

Title: Becoming Entrepreneurial: gaining legitimacy in the nascent phase

Karen L. Williams Middleton; Dept. of Technology Management and Economics (Division of Management of Organizational Renewal and Entrepreneurship); Chalmers University of Technology; Gothenburg, Sweden
Email: karen.williams@chalmers.se

Structured Abstract:

Purpose - The purpose of the article is to examine how legitimacy as ‘an entrepreneur’ is gained in relation to others during the nascent phase.

Design/methodology/approach – Two firm creating teams are studied over a 12 month incubation period. Data collected through participant observation, documentation and interviews is employed as narratives in order to explore how nascent entrepreneurs gain legitimacy through social interaction. Positioning theory is used to explore how negotiated rights and duties are employed towards legitimacy gaining strategies.

Findings – Conforming, selecting and manipulating strategies are used to gain legitimacy during a process of firm creation through interactive dialogue with key stakeholders (role-set). Positioning facilitates a process of negotiated rights and duties that helps to define the role of ‘entrepreneur’ to which the nascent entrepreneurs aspire.

Research limitations/implications - The study is bounded to a specific contextual setting and thus initial findings would benefit from further investigation in comparable and control settings. Findings illustrate the ways in which nascent entrepreneurs employ legitimacy gaining strategies through interaction with key stakeholders, an area of research not well understood. This contributes to an understanding of how entrepreneurial identity is developed.

Practical implications - Designed firm creation environments can facilitate interaction with key stakeholders and support positioning of nascent entrepreneurs as they attempt to gain legitimacy in the role of ‘entrepreneur’, while creating a new firm. Legitimacy gaining strategies can strengthen entrepreneurial identity development, which can be applied to multiple entrepreneurial processes.

Originality/value - The article accesses individuals in the process of becoming entrepreneurs, a phenomenon most often studied in hindsight. Emphasis on stakeholder interaction as contributing to entrepreneurial development is also understudied. Legitimacy gaining strategies are explored through narratives using positioning theory, an approach which has been discussed conceptually but not readily applied empirically.

Keywords: entrepreneur, legitimacy, nascent, narrative, positioning

Acknowledgments:

The author would like to thank Simon Down for his advice in the development of the article as well as the journal reviewers and editor for their constructive comments towards improving the article. The author would also like to acknowledge her colleagues Anne Donnellon, Mats Lundqvist, and Susanne Ollila for their feedback and suggestions as the article developed.

1.0 Introduction

Legitimizing one's entrepreneurial identity is a substantial challenge facing first-time, nascent entrepreneurs. Recognition in fulfilling the role of 'entrepreneur' is often not achieved until one has already (successfully) completed actions associated with the role. This ex post phenomenon has created a 'survival bias' (Davidsson 2006; Gartner et al. 2010) that hampers our understanding of how individuals legitimize themselves towards others as they become entrepreneurial. Understanding is further constrained by societal examples of existing entrepreneurs which have resulted in stereotypical scripts of 'the entrepreneur' (Down and Warren 2008). This individual has been shaped as a heroic figure with marked characteristics (Anderson and Warren 2011; Nicholson and Anderson 2005) setting social norms of what is expected from the role 'entrepreneur', even though entrepreneurial research has argued that there is no specific set of traits that defines an entrepreneur (see, for example, Gartner 1988). Instead, the emergence of an entrepreneurial identity is argued as a social and contextual process, which often includes negotiating the creation of a new firm¹ (Rae 2006). Development of this perspective, and the associated impact on entrepreneurship research, is challenged by the difficulty of observing the process of emergence as it takes place.

Longitudinal studies of nascent entrepreneurs, initiated in the 1990's, marked the first key step towards understanding what takes place as a new firm emerges (see PSED I & II, Kauffman and CAUSEE studies by, for example Davidsson and Steffens 2011; Davidsson et al. 2011; Gartner et al. 2004; Reynolds 2007; Robb and Reynolds 2007). These studies identified a core set of activities performed (Gartner and Carter 2003) and argued as key to new firm creation (Reynolds 2007). Additional research organized the activities into four broad categories – planning, establishing legitimacy, resource combination and market behaviour (Liao and Welsch 2008). Establishing legitimacy in

¹ The term firm is used in this article, with the understanding of entrepreneurship as a process. At different stages of the process, the nascent may be working with a venture (a potential firm, not yet incorporated), or a firm (an incorporated venture). The term project is also used to signify a venture (i.e. a potential firm).

particular is found to be critical if nascent entrepreneurs, and the firms they are building, are to succeed in engaging in other firm forming actions (Delmar and Shane 2004; Tornikoski and Newbert 2007; Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002). However, the legitimacy establishing activities identified through longitudinal studies are more to do with ‘marking’ the emergence of the new firm (for example, setting up a telephone listing or bank account), and less with the establishment of a firm creating role. So while these activities are argued as a way in which nascent entrepreneurs may demonstrate the merit of their engagement to key stakeholders, the activities are not recognized as addressing how nascent entrepreneurs negotiate firm creation through social and contextual interactions (Gartner et al. 2010).

Previous research within the field of entrepreneurship has promoted a social constructionist perspective for exploring the human interactive aspects of the emergent process of entrepreneurship, capturing experiences through discursive and narrative approaches (see for example, Down and Warren 2008; Downing 2005; Gartner et al. 2010; Rae 2005). Narratives provide an approach for understanding human conduct: the intentions, purpose and reason occurring between individuals in a social order (Czarniawska 2004). Entrepreneurs are said to use ‘negotiated narratives’ as a way to develop a sense of who they are and what they do, recognizing identity as “an expression of relationship – to past (and future) conversations, events, experience, thoughts, ideas, etc.” (Fletcher and Watson 2007, p.13). Individuals construct an entrepreneurial identity through storytelling by applying “their other identities and positions, their own past and present experiences and future perspectives as resources” (Hytti 2005, p. 605). The understanding and meaning gained through narrative is not done individually, but rather as a process of positioning in which a storyline is accepted, rejected or changed by the parties involved (Davies and Harré 1990). Building from a discursive perspective, positioning theory explores more deeply how rights and duties are negotiated in dialogue with others (Harré and van Langenhove 1999), as part of an unfolding storyline (Harré et al. 2009) which allows for a more dynamic alternative to the static concept of ‘role’. Legitimizing identity can then be seen as a socially embedded process of positioning

relative to (often incumbent) rules, norms, and structures (De Clercq and Voronov 2009). Narratives and positioning are argued as important approaches for exploring how entrepreneurial identity and legitimacy are gained, with positioning theory promoted as a conceptual basis for analyzing the ongoing negotiation process.

