questionnaire over a 7 month period	Attitude, subjective norms, importance of the role identity, social relations, habits		Identity theory variables (importance of role identity, social relations connected to identity, and habit) predicted the adoption of a blood donor role identity
Elsbach (2009) <i>HR</i>	Individual	Toy car designers	Interviews and direct observation over the course of 5 weeks	Personal styles	Creative brands/products	Demonstrates how professional creative workers affirm their creative identities through their work

Table 1. continued

Author	Level of Influence on Identity	Sample	Method	Antecedents	Outcomes	Findings
Haynie and Shepherd (2011) <i>JAP</i>	Individual	Soldiers and Marines disabled by wartime combat	Self-reports (interviews, surveys, journal entries, telephone and email correspondence), relevant other reports (interviews with spouses/ commanders), and archival data (military and medical reports) obtained across multiple time intervals	Traumatic life events	Career motivations and transitions	How traumatic experiences shape 'self' and form the basis for enacting future-oriented career strategies that confer meaning and purpose
Jain, George, and Maltarich (2009) <i>RP</i>	Individual	University scientists and tech-transfer specialists	Interviews with scientists and tech-transfer specialists, and interviews conducted by historians from the early 1970s onward	Delegating and buffering processes		Individuals deploy delegating and buffering mechanisms to facilitate salience in their hybrid role identity
Ladge, Clair, and Greenberg (2012) <i>AMJ</i>	Individual	Professional women who recently became first-time mothers	Semi-structured interviews	Pregnancy trigger events, personal context, and organizational context		Explores how an individual's work identity must be adapted to be integrated with a change in a non-work (mother) identity
Murnieks, Mosakowski, and Cardon (forthcoming) <i>JOM</i>	Individual	Midwest US entrepreneurs	Two rounds of surveys		Entrepreneurial passion	Identity salience and centrality influence passion, which in turn, impacts entrepreneurial behavior and self-efficacy

Table 1. continued

Author	Level of Influence on Identity	Sample	Method	Antecedents	Outcomes	Findings
Pratt, Rockmann, and Kaufmann (2006) <i>AMJ</i>	Individual Focus (Multi-level)	Medical students	6-year qualitative (semi-structured interviews) study	Career/role transitions, socialization, active identity construction	Role identities part of a learning cycle involving: work-identity integrity assessments, identity customization, social validation, and work	Identity construction was triggered by work-identity violations, which were resolved through identity customization processes

TABLE 2
Sampling Strategy

Selection Criteria	Why Needed
Entrepreneurs	Entrepreneurs represent organizational leaders who make key decisions for their organizations, few studies examine role identities of leaders
	Entrepreneurs "wear many hats"
	Entrepreneurs have discretion over socialization practices, which could have unique group-level effect
	There is often a close link between entrepreneurs and their organizations
Various Growth Stages (Organizational)	Most studies examine role identities in large, well-established firms, role identity in entrepreneurial firms is largely unexplored
	Provides <i>in-situ</i> view of role identity in relation to the organization
Various Career Stages (Individual)	Allows for comparison of how organizational growth impacts entrepreneurs' role identities
	Provides <i>in-situ</i> view of role identity
	Allows for comparison of how entrepreneurs' role identities change over time
Multi-industry Sample	Most studies focus on newcomer experiences or highly successful entrepreneurs, few studies examine individuals at the middle stages of career
	Compare role identities of individuals in different fields
	Compare professional and non-professional role identity formation

TABLE 3
Research Questions and Data Source Alignment

Selection Criteria	Data source/approach that will address question
What hats are most important to entrepreneurs (i.e., role centrality) and most likely to be activated (i.e., role salience)?	Calendars and interviews (role centrality), Verbal protocols (role salience)
What is the impact of different factors on adoption of micro and macro roles?	Interviews and biographies
What types of hats do entrepreneurs wear?	Interviews, calendars, third-party interviews, biographies
How many hats do entrepreneurs wear?	Calendars and third-party interviews
How do entrepreneurs transition between these hats?	Interviews
Why do entrepreneurs transition between these hats?	Interviews and biographies

TABLE 4
Description of Sample

Firm	Identity Path	Perceptions of Growth	Growth Rates*	Year Founded	Age	Gender	Yrs of Entrep. Experience	# of ventures founded
Media Sales	Retaining	Positive	Low	2009	29	Male	7	4
E-commerce/ Real estate	Shedding	Mixed	Moderate	2005	29	Male	8	2
Social Networking Site	Nascent	Positive	N/A	2013	28	Male	1	1
Business Lab (Varied)	Nascent	Positive	N/A	2012	46	Male	18	8
Wrecker Services	Retaining	Mixed	Low	1971	74	Male	43	2
Healthcare Analytics	Nascent	Positive	N/A	2013	26	Male	1	1
Apparel & Fashion	Nascent	Positive	N/A	2013	23	Male	1	1
Healthcare Software	Shedding	Mixed	High	1995	57	Male	30	6
Logistics	Shedding	Mixed	High	2007	44	Male	7	1
Traffic Mgmt Systems	Shedding	Positive	High	2006	51	Male	7	4
Photography	Craft	Mixed	Low	2002	27	Male	12	1
Jewelry	Craft	Negative	Low	1990	60	Male	23	1
Lighting Products	Shedding	Positive	High	1968	58	Male	46	4
Business Coach	Retaining	Positive	Low	2013	43	Male	20	5
Building Products/ E-commerce	Retaining	Positive	Low	2013	26	Male	6	4
Retail Consulting	Retaining	Mixed	Low	1995	60	Male	18	1
3-D Printing	Shedding	Mixed	High	2013	42	Male	12	3
Financial Staffing	Shedding	Positive	High	2000	40	Male	12	1
Various Tech Start-ups	Shedding	Mixed	High	1987	53	Male	27	6
Digital Imaging	Shedding	Mixed	High	1986	56	Male	28	5
Non-profit	Shedding	Positive	High	2008	39	Male	9	3