The article examines how legitimacy in the role ‘entrepreneur’ is gained during the process of creating a new firm. Gaining legitimacy is explored through nascent entrepreneurs’ social interaction with key stakeholders, identified as a role-set (Aldrich and Zimmer 1986), recognizing that identity emergence is a social and contextual process, and building upon social constructionist approaches for exploring human interaction. The article proceeds to review literature regarding (entrepreneurial) identity and legitimacy, as well as narrative and discursive approaches, including positioning theory, as these are employed methodologically. Next, the research method and context of the study is presented in order to validate the setting as one of entrepreneurial emergence, and to explain how data for the narratives was collected and constructed. Through the employed narratives of two teams of nascent entrepreneurs and their associated role-sets, the article explores how nascents negotiate their rights and duties and employ strategies to gain legitimacy in the role ‘entrepreneur’. The article helps to further our understanding of the way in which social interactions contribute to entrepreneurial emergence, and introduces the value of using positioning theory to explore constructing identity and gaining legitimacy during the nascent phase of new firm creation.

2.0 Theoretical Foundations

Identity and legitimacy towards a ‘role’ are socially constructed through interaction with others (Benwell and Stokoe 2006; Giddens 1991). Identity, particularly when in transition, can be claimed through observing one's own behaviours and the reactions of others with whom the identity is negotiated; initially in the form of a provisional-self, which is then refined through experience (Ibarra 1999). Legitimacy is developed in part through the verbal action of making claims (Down and Warren 2008;

Gartner 2007, 2010; O'Connor 2004). Previous research using narratives has demonstrated connections between, for example, identity emergence and the negotiated activity of firm formation (Downing 2005; Dyer 1994; Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010; Lounsbury and Glynn 2001; Rae 2005). I present theoretical foundations for identity and legitimacy in order to illustrate how identity is used when gaining and establishing legitimacy as an entrepreneur, through a process of becoming, and address narratives as a mechanism for identity and legitimacy construction.

2.1 Identity and legitimacy

Individuals are seen to have multiple, socially constructed identities that are used to assign meaning to themselves and for others, based on their social roles (social identities) or on personal characteristics (personal identities) (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010). This article intends to investigate the role of 'entrepreneur' as a social identity. In order to discuss the 'entrepreneurial' specification of identity and how it contributes to gaining legitimacy in the role 'entrepreneur', it is important to recall entrepreneurship as the emergent phase of an organization (Gartner 1993; Katz and Gartner 1988), including the emergence of the individual's role relative to the organization. Entrepreneurial identities are constructed through an individual's socialization (Falck et al. 2010), building on an understanding that entrepreneurship is socially embedded (Granovetter 2000). General definitions of the entrepreneurial role are developed at a societal level through cultural norms, expectations and clichés (Anderson and Warren 2011; Down and Warren 2008). The personal components of the role are developed through relationships, dialogues and interactions, as individuals develop a sense of 'who they are' and where they are going (Fletcher and Watson 2007).

In her work on provisional-selves, Ibarra (1999) identified three main behaviours that individuals adopted to construct their identities as they transitioned into new roles: observing role models, experimenting with one's own image, or evaluating image and identity based on feedback. The reactions of others play an important part of validating (or not) new behaviours, or providing feedback for improvement relative to the

developing role (Ibarra 1999). Aspiring entrepreneurs are seen to ‘learn how to be’ through engagement with mentor networks who can enable acquisition of status and identity, as identity is recognized as emergent and relational and is developed through dialogue with family, customers, employees, suppliers, competitors and others (Rigg and O’Dwyer 2012). These key stakeholders contribute critical resources and knowledge to the emerging firm (Carsrud and Johnson 1989; O’Connor 2004), and act as a role-set (Aldrich and Zimmer 1986). The role-set can shape the “quantity and context of possible selves created and tested in adaptation” (Ibarra 1999, p. 786), as re-storied experiences shared with the role-set are woven into the self-narrative of the individual (Harmeling 2011). The role-set also justifies and legitimizes actions taken as appropriate to the role, which is particularly important when individuals are making a significant transition from previous roles (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010), for example individuals transitioning from ‘nascents’ to ‘entrepreneurs’. Through interaction with the role-set, these individuals use ‘negotiated narratives’ to translate personal identity relative to the social identity ‘entrepreneur’, which is then used to gain legitimacy in the role.

Individuals legitimize their identity through a socially embedded process of positioning relative to rules, norms, and structures (De Clercq and Voronov 2009). Legitimacy is “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (Suchman 1995, p. 574). Underlying this generalized definition, lies a complex concept implying that legitimacy will function differently depending upon the context of intended use. Establishing entrepreneurial legitimacy is argued as mainly a process of gaining legitimacy, as the individual is faced with promoting new activities in order to gain validity as an entrepreneur. Suchman outlines three main strategies for gaining legitimacy: conform to dictates of pre-existing audiences, select an audience that will support the new activities, or manipulate the existing environment to create new audiences (ibid, p. 587-593). Legitimacy involves different behavioural dynamics: pragmatic, moral, and cognitive (ibid, p. 577-584). The pragmatic behaviour for gaining legitimacy includes conforming to demands, selecting

friendly audiences, and promoting an image. The moral equivalent involves conforming to ideas, defining goals, and demonstrating success to persuade others. Cognitive behaviour towards gaining legitimacy includes conforming to models, seeking certification, and institutionalization. The need for collective interaction becomes increasingly important, as gaining legitimacy shifts from pragmatic to cognitive behaviours (ibid, p. 591).

The majority of legitimacy establishing activities for organizational emergence – determining the legal form of the firm, determining the individual role or title, presenting leadership, and communicating with key constituents including stakeholders (Liao and Welsch 2008) – can be seen as demanding stakeholder (role-set) interaction. Interaction is argued as a critical component of becoming entrepreneurial (Carsrud and Johnson 1989) in that entrepreneurs must “frame the unknown in such a way that it becomes believable” to others (Aldrich and Fiol 1994, p. 651). De Clercq and Voronov (2009) emphasize that individuals pursuing entrepreneurship gain legitimacy as the ‘entrepreneur’ through enacting ‘entrepreneurial habits’ – undertaking the activities required for new firm creation and illustrating the ability to ‘stand-out’ through breaking with convention. The enacted ‘habits’ illustrate employment of the legitimacy gaining strategies outlined by Suchman. The role-set also works with the nascent becoming the entrepreneur to build authenticity from the personal and cultural values of the group, engaging pragmatic and moral legitimizing behaviours (Aldrich and Fiol 1994; O'Connor 2004). Taking the premise that entrepreneurs and stakeholders coproduce and legitimize entrepreneurial emergence through interaction (Downing 2005), narrative and discursive theories are presented as means to facilitate investigating the social interaction utilized for gaining legitimacy.

2.2 Narrative and discursive theories

The social construction of entrepreneurial identity and legitimacy is argued to be gained by applying a narrative approach (Down 2006; Downing 2005; Holt and Macpherson 2010; Wry et al. 2011), including storytelling and the collective sharing and

reflection of experiences (Aaltio 2008; Johansson 2004). Czarniawska describes a narrative as “a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected” (2004, p.17) allowing us “to see conversations as dramatized stories, in which the participants are actors, authors, directors, and producers” (Czarniawska 1997, p. 13), thus providing us a “way of understanding human action” (ibid, p. 14). Stories are argued as particularly useful for sense-making within ambiguous situations (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001), and a narrative repertoire allows for internalization of the new role identity (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010). This identity can then be negotiated to gain legitimacy in the eyes of others. Stories that "reflect actors' positioning of individual and collective identities and understanding of actions and events" (Downing 2005, p. 193), are used to validate and legitimize relative to the role ‘entrepreneur’.

Downing (2005) emphasizes storytelling, emplotment, and narrative structuring as related and observable processes which can increase our understanding of the social interaction between entrepreneurs and their role-set. Positioning theory (Harré and van Langenhove 1999) is presented as a specialized discursive approach allowing for examination of social acts within narratives, focusing on how rights and actions are enacted in relation to others. As “within a conversation each of the participants always positions the other while simultaneously positioning him or herself” (Harré and van Langenhove 1999, p. 22), positioning provides “a dynamic alternative to the more static concept of role” (ibid, p. 14) where “the assignment of fluid ‘parts’ or ‘roles’ to speakers in the discursive construction of personal stories make a person’s actions intelligible and relatively determinate as social acts” (ibid, p. 17). Rights and duties, social force, and storylines, either presented or claimed, are developed and championed within conversations in relation to others in the team and role-set in order to exert influence. Through the dynamic interplay, exerted influence is used to gain legitimacy towards the role of ‘entrepreneur’ as it is accepted, rejected, improved upon or in other ways socially constructed.

As the communicative process continues, a mutually understood structure for interactions evolves in which the roles presented are negotiated, refined or dismissed such that repositioning takes place. This leads to the unfolding of a conversation in which actors determine their own and each other's actions in a social sense through their joint action and narrative (Davies and Harré 1990); a process which relates to the concept of re-storying, mentioned previously. The process can be understood as a 'positioning triangle': the interplay of the actors' positions, the social force of what they say and do, and the storylines of each interaction (Davies and Harré 1990; Harré and van Langenhove 1999). The positioning storylines, captured in each specific interaction, can be woven into the narrative repertoire of the individual becoming the entrepreneur, and presented through emplotment, a procedure of composing meaning by configuring temporal elements into a whole (Polkinghorne 1991). These iterations of narrative into narrative repertoire help to illustrate the translation of the personal identity towards the social identity associated to the role 'entrepreneur'. Using positioning theory recognizes the importance of capturing stories in temporal proximity, as the emotional resonance relative to key stakeholders will gradually recede as new actions occur (Downing 2005).

For the purpose of this article, positioning theory is argued as a tool for understanding the social interactions related to becoming entrepreneurial, as it allows for examination of social acts within the narratives of individuals studied, highlighting how rights and duties are enacted in relation to others. Legitimacy gaining strategies, including pragmatic, moral and cognitive behaviours, are communicated through discursive means when becoming the role of 'entrepreneur'.

3.0 Method

As the article explores how nascent entrepreneurs gain legitimacy through social interaction, a narrative approach is the chosen research method. The applied approach allows for the provocation of storytelling by the nascent entrepreneurs, set against observation of how the story is made, from the perspective of the researcher, as well as in comparison with competing or complementing stories from the role-set, presented in the

Entrepreneurial Narratives section. The interpretation and analysis of the narratives are used to illustrate the negotiation of rights and duties towards legitimacy in the role 'entrepreneur'. Key to this approach is the use of interviews, emplotment, narrative structuring and structural analysis (Czarniawska 2004; Downing 2005). The study blends historical, observational and interview methods when gathering and interpreting evidence, including use of documents, descriptions and participant observations (Hammersley 1990) to construct narratives.

As the intention of the study is to follow the entrepreneurial process as it is occurring, I begin with a description of the contextual environment (see section 3.1). There are known events, planned into the environment, that follow a chronological order, around which the teams and role-set engage and react. 'Unplanned' events also take place. Interviews are used to capture stories from nascent and role-sets that relate to a collective oral history as well as individually experienced events, and include the interviewees' logic of representation (Czarniawska 2001). It is important to recognize that the interviewees do not necessarily respond chronologically, as the oral history of the environment exists for them as well, and their logic of representation means that they put on the 'dress' of how they are expected to act relative to their role in the environment (as described in Table 1). Awareness of these logics is kept when constructing the narratives from interviews and complementary data.

Building upon the oral history, interviews and complementary data, the narratives are constructed using a chronological logic (Connerton 1989) in relation to the environment through emplotment (as presented in Table 2). Excerpts from the interviews only 'fill' part of the space between the chronological events (as exemplified in Table 4). Emplotment is utilized to construct narratives from the multiple data sources in order to make sense of the events that take place, transforming the chronology into causality (Czarniawska 2004; Somers 1994). This establishes a linear understanding between the excerpts drawn from the interviews and the chronological framework established by the oral history and design of the environment. The emplotment is shaped through selective appropriation (Downing 2005) relative to the intention to follow the entrepreneurial

process as it is occurring, in order to create a narrative structure. Triangulation of information provided (including comparison of narratives to documentation) increases validity (Flick 2006).

Finally, structural analysis (Czarniawska 2004) is used to react to the script and schema created through the employed narratives. Here, a Landau structure (Landau 1984) is used, as the fundamental interest of the study is to investigate action through an entrepreneurial process. Next, I present the context from and in which the narratives are constructed. This is followed by specification of data collection and analysis methodology.

3.1 Context

Investigating entrepreneurs in the process of becoming requires access to an environment in which an entrepreneurial process is on-going and the engaging individuals can be observed. The context utilized is a technical university incubating ideas at a stage prior to incorporation, i.e. before a legal entity has been created. Access to this environment (as a researcher) is based on an employment role in the environment, discussed in section 3.2. For the purpose of this study, the environment is called a firm creation sub-unit (FCS). Teams of three individuals (in the final year of a masters-level education) are matched with ideas (stemming from university or independent research) to be incubated and formed into a 'project' (i.e. potential new firm); the individuals are therefore identified as nascent entrepreneurs. Each team has access to a role-set, consisting of business advisors, faculty, coaches and a board as part of the design of the FCS. The project is incubated for one year. Incubation is contingent upon signing a contractual agreement designating that all parties agree to collaborate and intellectual property is owned by the project. The agreement also designates equity distribution should the project be incorporated at the end of the incubation period. The role-set descriptions and initial rights (including equity distribution) and duties are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Description and rights and duties of the nascent entrepreneur and role-set