Table 4. continued

Firm	Identity Path	Perceptions of Growth	Growth Rates*	Year Founded	Age	Gender	Yrs of Entrep Exp	# of ventures
LED Lighting	Nascent	Positive	N/A	2008	52	Male	9	2
Microbrewery	Craft	Positive	High	2009	34	Male	4	1
Real Estate	Retaining	Mixed	Low	2005	52	Female	8	1
Wireless Sensors	Shedding	Positive	Moderate	2012	38	Male	14	5
Beer Retail / Franchising	Shedding	Positive	High	2011	33	Male	2	1
Compression Apparel	Shedding	Mixed	High	1994	57	Female	20	1
Coffee Shop / Roasting	Craft	Negative	Low	1996	64	Male	17	2
Marketing	Retaining	Positive	Moderate	2001	46	Male	13	3
Beer Retail	Craft	Mixed	N/A	2013	42	Male	1	1
Advertising Services	Shedding	Positive	High	1997	48	Male	17	7
Dairy Products	Craft	Negative	Moderate	2009	25	Female	5	1
Franchise Consulting	Shedding	Positive	High	2012	50	Male	8	3
Environmental Surveys	Retaining	Positive	Low	2000	51	Male	14	1
Dessert Shops	Shedding	Positive	Moderate	2007	43	Female	7	3
Photo Products	Craft	Mixed	High	2011	35	Male	14	3
Coffee House / Roasting	Craft	Mixed	Moderate	2002	60	Male	12	1
Video Production	Craft	Mixed	High	2007	25	Male	7	1
Food Products	Nascent	Positive	N/A	2013	22	Male	2	2
Financial Planning	Shedding	Positive	Moderate	2011	28	Male	3	1
Web Design	Retaining	Mixed	Low	2011	23	Male	5	2
Construction	Shedding	Positive	High	2005	45	Male	10	2
Sports Products	Retaining	Positive	Moderate	2013	29	Male	1	1
Supply Chain Consult.	Shedding	Positive	Moderate	2001	43	Male	13	6
Meat Products	Craft	Mixed	High	1947	67	Male	41	1

*Low: <5% per year, Moderate: 5-15% per year, High: <15% per year

TABLE 5
Motivation Behind Wearing All The Hats

Motivation	Wearing All the Hats
Conserve Resources	It's kind of the joke around the office. It's a one-man dance. The 1-800 number rings to my phone, I do the banking, I fly around and meet suppliers. We had to train someone to write the contracts. I have a graphic design team and programmers all over the world. It's like all of the resources we need to get stuff done. It obviously wasn't created by one person. It only really takes one person to manage...I just kind of take everything with a grain of salt; it's just part of it. If it needs to be done, I do it. (Building Products / E-commerce)
	So in the beginning, it was really tough. You have to find a way to motivate yourself even though you're not making any money...It was just [my partner] and I in the beginning. We had 1 girl hired, but we couldn't afford to pay her, so she actually left. I was making every garment in the beginning. I sewed, physically sewed every garment. (Compression Apparel)
Learning Experience	I consider myself a jack-of-all-trades but a master of none... I have a little bit of experience in a lot of different areas, and it has played to my advantage. (Financial Planning)
	You need to start out being a jack of all trades, willing to do whatever you do. Then when you start farming stuff out, at least you have got an idea of what you are expecting, as far as level of excellence, cost and all of that kind of stuff. I think to a degree the beginning entrepreneur does have to be a jack of all trades and have a willingness to do all of that stuff. (Digital Imaging)
	At one point, I remember we had 30 people out working, some 30 people, and I'd go bill it all, pay it all, pay all the back payroll taxes, and find the five people for those jobs. I mean, just full cycle. There was no business to that. It was a big-time job. So that transcended into architecting the system and the machine, so to speak, and creating the strategy, understanding the position of the business, the service business of people. Understanding about how to hire for ourselves and get those people into position in the system, and let the system manage some and let the manager manage some. (Financial Staffing)
	Early on, we did everything. When you're getting it off the ground, you don't know what you're doing yet, so how can anybody else know? You have to learn it, and you have to know and then teach that knowledge, and that knowledge has to go to the next person and then spread. So in the beginning, it's only you. (Dessert Shops)

Table 5. continued

Motivation	Wearing All the Hats
Personal Enjoyment (Varied Work Life)	When I started, it was me and 1 more employee. When we started, I didn't know anything, and he didn't know anything either, and he taught me everything I know. When I started, I literally put the cure on every piece of meat that I cured the first 5 years I was in business. Everything. I've done it all. I would do the delivery. I did everything there was to do. Every task. When I got into the business, I actually was just going to do it long enough to get admitted into law school. But after about 6 months into the business, I realized I was just kind of having fun. I thought I'm enjoying this. I really like this. I never dreamed I would survive in business as long as I have. (Meat Products) I do not see sticking around for 20 years at anything. My interests are just so varied. I have fallen in infatuation. It never would have occurred to me that I would be involved in this area [of business]. It is the opportunity recognition stage that I enjoy so much. You go to bed and dream and envision yourself in this marketplace, in this technology space, and you cannot think of anything else. That is the part that gets me every single time. (3-D Printing)

TABLE 6
Perception of Workload

Firm	Identity Path	Growth Rates	Exemplary Quote On Workload
Lighting Products	Shedding	High	I was a helicopter manager. When I started off, I was really low to the ground and saw all of that stuff. Through time, I have gotten higher and higher and higher. You get further away from these things. I hovered low for a long time until I realized, I am keeping the company small. I was micromanaging and once I realized that we can't grow if I micromanage, because we can only get as big as I will let us, so the higher up I get the better off.
Financial Staffing	Shedding	High	I could walk out of here [the business] and come back in 30 days and... literally walk out of here and come back in 30 days [and the business would be just fine]. If I'm walking around with a firehose, I've got a problem... it can run without me for a time period. So I ask myself this: Is my job daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly? Or is there a job? I do take the advice of continuing to work myself out of a job.
Construction	Shedding	High	Because of our growth, we have 2 project managers and an office manager, and then everything else we have subcontracted out... Right now, and this has just kind of happened at a younger age than we thought, but we're not having to put many hours in. We've scaled back [our hours] just recently, but the business is still growing and growing and growing.
Wireless Sensors	Shedding	Moderate	I think every CEO of every company should be sitting there for the sole reason of starting companies to work yourself out of a job. You want to own the company, not have the company own you... I've heard the term "ambitiously lazy." I love that. I am willing to do whatever it takes as long as there is a nap at the end of it.

Table 6. continued

Firm	Identity Path	Growth Rates	Exemplary Quote On Workload
E-commerce/ Real estate	Shedding	Moderate	I don't currently run a day-to-day business. I don't currently run any day-to-day business. I work with the people who are running those businesses, which is the model we hoped to continue going forward if no other reason than simply scalability. There are only so many hours in a day, and it takes a tremendous amount of effort and energy and time to start or run a business, and you cannot effectively run 10 companies' day-to-day operation. It's not humanly possible, so one way to scale your time is to support the people who can dedicate the time to each of those individual enterprises.
Coffee Shop / Roasting	Retaining	Low	For years and years and years, people have asked me, "Why haven't you started another store?" I just tell them I can't imagine. I have a hard time keeping up with one.
Retail Consulting	Retaining	Low	If it [the business] was at the point where I could actually turn it over, if I'd found that person who could bring in the sales and continue to keep everything going, then I could move on with my life.