Role	Description	Duties	Rights
Nascent entrepreneur (NE)	Student communicating entrepreneurial intent and engaging in firm creation	learn how to create a new firm and apply learning to developing the project with intention to incorporate, including fulfilling educational requirements; attract financing, develop business, represent the project towards market	3,33% ownership claim (i.e. 10% for the 3 person team); skills and knowledge as part of packaged education; support including access to staff, advisors and coaches
Idea provider (IPr)	professor, researcher or industry actor providing an idea or invention with perceived commercial value	provide the idea and associated intellectual property; 8 hrs per week of advice and support to the team, often particularly regarding technical development	up to 45% ownership claim; considered expert in field and allowed to continue research/work activities as primary focus
Incubator (Inc)	business actors providing initial investment and resources for the projects/firms	initial screening of ideas; team formation; investment and management of incubated project; partial management of incorporated firms up to point of exit	20% ownership claim; manages addition 25% used for attraction of future competency; can reject termination request (from nascent entrepreneurs) if argumentation not valid or can enact termination based on policy issues; controls seed-capital distribution
Learning Facilitator (LF)	university actors and educators responsible facilitating learning in alignment with project and entrepreneur needs	facilitating learning at individual and team level through design of interaction and provision of resources and development skills/tools; team formation; general guidance, advice and support	design of process and interaction; can enact termination if project negatively influencing individuals or core learning objectives
Board member, including chair (BM)	individual with business, industry or research expertise; idea providers and incubator (see above) are specialized board members	guide the project towards incorporation by meeting at regular intervals and approving key decisions, including approving budget allocations	oversee decisions regarding direction of project/firm, including selection of nascent(s) continuing with project should it be incorporated; no initial ownership claims but potential future equity from the remaining 25% competency pool
Advisor (Adv)	coach or consultant that provides specialized information to the team	general or specialized advice regarding business development information, sometimes provided at specific structured points through the incubation period	freedom to disengage; no initial ownership claims but potential future equity from the remaining 25% competency pool

The FCS was initiated in 2001. Between 2001 and 2005, 20 individuals were accepted into the FCS each year on average; this increased to an average of 32 from 2006 to 2010. As part of the FCS design, the core of the nascent team does not change. However, certain members of the role-set, such as the idea provider, are linked to the idea, and can thus be removed from the role-set, should the idea fail or in some other way be forced to leave the FCS. In this way, the entrepreneurial role sought by the nascent is essentially that of a surrogate (Franklin et al. 2001), such that the role of entrepreneur is not defined by creation of the initial idea but by the pursuit of a new firm based on the idea. Ideas can shift at any time during incubation, but the teams still follow the general framework provided by the FCS, which serves as the chronological order of the observed action for the narratives, as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Context and timeline of firm creation activity

January	Nascent entrepreneurs are interviewed by FCS staff to assess their skills/interest prior to entering the FCS incubation period in order to facilitate team formation. Full cohort (class) of nascent entrepreneurs collectively selects ideas to be incubated in the FCS.
February	Teams of nascent entrepreneurs are paired with an idea/idea provider and additional role-set with the intention to create a new firm. Teams receive initial financing from incubator.
March	First internal presentation of the (future) firm (FCS members only, though idea providers may attend upon invitation), including first draft of business plan. Firms begin to seek additional financing from local and regional innovation system (the process continues through remainder of incubation period).
April	
May	First external presentation of the (future) firm (including actors outside the FCS), including delivery of a written business plan.
<i>Summer</i>	<i>Summer break June through August</i>
September	Second internal presentation and delivery of business plan.
October	
November	Second external presentation and delivery of business plan.
December	
January (following year)	Incubation period ends. Firms take decision to incorporate, move to another facility, or terminate.

The focus of the study was the 2007 incubation period, which included 30 nascent entrepreneurs formed into eleven teams²: seven focused on general technology and four focused on bioscience. Two of the eleven teams were randomly selected for the study based mainly on their willingness to participate; one team had a technology-based idea and one team a bioscience-based idea. The technology-based team is labelled Team A: Ray, Kris and Jo. The bioscience-based team is labelled Team B: Calvin, Erin and Gordon. In all cases, pseudonyms are used in order to provide anonymity. Team characteristics are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Background information of nascent entrepreneurs

	Name (pseudonym)	Gender, Age (at start of incubation period)	Educational background	University of educational background
Team A	Jo	Male, 24	Business Development	Växjö
	Kris	Male, 25	Industrial Engineering	Chalmers
	Ray	Male, 25	Industrial Engineering	Chalmers
Team B	Calvin	Male, 28	Molecular Biology	Univ. Gothenburg
	Erin	Female, 22	Chemical Engineering	Chalmers
	Gordon	Male, 29	Biotechnology & Business Management	Brigham Young University

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

The main means of data collection utilized was participant observation, and individual and group interviews (Atkinson and Coffrey 2003) of nascent entrepreneurs and members of the role-set, as well as documentation and introspection (Denzin 1989).

² From 2001 to 2007, 41% of the teams in the FCS re-started with new ideas after having to shut-down their initial idea due to lack of perceived business viability in the current state. In 2007, 55% of the teams experienced at least one failure/re-start. At the end of the 2007 incubation period, 55% of the teams incorporated their projects; slightly less than the average rate (2001-2007) of incorporation of 69%. Based on this, the randomly selected teams are considered representative of the environment.

The research was conducted in-situ, with continual access to the FCS, as well as access to documentation and archival evidence, allowing for multiple phases of participant observation (Spradley 1980). Observation was conducted between January and December 2007, with additional data collected for two months following the incubation period to capture how both nascents and projects transitioned out of the FCS.

The two selected teams agreed to be interviewed at regular intervals during incubation and provided access to their documentation (ex. meeting protocols, business plans, etc.). In addition, staff interviews and written documentation from FCS staff meetings complemented specific reflections from the perspectives of the nascent entrepreneurs. In most cases, interviewees were provided with general questions a few days prior to the interview to facilitate provocation of storytelling. Interviews were recorded and then transcribed. Utilization of data taken from multiple perspectives upon the same event counters some of the challenges of role-duality.

Table 4 (using the labels from Table 1, example NE) presents specific data collection intervals for the two teams during the incubation period. The data from these intervals was combined with additional data collected from staff meetings (occurring every three weeks), presentations (four per incubation period), board meetings (occurring approximately every month, once commenced) and continual observation of the FCS. The collected data was used to emplot the narratives relative to the chronology of the FCS.

The emplotted narratives, presented in the following section, are analyzed to recognize positioning between actors over time and how this potentially results (or fails) in achieving the 'higher state' of 'entrepreneur', argued as exemplifying role acquisition (Greimas et al. 1976) or provisional identity (Ibarra 1999). Excerpts exemplifying positioning or role distinction are selected from transcribed interviews in order to illustrate how the legitimacy gaining strategies mentioned in section 2.2 are utilized by the nascent entrepreneurs, as well as role-set members. Further analysis is done to

highlight position-making, position-taking and negotiating rights and duties between actors as the nascents attempt to become legitimized entrepreneurs.