TABLE 7
Prospective/Retrospective Sensemaking of Growth and Work Tasks

Firm	Sense-making Form	Age	Yrs of Entrep. Exp.	Growth Exp.	Exemplary Quotes On Prospective/Retrospective Sensemaking and Work Tasks
					We are discovering ourselves our whole lives and I was doing what I was doing [pursuing ventures] without having taken the time to say, "Why am I doing this? What makes me happy? How am I really wired?" (Retrospective)
Business Coach	Retrospective & Prospective	43	20	Yes	Honestly, the great recession forced me to really regroup and figure out what I'm all about, what would I really like to do. And I have found that the best way to do that is to do anything entrepreneurial because that is what I like to do, so this is the wave I'm in for the other half of my life. So in the future, my full-time gig will be a business coaching consulting-type, helping startups or existing businesses overcome different barriers. (Prospective)
					As you get better at what you do, you make more money, you can then start to throw some of the things you don't particularly like at people. [However] It doesn't matter how far you go, there is always going to be things you have to do that you don't want to do. Even though you really do like what you do overall. (Retrospective)
Various Tech Start-ups	Retrospective & Prospective	53	27	Yes	I'm just always so busy doing things that I choose to do. I tell my daughters, I don't ever want to hear you don't have time. You don't make time, that's fine, but you have a choice. I have a choice. I could walk out of here tomorrow, get on a plane and go scuba diving for a month, but I choose not to because I have other things in the works that I put more importance on. Would I change anything? No not really. (Prospective)

Table 7. continued

Firm	Sense-making Form	Age	Yrs of Ent. Exp.	Growth Exp.	Exemplary Quotes On Prospective/Retrospective Sensemaking and Work Tasks
Beer Retail	Retrospective & Prospective	42	17*	No	This [spending numerous hours at the business] has been the cause of much debate. I am actually relearning myself also during these whole Kafka-esque moments, okay? I am going through a bit of a metamorphosis in saying that I am not having to work until 6[am] as I used to when I was a younger man. (Retrospective) Why are you working? Why do you turn the key in the door? Why do you clock in? Why? I don't want to live to work. I want to work to live. You're a human being. You need sunlight. You need to get vitamin D and E. You have to go and invest in people. How you balance that? It's tricky. I'd say it's going to be tricky. I don't know yet. That question's going to be a hard question to answer. That's what I foresee. I also foresee that as I move forward, my end game is not this one store. My end game is to put a manager here, and open up another one [store]. (Prospective)
Logistics	Retrospective & Prospective	44	7	Yes	There's always that curve you have to climb whenever you change roles...But the transition of a role doesn't necessarily mean you give up your old responsibilities. You just take on new ones. (Retrospective) Once you get that [entrepreneurial] bug, you never really get rid of it. I don't know about the future. Certainly for the next four to five years, I plan on doing this, but maybe after that...maybe this thing will run its course, we will see what happens. All businesses have a cycle through them. They start, they rise; they wane. (Prospective)
Food Products	Prospective	22	2	No	[Going forward] I work on the marketing side of things and some of the logistical aspects. But I sit back and collect our royalty on this. There's still a little bit of work as far as meeting with some of these distribution centers, but it's a lot better business model as far as the amount of work that I would have to put into it for it to actually make money. I'm pretty excited about it. (Prospective)

Table 7. continued

Firm	Sense-making Form	Age	Yrs of Ent. Exp.	Growth Exp.	Exemplary Quotes On Prospective/Retrospective Sensemaking and Work Tasks
Financial Planning	Prospective	28	3	Just Starting	My end goal is to open another office in the [redacted] area and have several other locations I want to open up. I fully expect to have this thing [business] completely free and clear of my day-to-day oversight within a year. (Prospective)

*Denotes Industry Experience

TABLE 8
Importance of the Leader/ Manager Role Identity in Growing Ventures

Firm	Growth Rate	Exemplary Quotes on the Importance of the Leader / Manager Role in the Growing Organization
Compression Apparel	High	I had to give up the sewing, design, and making patterns. It was hard. Then it [the business] was more of working with people and talking to people, and making sure... I think the bottom line is at some point business becomes other people versus you. And you can't do all the work that 30 people do. But then your job becomes to motivate these people and make sure they are feeling okay, that they feel they're in the right place.
Lighting Products	High	I provide the overall vision for the company, I am a cheerleader [for my employees] and then I handle the business of the business.
Microbrewery	High	Without my employees, I don't have a business... The nice part about having a small business is you can pick your team. And I'm the team captain, and I get to handpick who I want.
Healthcare Software	High	[As the company grew] I did a fair amount of putting together the team, kind of keeping everybody upbeat and "buying the juice."
Non-profit	High	I just did it because I love [the concept] and could organize people. I think I've always had the ability to organize and direct people in an effective way... Initially, I was so involved in every level [of the organization]. And then eventually that role moved to where I'm trying to cultivate the next group of leaders.

TABLE 9
Description of Craft Entrepreneurs

Firm	Exemplary Quote on Growth	Percept. of Growth	Growth Rates*	Year Founded	Age	Yrs of Entrep. Exp.	# of ventures founded
Photography	I value highly being a dad first, not screwing that up. I think most entrepreneurs do, even if they're trying really hard not to, they just do. So, I'm not failing at that right now. The problem is some of the projects that I have coming up will require a lot more than 40 hours of work a week. So that is going to be a challenge.	Mixed	Low	2002	27	12	1
Jewelry	My philosophy is don't just stop and smell the roses, stop and pick some of them, give somebody a bouquet...if you would have said I'll give you a million dollars, whatever, life is really short. I have enough money to enjoy my time off, ok, so what else could you really want? The time off is more important than the money.	Negative	Low	1990	60	23	1
Microbrew	The next step is a full expansion. We've outgrown the building that we're in. We've outgrown our capacity. We can't brew any more than they do right now. So we've strategically partnered with folks that are planning expansion.	Positive	High	2009	34	4	1
Coffee Shop / Roasting	For years and years and years, people have asked me, "Why haven't you started another store?" I just tell them I can't imagine. I have a hard time keeping up with one.	Negative	Low	1996	64	17	2