Table 4: Data collection timeline for teams A and B

Month	Date and Event	Excerpt
January 2007	22 nd : Team formation, individual interview [NE, EM]	Excerpt 1
February 2007	26 th : Participatory observation of team A [NE, LF] 28 th : Participatory observation of team B [NE, LF]	Excerpt 2
March 2007		
April 2007		
May 2007	10 th : Interview team A [NE] 11 th : Participatory observation of team A and B [NE, EM] 15 th : Interview team B [NE]	Excerpt 3 Excerpt 8
June 2007	20 th : Interview role-set member [Adv] 29 th : Interview role-set member [Adv]	Excerpt 4 Excerpt 9
July 2007		
August 2007		
September 2007	25 th : Interview team B [NE] 26 th : Participatory observation of team A and B [NE, EM]	Excerpt 10
October 2007	3 rd : Interview team A [NE]	Excerpt 5
November 2007		
December 2007	6 th : Participatory observation of team A [NE, EM] 7 th : Participatory observation of team B [NE, EM]	
January 2008	29 th : Interview with Jo [NE] 29 th : Interview with Ray [NE] 31 st : Interview with Kris [NE]	Excerpt 7 Excerpt 6
February 2008	2 nd : Informal interview with Erin (not recorded) [NE] 7 th : Interview with Gordon [NE] 11 th : Interview with Calvin [NE]	Excerpt 12 Excerpt 11

Embeddedness in the FCS as a member of one of the role-set categories facilitated primary access, pre-understanding, and awareness of organizational politics that outsiders would not have had access to, and as such the research was not reliant on espoused theories (Argyris 1991). At the same time, a position outside the nascent entrepreneurial team allowed for a necessary degree of separation from the primary research object. This small degree of separation made the inquiry less susceptible to bias. Furthermore, data for the study included participation in and documentation from meetings, which allowed for introduction of perceptions and interpretations of others operating regularly within the

FCS. Continual access to the FCS also allowed for observation and contextualization of direct and indirect social consequences (O'Connor 2004).

The study is limited to the chosen empirical landscape, including the way in which it was defined and investigated. Without additional data and comparison to other environments, the generalizability of the findings may be questioned. Even with substantial triangulation of data from the multiple sources available, analysis is still recognized as based on the interpretation of a single researcher and is thus subject to bias. Further research using employment and positioning theory would be valuable in order to establish additional explanations of how legitimacy is gained in the emergent process of becoming the entrepreneur.

4.0 Entrepreneurial Narratives

4.1 Team A

At the beginning of the incubation period, January 2007, FCS staff members have conversations with each nascent entrepreneur to gather information for team construction. *“One’s role in a group is very much dependent on the situation and the people involved.”* (Kris, Excerpt 1) At the same time, the nascent entrepreneurs collectively evaluate ideas and select eleven ideas, which become the projects for the incubation period.

Excerpt 2 (Ray): “... a lot of [the idea providers] are testing us ... you have to prove that you are up for a task. And then we start to measure them – ‘what have you been doing, what’s your idea, who have you been talking to’, and we put them on the spot.”

The FCS staff form the nascent entrepreneurs into teams and match them with a project. The teams start testing project feasibility, and by April, there are concerns about the viability of Team A’s project, based on discussions with an advisor. These concerns prove valid as an incubator representative reports shut-down of Team A’s project at the May 7th FCS staff meeting. During an interview on May 10th, the team talks about their experiences.

Excerpt 3 (Ray): “When we started [the project], we thought that it was going to be the idea provider in power ... they always had the control over the idea, they had the expertise. Then when meeting with [an advisor], seeing the other potential applications, we felt that we got hold of the team because we were outside the idea providers’ range of expertise. Then it was about how we used our position as the management team; took the ideas into the management jargon. ... [we] put the idea, through our own management experience, into the business world instead of the research world. This was a dramatic shift – we did not act as the management team until we took on the idea and internalized it for ourselves.

...

in the beginning, you pretended to be an entrepreneur, or you pretended to be an owner of a firm. ... I feel more like an entrepreneur now than I did 4 months ago.”

In the end of June, after the end of the first term, a team advisor describes the nascent entrepreneurs of Team A.

Excerpt 4 (Team A Advisor): “Ray I would say is an entrepreneur in some way. He makes things happen. He is passionate about what he does. Yes I would say that has an entrepreneurial spirit ... Jo I think is an entrepreneur or he has the desire. He wants to do something on his own and to not go into existing structures. ... Kris being more stuck in a traditional [industrialist] role.”

Each of the team members work part time with the project during the summer, while also working part time elsewhere in order to gain earnings and additional experience. Ray and Kris start to work independently on a separate idea outside the FCS together with another nascent entrepreneur. The experience gained during the first months in the FCS shifts how they present themselves towards others.

Excerpt 5 (Ray): “I present myself as an entrepreneur always, I think. ... I never talk to my friends about: ‘oh, it’s hard now because I have an exam.’ No! ... when I’m talking to them, it’s like, [I’m] not in school anymore. [I’m] actually having a company.”

The team deals with negotiation of ownership with one of the shareholders in order to secure intellectual property claims, as reported on the July 5th FCS staff meeting.

After struggles with their idea providers and the control position, the team shuts down the project and shortly thereafter takes on a new project. In separate interviews, Kris and Jo talk about the roles taken in the second project.

Excerpt 6 (Kris): “[in the first project] I was responsible for like the technical type of questions, and ... I had no problem with that, so it was fine, and I guess I was the most suited on for those types of problems. But with [the second project], it was quite hard to get that responsibility, because there were no technical developments.”

Excerpt 7 (Jo): “I think we made a mistake when we discussed what group roles to have [with the second project] ... We just took our roles ... and [I] didn’t really reflect upon how well Kris and Ray feel.

By January, Jo is the only one continuing with the project, but he is still struggling with the one of the idea providers, and by the end of January, the project is terminated. In the final interviews, both Ray and Jo express an interest to be an entrepreneur in the future. Jo starts working in the industry-sector while also becoming the chairman of a non-profit organization. Ray starts as a trainee in a telecommunications firm and then, during an informal interview in 2008, reports a promotion into a new role as business developer. Kris works as a consultant, but communicates aspirations for future entrepreneurial activity.

4.2 Team B

Only a few weeks into their incubation period, Team B experiences an initial but critical conflict with their idea provider. Their first project is shut down by the beginning of March. The team searches for a new idea, and a new project is initiated by April. At the April 13th FCS staff meeting, the team is reported to be working on patent applications. During an interview, the team talks about their experience in the first project.

Excerpt 8: “(Erin): The first time we were going to meet our first idea provider, we sat down and did not know what we were supposed to be doing ... when we met [our new idea provider], we knew what we were

doing and we could show that, and he could then say – ‘yes, you are an asset’, and we felt more in control.

...

(Gordon): For me it is obvious that we are going to become the control figures in [the firm] ... because whoever has the information will be the ones that controls it”

In another interview, an advisor describes how she views the team.

Excerpt 9 (Team B Advisor): “Erin wants to be an entrepreneur very much. ... Calvin has definitely taken on the role, I mean he loves to call himself an entrepreneur. ... Gordon, whose main strength is to analyze ... [turns] visions into something concrete. ... Erin is the one that packs it down and implements it in the end.”