Table 9. continued

Firm	Exemplary Quote on Growth	Percept. Growth	Growth Rates*	Year Founded	Age	Yrs of Ent Exp	# of ventures
Beer Retail	This [spending numerous hours at the business] has been the cause of much debate. I am actually relearning myself also during this whole Kafka-esque moments, okay? I am going through a bit of a metamorphosis in saying that I am not having to work until 6[am] as I used to when I was a younger man.*	Mixed	N/A	2013	42	1	1
Dairy Products	When I started milking cows and getting into milk more, I was like, No. We don't need that. We don't need more cows... With more cows comes more work. More manure. More everything... I don't think you should try to do more.	Negative	Moderate	2009	25	5	1
Photo Products	Our business exploded immediately, and we just weren't ready for that. We had major problems, but we overcame them and survived... We're long past those days now. Now, we're kind of on the verge of outgrowing this building, so we're looking at expanding.	Mixed	High	2011	35	14	3
Coffee Shop / Roasting	I could buy cheaper coffee, pay less for it, have someone else contract to actually roast it and bag it for me, and kind of on a toll basis produce a lesser quality coffee, convenient store coffee, and expand their volume, do more business. I think if we do it right, we would have more profit at the end of the day. So that's one of the things we're currently evaluating, is that a business segment that we want to pursue for growth's sake? Or do we want to stay strictly specialty and be limited in the local market to largely what we've sort of already tapped into?	Mixed	Moderate	2002	60	12	1

Table 9. continued

Firm	Exemplary Quote on Growth	Percept. Growth	Growth Rates*	Year Founded	Age	Yrs of Ent Exp	# of ventures
Video Production	In your business, you have to say, “Are we going to be quality or are we going to be quantity?”... For a while there, we went through some points where we were like, “Well, we could probably do a lot more,” so we started opening the doors and started getting all this quantity in. We were like, “Nothing has quality in it.” We’re just burning and turning, and it wasn’t fun for anybody. So we pulled that real quick and said, “Okay, let’s focus on quality.”... That to me is what I got in it for.	Mixed	High	2007	25	7	1
Meat Products	I know that we can grow the business. I have no doubt about that. In fact, what I’m having to do right now is put a parachute behind it to slow it down, because it’s hard not to grow it... I would probably relish that challenge [more growth]. But I don’t know if I would enjoy myself any more than I am right now, because I enjoy what I do. I can’t say I wouldn’t enjoy that, I just don’t know... It goes back, you know, would you be any happier?	Mixed	High	1947	67	41	1

TABLE 10
Craft Entrepreneurs and Positive Media Attention and Customer Reviews

Firm	Reviews, Awards & Media Attention
Photography	Media: <i>National Parks Magazine, Time-Life, Nature's Best, and National Geographic books</i>
Jewelry	Reviews: Google Reviews 5 stars
Microbrewery	Reviews: Trip Advisor 4.5 stars Media: <i>Craft Brewing Business, The Full Pint, Various Local TV and newspapers</i>
Coffee Shop / Roasting	Reviews: Urbanspoon 5 stars (95% like), Yelp 4 stars, Google Reviews 4.2 stars Media: Local and state-wide newspapers and magazines
Beer Retail	Reviews: Urbanspoon 5 stars (100% like), Yelp 4.5 stars, Trip Advisor 4.5 stars, Foursquare 7.3 (out of 10), Google Reviews 4.3 stars
Dairy Products	Reviews: Urbanspoon 5 stars (100% like) on 27 votes, Yelp 3.5 stars on 4 reviews Media: <i>Southern Living, The Local Palate, Food and Wine, New York Times, Huffington Post, Garden and Gun, Various local TV and newspaper outlets</i>
Photo Products	Reviews: Yelp 3 stars on 6 reviews, Google Reviews 3.3 stars on 20 reviews
Coffee House / Roasting	Reviews: Urbanspoon 4.5 stars (92% like), Yelp 4.5 stars, Trip Advisor 4.5 stars on 41 reviews, Google Reviews 5 stars Media: Various local TV and newspaper outlets
Video Production	Awards: State-wide Young Entrepreneur Award Winner
Meat Products	Reviews: Yelp 4 Stars, Google Reviews 4.7 stars Media: <i>Southern Living, Bon Appétit, Gourmet, Epicurious, Wine Spectator, Esquire, Fox News, New York Times, Huffington Post, Chicago Tribune, and many more</i>

TABLE 11
Amount of Time Devoted to Work Role Identities

Firm	Identity Path	Amount of Time in Venture	Imputed Number of Hours per Week
Social Networking Website*	Nascent	I put a minimum of 20 hours a week into it, obviously there are a lot of variables. Some days, I'm here until 10 at night and some days I'm not.	20+
Business Lab (Varied)	Nascent	I'm usually at it by 7 in the morning until about 9 at night 6 days a week.	80
Healthcare Analytics*	Nascent	I think about two hours a day.	14
Apparel & Fashion*	Nascent	Right now, I'm putting in between 10 and 20. Come January when the accelerated program starts, I'm actually going to be moving to [city] and putting in 50 or so probably.	10-20 50
LED Lighting	Nascent	I put in 80 hours a week.	80
Food Products*	Nascent	This past year it's been a ton just because of the amount of work that was needed from me.	20+
E-commerce/ Real estate	Shedding	I usually head into work around 7:15, 7:30. I don't have a set schedule at the office. There are some days that I don't go into the office at all because I'm in outside meetings, or some days I'll spend the entire day in the office.	40-60
Healthcare Software	Shedding	[For a while], I was working like 10 to 12 hours a day seven days a week. [After I got out of the business] There for a little while, I didn't do much, and I just didn't like that at all. It was depressing. I was only doing maybe 20 to 30 hours of work a week. [Toward the end] I usually went there [to the business] two, three to four hours a day.	70-80 20-30
Logistics	Shedding	It varies over time. Some weeks you will work 60 to 70 hours and some weeks you will work 40 to 50. Occasionally, you will take a day off.	60-70 40-50