During the summer, the team is preparing for clinical trials and interviewing persons for the chairman position in the board. Calvin and Gordon work with the project during the summer, while Erin gains intellectual property experience during an internship in the UK. By September, the team is working on prototyping. The team discusses their group dynamic.

Excerpt 10: “(Erin): If I don’t like something, I have started to tell my side of the story too. And I, I hate being like that, but I realize it’s better to be, just be honest about it and everything.

(Calvin): Yes, that is a difference. And it’s a great one.

(Erin): Yeah, I don’t think it’s so great. I hate myself. When I come home I just think – oh what have I done. But yeah, I’m more open, because I realize that [Calvin and Gordon] are, so I have to be as well.”

FCS staff meetings in October and November report that the team is on-track and focusing on patenting claims. At the final presentation in the end of November, the team wins awards and garners attention from external investors. A board meeting on December 14th includes discussing financing options. In the January 2008 FCS staff meeting, it is reported that Calvin and Gordon will continue with the project, working towards a critical milestone in April, after which the decision about incorporation will take place. Calvin and Gordon talk about next steps in individual interviews in the end of January 2008.

Excerpt 11 (Calvin): "...there is the question if we incorporate, who will be the CEO. ... Gordon should have the first go for the CEO place I guess. ... The most fun things to work with I think, operationally and controlling wise, are working with production and marketing. ... my thing is being out there with the customers and getting the response from them so I feel that I would probably do that work better than him."

Excerpt 12 (Gordon): "Our job is to do the financing and also try to coordinate and monitor and follow-up with the prototype development. ... Calvin's started to realize the thing that I felt, that to the idea providers, you really need to be hard-handed with a soft-hand. You have to be very structured with them. Very (pause) follow-up with them rigorously, to a point where it is almost harassing, but try to do it in a good way all the time. So the relationship is starting to change, more that I think that we are leading..."

The firm is incorporated in July 2008, with Gordon as CEO. Calvin works part time with the firm while also pursuing research. Erin does not continue with the incorporated firm. After working in a professional position at an established company, Erin takes on a role as key developer of a new firm in June 2009. In early 2010, Erin becomes CEO of a biotechnology start-up.

5.0 Analysis

The emploted narratives of Teams A and B illustrate how the nascent entrepreneurs use the gaining legitimacy strategies outlined by Suchman (1995) to either conform to existing expectations, make selections that support new activities, or manipulate their context, including their role-set, as they attempt to take-on the role of 'entrepreneur'. Each excerpt is used to show how pragmatic, moral and cognitive behaviours are employed in order to apply one or more of the three legitimacy gaining strategies. The excerpts are analyzed to identify how positioning contributes to the nascent entrepreneurs gaining legitimacy by negotiating rights and duties not only with their role-set, but each other as well.

5.1 Conforming

In the beginning of the incubation period of Team A, both Kris and Ray use conforming strategies in order to fit into the expectation of the 'entrepreneur' role, as exemplified in Excerpts 1 and 2. They are both pragmatically conforming to demands and cognitively fitting to models of the entrepreneurial role. The duties and rights of the role are defined by the FCS environment and perceptions of the role-set. Members of the role-set position the nascents relative to their demands, ideas and models (conforming strategies), as stated in descriptions of the nascents of both teams in Excerpts 4 and 9.

The nascents also use conforming strategies relative to one another. In Excerpt 10, Erin is positioning relative to her teammates Gordon and Calvin, comparing the way she is acting to how she perceives them, illustrating a social act (Harré and van Langenhove 1999) which is impacting her role in the team. She uses pragmatic behaviour to conform to the demands of her teammates, even though she states that she does not like it. Her teammates have become the audience she must conform to, setting duties for a role in the team. In Excerpts 6 and 7, Kris and Jo discuss how operative role selection impacts their ability to engage in the project. Kris' technical role in the first project was more cohesive because of the technical components of the idea, allowing him to apply conforming strategies. For the second project, the team kept the same operative roles without negotiating new rights and duties. Because the nature of the project was different, Kris' legitimacy and ability to influence the project diminishes because the duties of his role diminish. This represents indirect positioning based on rights and duties associated to the operative role, which Jo recognizes as problematic (Excerpt 7). Demands, ideas and models (conforming strategies) define what is expected of the role.

5.2 Selecting

The interactions with the role-set, and particularly the idea provider, involve a mixture of conforming and selecting behaviours. Ray illustrates this in Excerpt 2, initiating positioning in relation to the idea provider by posing questions during idea selection. The nascent entrepreneurs are aware of being perceived as beginners and try to prove that they are 'up to the task' by putting the idea provider 'on the spot'. They are

both seeking ‘certification’ from the idea provider (cognitive behaviour) while also defining goals they expect for the project (moral behaviour). The nascents also select specific role-set actors (pragmatic behaviour) to enable positioning towards other members of the role-set, which is best exemplified by Ray's discussion of a power shift towards the idea provider after speaking with an advisor (Excerpt 3). Both team narratives address that selection is part of the design of the FCS, as the teams chose the ideas/idea providers (and not vice versa). For both teams, the selection occurs twice, as they shut down their initial projects relatively soon after the incubation period starts and then select a new idea/idea provider (selecting friendly audiences – pragmatic behaviour) to work with for the remainder of the period. Team B expresses how they are able to more effectively position themselves towards their new idea provider in Excerpt 8, by defining goals in order to gain legitimacy. The nascents show how they control information and are perceived by the idea provider as 'an asset'.

5.3 Manipulating

Manipulation is initiated through pragmatic behaviour in the first stage of the entrepreneurial process, as the nascents attempt to promote an image of being ‘up to the task’ (Excerpt 3). As the teams gain experience and control over the ‘project’, they utilize their control position to negotiate rights and duties and thus manipulate their role-set in order to gain legitimacy as ‘entrepreneurs’. In Excerpt 3, Ray explains how his team was able to position themselves into the management team by shifting the way in which they spoke about the idea with the role-set, illustrating pragmatic behaviour to promote an image. Ray relates the shift to his ‘feeling more like an entrepreneur’ than previously, and echoes the claim as ‘entrepreneur’ towards friends in Excerpt 5, which can again be seen as promoting an image. Taking claim of information is utilized by Gordon even in the early stages of the second project (Excerpt 8) to gain rights and duties as a control figure. By the end of the incubation period, both Calvin and Gordon (Excerpt 11 and 12) describe how they engage with different actors and the role-set to position themselves as ‘entrepreneurs’, elaborating on how they negotiate with (and manipulate) others in order to move the project forward.