Table 11. continued

Firm	Identity Path	Amount of Time in Venture	Hours
Traffic Mgmt Systems	Shedding	I'm probably consistently a 60 to 70-hour a week person.	60-70
Lighting Products	Shedding	I spend 100 hours a week minimum doing [entrepreneurial] stuff.	100
3-D Printing	Shedding	Right now, I am probably logging about 90 hours a week on average.	90
Financial Staffing	Shedding	It's not a job; it's a lifestyle. I try to be in the office 45 hours, 45 to 50 hours, let's say 60 to 65 hours. I try to keep my weekends free.	60-65
Various Tech Start-ups	Shedding	If somebody says they work 80 hours a week, that's a remarkable number. I know what that's like. It's hard to sustain. On average, I probably am working 60+ hours a week and it's at all times and bizarre times.	60+
Digital Imaging	Shedding	There was nothing like a 40-hour week. We had 50 to 60-hour weeks.	50-60
Non-profit	Shedding	I think probably an average week is easily 60 to 70 hours. A busy week is 100.	60-70 100
Wireless Sensors	Shedding	I'm 9 to 9 everyday, 5 days a week, so we are doing 60 there. That is a cut-down from, I was doing 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. 6 days a week for about 8 months.	60
Beer Retail / Franchising	Shedding	In the beginning when we first got going, the first 8 months, man, I was working... I slept for 6 hours. The rest of the time I was working 18 hours a day. But now with the franchise operation, I would say I probably spend about 20 to 25 hours a week in the office. The other portion would be here, and that's another 20 to 25 hours a week.	40-50
Compression Apparel	Shedding	I come in anywhere between 8 and 11. Yesterday, I left here at 7 to go home...being here 60 and 70 hours doesn't really matter to me.	60-70
Advertising Services	Shedding	N/A	
Franchise Consulting	Shedding	It varies. On a low week, 60. On a high week, it could be well at 100.	60 100
Dessert Shops	Shedding	In the beginning, it's only you... I was there 17 to 18 hours... Does [the number of hours] count in my sleep? I'm never away. It's all the time.	80+
Financial Planning	Shedding	I like 50-60. I think I can be extremely effective 50-60.	50-60

Table 11. continued

Firm	Identity Path	Amount of Time in Venture	Hours
Construction	Shedding	After the big storm, I was working upward of 100 hours. Right now, and this has just kind of happened at a younger age than we thought, but we're not having to put many hours in...A couple of hours a day.	100 10-15
Supply Chain Consulting	Shedding	I only work half days, whether it's the first 12 hours or the second 12 hours, I don't know.	60+
Media Sales	Retaining	As many as I can stay awake.	80+
Wrecker Services	Retaining	I'm here everyday. If we're home and not on a cruise, I'm here seven days a week...I usually get here between 8 and 9 in the morning and usually by 3 or 4, I'll go to the health club.	40-50
Business Coach*	Retaining	Forty hours a week at least but I also have my construction company in here that's active so occasionally I'm doing projects. That's the only reason it would be forty. I literally from the moment I get up until the moment I go to bed I'm working on [this new project] cause I love it, so it's a lot of time.	40+
Building Products	Retaining	It's probably close to 60 or 70 [a week].	60-70
Retail Consulting	Retaining	I've got my hours down to probably 50 hours a week.	50
Real Estate	Retaining	Probably 50 hours a week. It's not that much.	50
Marketing	Retaining	It varies a lot. Right now, I am probably working 60 hours a week or so.	60
Environmental Surveys	Retaining	Forty.	40
Web Design	Retaining	Between 70 and 80 hours a week.	70-80
Sports Products*	Retaining	I figure about an hour a day on average.	7
Photography	Craft	It's definitely not [more than] 40 hours a week. [However] the projects I have coming up will require a lot more than 40 hours of work a week for a while.	< 40
Jewelry	Craft	In the summertime, I'm down to three and a half days a week because we are closed Mondays and I was taking Friday afternoons off and not working Saturdays.	30-40

Table 11. continued

Firm	Identity Path	Amount of Time in Venture	Hours
Microbrewery	Craft	As an entrepreneur, you're easily going to work 80 hours a week.	80
Coffee	Craft	5 in the morning until 2 in the afternoon...Probably about 60 hours a week.	60
Beer Retail	Craft	I envision my day starting like every other. I'll probably keep banker hours. I see myself getting there at 10. If it's a busy night, whatever the night dictates, then we'll work through and work till 11. So I'll probably be there 12 hours. If not, I'll probably go home at 6 once I see everything's going.	40-60
Dairy Products	Craft	N/A	
Photo Products	Craft	Right now, I would say it's 40 to 50. My brain is in the business probably more like 80 or 90 hours a week.	40-50
Coffee	Craft	I still largely have been able to avoid weekend work with the single big exception of part of our marketing plan has all along been all the walkathons, Race for the Cure, and all of those kinds of things... 12-hour days 5 days a week is probably the norm.	60
Video Production	Craft	I would like to have closer to that 40 to 50-hour per week investment. I think that's where I'd like to be. But for now while I can push the 80 to 100 hours.	80-100
Meat Products	Craft	I probably average 70-75 hours a week in my business for 41 years.	70-75

*Denotes entrepreneur is in school or has full-time job

TABLE 12
Importance of Financial Standing and Life Stage on Growth

Firm	Age	Exemplary Quotes on Life Stage and Financial Resources
Healthcare Software	57	I think that people, what we all want, is to add value to either to other people or to society. I think that is really what we all crave. That becomes different. At different phases in your life, that takes on different forms...I don't think I understood this [when I was younger]. I think that what would drive me then was the opportunity to do something really big and really splashy that had never been done before...[Regarding a new and recent venture] I decided I couldn't do it with him and couldn't do it without him. I was going to have to fire him and bring in somebody else. If we both had been younger, I would have stuck with it, but I was going to bet my whole life savings on this, and at this point I am not ready to do that.
Meat Products	67	I have no doubt in my mind that if I can introduce this product across the country, that we could sell it. I just do what I'm doing today because I enjoy what I do. If I'm enjoying it, would I really enjoy it more if I was doing that? I think it becomes about making money at that point instead of enjoying life. I'll be 67 next month. I just want to enjoy my life. I want to enjoy my grandkids.
Business Coach	43	I'm not a single guy who can just go out and take risks. I always temper my ideas with practical day to day life and that's been a limiting factor in just running out and start to get the stuff. Also there are resources: we have limited time, money, energy, all of that, so it's like, it might be a good idea but can I carry it through?
Digital Imaging	56	I have gotten to the point in life where I can really enjoy other people's successes. I do not have to be driven to go do the next one. In fact, I don't think I have the fire in my belly anymore. I love teaching. I will see one, two or three [students of mine]. They will drink the [entrepreneurial] magic, and I will develop a life-long relationship with them.

Table 12. continued

Firm	Age	Exemplary Quotes on Life Stage and Financial Resources
Retail Consulting	60	This has gone well for 18 years. The best thing I've ever done in my life, okay, as far as business. But life is short. I'm at the point in life where I want to be able to give back to somebody. I think that would be very rewarding. I'm not looking for pay; I'm just looking to do it.
Photography	27	You know, there weren't any risks [when I started my business]. I wasn't married. Most of the time, I didn't have rent. I was in the free floater post-college stage.

TABLE 13
Importance of Capital Acquisition Role

Firm	Exemplary Quotes on Roles Associated with Acquiring Financial Resources
LED Lighting	[Raising money] is the tough part for any entrepreneur, but we've been pretty fortunate that we have not gone the venture capital route. Even if we wanted to, we probably couldn't have anyway. It's really, really tough getting start-up money, but we've been fortunate to have a group of about 4 local people that invested and backed this company, and have been passively keeping this thing going. That is the simplest way to do it.
Social Networking Website	My goal is to get one [company] to say "I will pay you [\$x] a head to bring people into my [company]," that in turn means I can get to an angel and say, "look, I'm bringing in revenue, and this is just from me hustling for the most part. If I can do this with your money, that frees me up to really do contract development, really build this program," so that's my next step.
Healthcare Analytics	If I get any small amount of funding I'm going to be doing this 100 percent full time.
Healthcare Software	I was the founder, but all it was, was an idea. I had to go out and bring on investors...I was trying to raise about, I forgot how much, \$9 or 10 million dollars, that I was trying to raise. Fortunately, none of the venture capitalists would give it to me because that would have been awful if they would have invested.
Logistics	I think I can mathematically prove...I haven't done it yet, but I'm going to do this at some point. I think I can prove that you can never have enough resources to run your business correctly as a start-up. As a true honest-to-god start-up, you can't. You can't get enough resources to do it right.
Business Coach	There are some common issues [among entrepreneurs]. One issue is funding, that there is a lack of resources, but a lot of it is a lack of knowledge on how to discover resources and then the other side of it maybe there is a realistic lack of resources....That's what the little guys are dealing with; you can't get funds. So funding is an issue.
Building Products/ E-commerce	I've been through lots of situations of arguing over equity, arguments over ownership and shares and earning; it's the number one force that destroys business relationships. Partners that get along great until the money starts getting talked about.

Table 13. continued

Firm	Exemplary Quotes on Roles Associated with Acquiring Financial Resources
3-D Printing	We are making the rounds [to potential investors] and getting everyone introduced to the idea of what we are doing but not starting our road trip. That is the remaining 10 percent of my time, sort of engaging investors.
Digital Imaging	We wrote this plan and started looking for funding. We looked 2 avenues for funding. We were looking for \$50,000 blocks from angels for looking for the whole nut from a venture capitalist or a corporate partner. I talked to 50 angels and had one “yes.”
Non-profit	You have 2 things [as a leader]. Can you build a coalition of support that would be a board, and financiers to get it off the ground and get the program rolling? That’s all you have to focus on.
Microbrewery	When you start out, you’re either undercapitalized or overcapitalized. And you can truly never be overcapitalized, but you can be undercapitalized. We were undercapitalized. So that really dictated my role from day one.
Wireless Sensors	Where I kick in, my role in the fundraising and the due diligence. He’s [my partner] sold them [investors] on the initial value, right? They are interested. Now I’ve got to come in and say, “Is this for real?” That’s what I do really well, that one on one, face-to-face, do the walk you through, give the tour, talk about this thing, “Have you ever done this before? Let me get you involved.”
Compression Garments	Tomorrow, my day will all of a sudden change because my investor was supposed to be here and my audit person and my accountant person were supposed to be here. And that’s one of the things I have to regulate.
Advertising Services	After I sold my company and I had the cash and I started looking around, I realized how hard it was for entrepreneurs to raise money. And when I was raising money for my company in the late 90s and early 2000s, I am from [city]. My family has been there for 100 years. We had a well-known company there. It sold in the early 90s. We were just corporate citizens. I could get people to write a check to me, but I could not get in to see them. I did not appreciate right away what an anomaly I was. So now fast forward to 2008 and 2009 and I am starting to write checks and I talking to entrepreneurs and they haven’t got anywhere to go...so that’s when I decided I need to start focus on helping entrepreneurs [raise money].

Table 13. continued

Firm	Exemplary Quotes on Roles Associated with Acquiring Financial Resources
Franchise Consulting	If we were really heavily capitalized, we would have 20 to 30 percent more people right now. As you know, it is all about cash flow... You know where you need to go. You know what types of assets and people that you need to put into place. [But getting there] is a question of funding. It is simply funding.
Coffee House / Roasting	I thought about investors to support that, because it's a pretty significant cash requirement to open a new coffee house somewhere. So I've thought repeatedly about taking some partners and/or selling shares or something to raise some funds and have never pulled the trigger on that. Again, my advisor, Ed has fairly strongly advised me not to get partners involved because of the complications and interpersonal issues associated with having a partner. If you can't decide on your own, you really can't decide with a partner in the mix.
Food Products	Working with investors [has been the hardest part of the business]. It's hard to get them to give me the time of day kind of thing, even when I've got his money. That's pretty annoying.
Traffic Management Systems	The investor stuff ebbs and flows. It becomes the most important thing in the world sometimes. Sometimes it is 90 percent of my time, but in between it is probably 10 to 15 percent.