6.0 Discussion

The narratives of both teams show how the nascent entrepreneurs use pragmatic, moral and cognitive behaviour as they apply all three strategies - conforming, selecting and manipulating - to gain legitimacy. Conforming and selecting strategies seem to be more prevalent, particularly in the earlier part of the incubation period. Manipulation seems to take place later on, as the nascent gain experience within the project. Conforming and selecting strategies are seen as built into the design of the FCS, both as processes that nascent engage in (such as the selection of the idea/idea provider) but also in how various members of the role-set (but not the idea provider) encourage the nascent to negotiate rights and duties with the idea provider. This could suggest that the team members and role-set are indeed helping to legitimize the role 'entrepreneur' such that the nascent is able to build this into his/her narrative, which can then be used to further negotiate (Fletcher and Watson 2007) and promote the identity of 'entrepreneur'. However, as illustrated in Excerpts 6 and 7, conforming strategies may also diminish identity construction toward the role 'entrepreneur'.

The designed context of the FCS, including an initial framework for the rights and duties of the role-set involved in decisions impacting the firm, contributes to the process of gaining legitimacy. One example is the ownership option (Li and Simerly 1998) promised to the nascent entrepreneurs in return for their engagement responsibilities. Future ownership is a critical positioning mechanism which can be used by the nascent entrepreneurs as it designates rights towards a potential future role as owner. This sends an important signal to the role-set, but also to the nascent entrepreneur, as it facilitates introduction of a provisional identity (Ibarra 1999), upon which the entrepreneurial role can be built. This signal could be one explanation to why conforming and selecting strategies are more prevalent in the early parts of the incubation period. However, the contractual agreements only establish (potential) rights. The nascent must engage in negotiating rights and duties through positioning to establish their claims. Negotiating facilitates hypothesis testing (Alvarez and Barney 2007) and experiential learning (Taylor and Thorpe 2004), which informs decision making logics (Sarasvathy and Dew 2005)

that the nascent can use to define and legitimize oneself as an ‘entrepreneur’. The designed context also generates an oral history of the entrepreneurial process, which, together with the specific expectations and pre-determined rights and duties of the role-set, establishes a more specific ‘script’ for the role ‘entrepreneur’, in comparison to the stereotypical scripts generated from societal examples (Down and Warren 2008).

The narratives illustrate how nascent entrepreneurs negotiate their rights and duties in various situations, not only towards their role-set, but also towards each other, as individuals mirror or react relative to their peers in the process of becoming entrepreneurial. Rights around decision making and control of information in the project/firm are communicated in order to claim a position of ‘entrepreneur’ managing the firm creation process, particularly in relation to the idea provider. Claims of position and action are recognized and commented on by advisors and incubator and education representatives during interviews or staff meetings, helping to build storylines of each of the nascent towards the role ‘entrepreneur’ – to a greater or lesser extent. This can contribute to construction of the entrepreneurial identity, with the role-set playing an important part in providing feedback (Ibarra 1999) as the nascent ‘learn to be’ and re-storied experiences are shared and woven into the individual self-narratives (Harmeling 2011).

Initial failure does not mean that a team will not be able to carry out a firm successfully. However, in comparing Teams A and B, the ability to position oneself in relation to the rights, duties and responsibilities of certain roles in the firm can affect the way in which a personal storyline is told (Lounsbury and Glynn 2001). For Calvin, Gordon and Ray, positioning into the role of ‘entrepreneur’, and creating a storyline of an individual acting entrepreneurially, was developed during the entrepreneurial process, regardless of firm success or failure. For Kris, Jo and Erin, positioning in relation to others in the team or the duties of a particular role presented challenges that limited or delayed adoption of an entrepreneurial role. However, learning from negotiated rights and duties gained during firm creation (Rae 2005) potentially translated to other arenas; for example Erin’s later status as a CEO.

Legitimacy as the ‘entrepreneur’ is gained as the rights and duties associated with the creation of a firm are negotiated through positioning in relation to others. Interaction affects the way in which the nascent entrepreneurs find confidence that allow them to change their opinion about their rights. As the series of positions taken, accepted, rejected and/or refined, the nascent entrepreneur develops a storyline which can be employed strategically in order to manipulate other actors or to communicate conformity to existing rules, norms or structures. The storytelling, coupled with strategies for gaining legitimacy, helps to construct the entrepreneurial identity through use of positions and experience as resources.

7.0 Conclusion

Nascent entrepreneurs are said to shape their reality of becoming an entrepreneur through a process of acting ‘as if’, where ‘words become deeds’(Fletcher and Watson 2007; Gartner 1993). This article has explored how this is done through social interaction, utilizing narratives to illustrate how nascent entrepreneurs employ legitimacy gaining strategies towards their role-set as they attempt to achieve the role of ‘entrepreneur’. Positioning theory has been used to illustrate how nascent entrepreneurs negotiate rights and duties, not only with their role-set but also towards one another, in order to claim and assert legitimacy as the ‘entrepreneur’ over time. Thus, positioning theory is argued as a valuable approach for exploring how nascent entrepreneurs gain legitimacy during the nascent phase of new firm creation, which contributes to their becoming entrepreneurial. Rights and duties are translated into communicated storylines and ‘negotiated’ (Fletcher and Watson 2007; Rae 2006) in order to gain legitimacy in the role of ‘entrepreneur’. By helping nascents to frame the unknown in a believable way, legitimacy gaining strategies contribute to construction of an entrepreneurial identity, which can then be applied to new processes of entrepreneurial emergence.

The use of positioning theory also draws attention to the distribution and acknowledgment of rights and duties of members in a landscape of action. Evaluation of what is being said and done, as compared to an assigned role or title, involves not only

This article is © Emerald Group Publishing and permission has been granted for this version to appear here (Chalmers Library). Emerald does not grant permission for this article to be further copied/distributed or hosted elsewhere without the express permission from Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
Version of Record available at: <http://doi.dx.org/10.1108/IJEBR-04-2012-0049>

the individuals aspiring to the entrepreneurial role and additional key stakeholders (role-set) but also the context in which the entrepreneurial action is taking place. Environments designed for incubation of new ideas at universities or similar institutions offer useful areas for study of new firm creation and the entrepreneurial process. Further investigation into the micro-behaviours taking place in the ‘critical mess’ (Gartner 2006) of the environmental context around the process of new firm creation can provide further insight into how legitimacy is gained, and how this contributes to individuals becoming entrepreneurial.