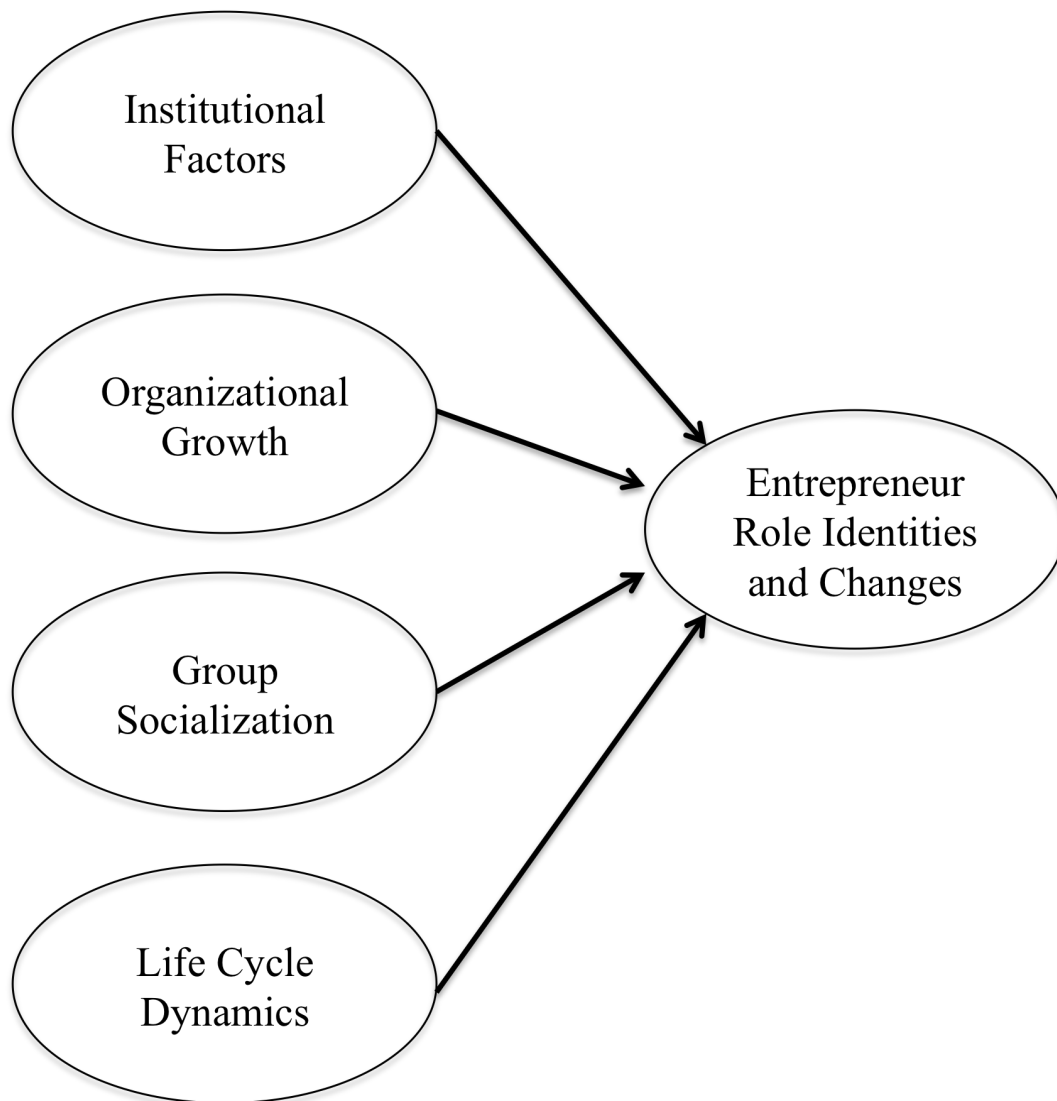


FIGURE 1
General Model Linking the Antecedents of Role Identity

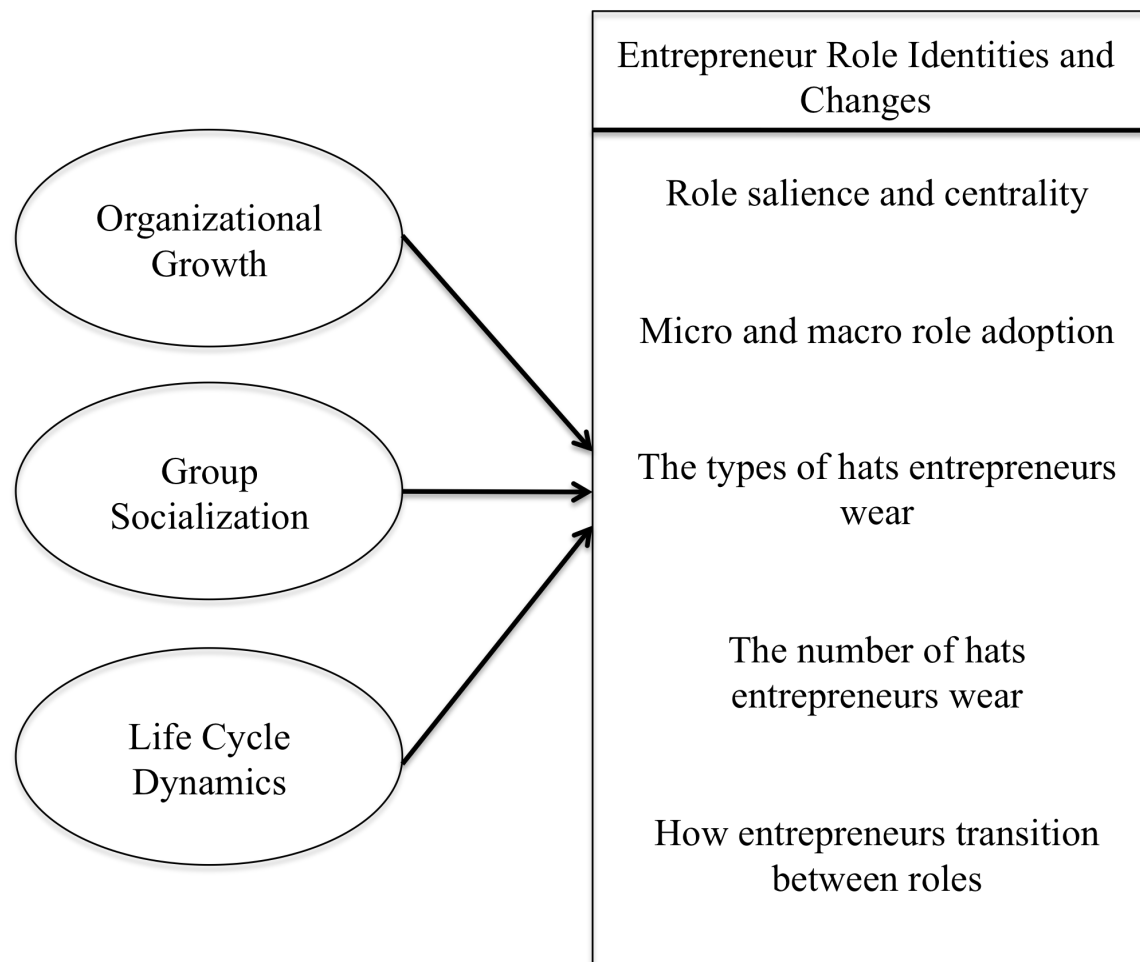
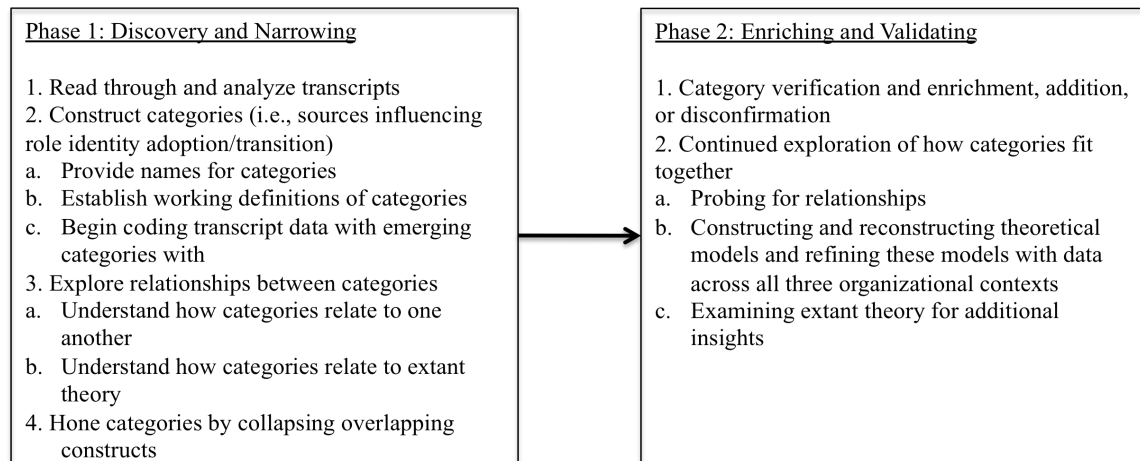


FIGURE 2
Model Linking the Antecedents of Role Identity for Organizational Leaders



* Adapted from Figure 1 in Pratt and Rosa, 2003: 397.

FIGURE 3
Data Analysis Process*

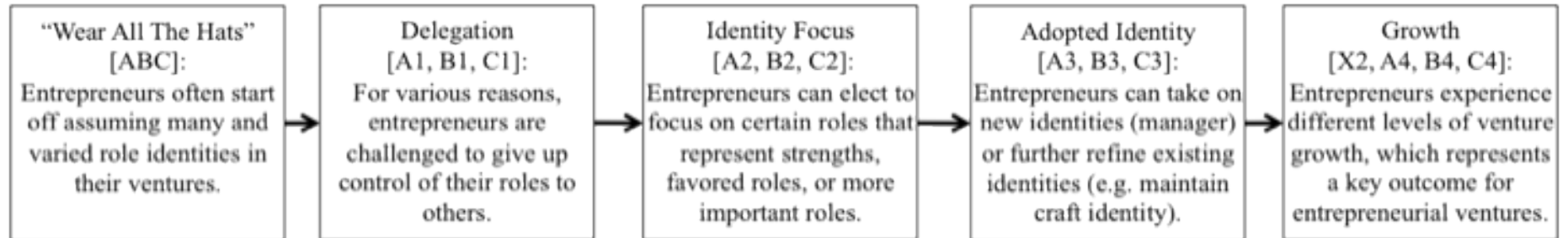


FIGURE 4
General Path Model: Role Transition Processes

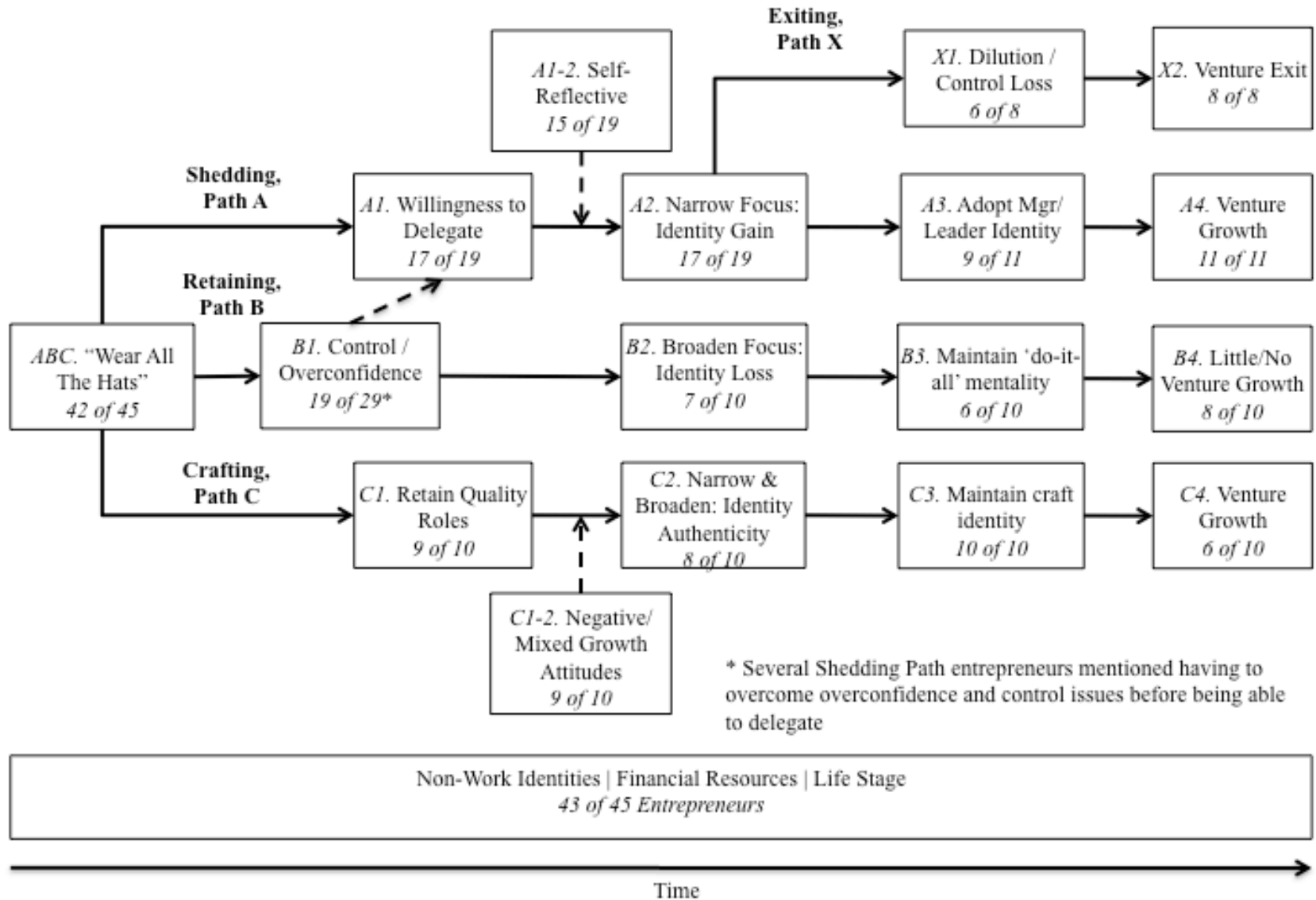


FIGURE 5
Specific Path Model: Role Transition Processes

VITA

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