References

- Aaltio, I. (2008), "Management education as an identity construction: the case of Estonia and its transition economy background" *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Small Business*, 5, 1, 83-99.
- Aldrich, H. E. and Fiol, M. C. (1994), "Fools rush in? The institutional context of industry creation" *Academy of Management Review*, 19, 4, 645-670.
- Aldrich, H. E. and Zimmer, C. (1986), "Entrepreneurship through social networks" in: Sexton, D. and Smilor, R. (eds.) *The Art and Science of Entrepreneurship*. Ballinger, Cambridge, MA, 3-23.
- Alvarez, S. A. and Barney, J. (2007), "Discovery and Creation: Alternative Theories of Entrepreneurial Action" *Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal*, 1, 1-2, 11-26.
- Anderson, A. R. and Warren, L. (2011), "The entrepreneur as hero and jester: Enacting the entrepreneurial discourse" *International Small Business Journal*, 29, 6, 589-609.
- Argyris, C. (1991), "Teaching Smart People How to Learn" *Harvard Business Review*, 4, 2, 4-15.
- Atkinson, P. and Coffrey, A. (2003), "Revisiting the relationship between participant observations and interviewing" in: Gubrium, J. F. and Holstein, J. A. (eds.) *Post Modern Interviewing*. Sage, London, 109-122.
- Benwell, B. and Stokoe, E. (2006), *Discourse and Identity*, Edinburgh University Press Ltd, Edinburgh, UK.
- Carsrud, A. L. and Johnson, W. R. (1989), "Entrepreneurship: a social psychological perspective" *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 1, 1, 21-31.
- Connerton, P. (1989), *How societies remember*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Czarniawska, B. (1997), *Narrating the Organization: Dramas of Institutional Identity*, University of Chicago Press, London, UK.
- Czarniawska, B. (2001), "Is it Possible to be a Constructionist Consultant?" *Management Learning*, 32, 2, 253-266.
- Czarniawska, B. (2004), *Narratives in Social Science Research*, Sage, London, UK.
- Davidsson, P. (2006), "Nascent entrepreneurship: empirical studies and developments." *Foundations and Trends in Entrepreneurship*, 2, 1, 1-76.
- Davidsson, P. and Steffens, P. (2011), "Comprehensive Australian Study of Entrepreneurial Emergence (CAUSEE): Project presentation and early results" in: Reynolds, P. D. and Curtin, R. (eds.) *New venture creation: An international overview*. Springer, New York, 27-52.
- Davidsson, P., Steffens, P. and Gordon, S. (2011), "Comprehensive Australian Study of Entrepreneurial Emergence (CAUSEE): design, data collection and descriptive results" in: Hindle, K. and Klyver, K. (eds.) *Handbook of Research on New Venture Creation*. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK, 216-250.
- Davies, B. and Harré, R. (1990), "Positioning: The Discursive Production of Selves" *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20, 1, 43-63.
- De Clercq, D. and Voronov, M. (2009), "Toward a Practice Perspective of Entrepreneurship: Entrepreneurial Legitimacy as Habitus" *International Small Business Journal*, 27, 4, 395-419.
- Delmar, F. and Shane, S. (2004), "Legitimizing first: Organizing activities and the survival of new ventures" *Journal of Business Venturing*, 19, 3, 385-410.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989), *The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

This article is © Emerald Group Publishing and permission has been granted for this version to appear here (Chalmers Library). Emerald does not grant permission for this article to be further copied/distributed or hosted elsewhere without the express permission from Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Version of Record available at: <http://doi.dx.org/10.1108/IJEER-04-2012-0049>

- Down, S. (2006), *Narratives of enterprise: crafting entrepreneurial self-identity in a small firm*, Edward Elgar Publishing Ltd, Cheltenham, UK.
- Down, S. and Warren, L. (2008), "Constructing narratives of enterprise: clichés and entrepreneurial self-identity" *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behaviour & Research*, 14, 1, 4-23.
- Downing, S. (2005), "The Social Construction of Entrepreneurship: Narrative and Dramatic Processes in the Coproduction of Organizations and Identities" *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 29, 2, 185-204.
- Dyer, W. G. (1994), "Toward a theory of entrepreneurial careers" *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 19, 2, 2-7.
- Falck, O., Heblich, S. and Luedemann, E. (2010), "Identity and entrepreneurship: do school peers shape entrepreneurial intentions?" *Small Business Economics*, 39, 1, 39-59.
- Fletcher, D. E. and Watson, T. M. (2007), "Entrepreneurship, Management Learning and Negotiated Narratives: 'Making it Otherwise for Us - Otherwise for Them'" *Management Learning*, 38, 1, 9-26.
- Flick, U. (2006), *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications, London, UK.
- Franklin, S., Wright, M. and Lockett, A. (2001), "Academic and surrogate entrepreneurs in university spinout companies." *Journal of Technology Transfer* 26, 1/2, 127-141.
- Gartner, W. B. (1988), "'Who is an Entrepreneur?' Is the Wrong Question" *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 12, 4, 11-32.
- Gartner, W. B. (1993), "Words lead to deeds: Towards an organizational emergence vocabulary" *Journal of Business Venturing*, 8, 3, 231-239.
- Gartner, W. B. (2006), "Entrepreneurship, psychology and the 'Critical Mess'" in: Baum, J. R., Frese, M. and Baron, R. A. (eds.) *The Psychology of Entrepreneurship*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, 325-334.
- Gartner, W. B. (2007), "Entrepreneurial narrative and a science of the imagination" *Journal of Business Venturing*, 22, 5, 613-627.
- Gartner, W. B. (ed.) (2010), *ENTER: Entrepreneurial Narrative Theory Ethnomethodology and Reflexivity*, Clemson, SC: Clemson University Digital Press.
- Gartner, W. B. and Carter, N. M. (2003), "Entrepreneurial behavior and firm organising processes" in: Acs, Z. J. and Audretsch, D. B. (eds.) *Handbook of Entrepreneurship Research*. Kluwer, Dordrecht, NL, 195-221.
- Gartner, W. B., Carter, N. M. and Reynolds, P. D. (2004), "Business start-up activities" in: Gartner, W. B., Shaver, K. G., Carter, N. M. and Reynolds, P. D. (eds.) *Handbook of Entrepreneurial Dynamics: The Process of Business Creation*. Sage, Thousand Oakes, 285-298.
- Gartner, W. B., Carter, N. M. and Reynolds, P. D. (2010), "Entrepreneurial Behavior: Firm Organizing Processes" in: Acs, Z. J. and Audretsch, D. B. (eds.) *Handbook of Entrepreneurship Research: An Interdisciplinary Survey and Introduction*. Springer, New York, 99-127.
- Giddens, A. (1991), *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Polity Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Granovetter, M. (2000), "The economic sociology of firms and entrepreneurs" in: Swedberg, R. (ed.) *Entrepreneurship: The social science view*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 244-275.

This article is © Emerald Group Publishing and permission has been granted for this version to appear here (Chalmers Library). Emerald does not grant permission for this article to be further copied/distributed or hosted elsewhere without the express permission from Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Version of Record available at: <http://doi.dx.org/10.1108/IJEER-04-2012-0049>

- Greimas, A. J., Courtés, J. and Rengstorf, M. (1976), "The Cognitive Dimension of Narrative Discourse" *New Literary History*, 7, 3, 433-447.
- Hammersley, M. (1990), *Reading Ethnographic Research: A Critical Guide*, Longman, London, UK.
- Harmeling, S. S. (2011), "Re-storying an entrepreneurial identity: education, experience and self-narrative" *Education + Training*, 53, 8/9, 741-749.
- Harré, R., Moghaddam, F. M., Cairnie, T. P., Rothbart, D. and Sabat, S. R. (2009), "Recent Advances in Positioning Theory" *Theory Psychology*, 19, 1, 5-31.
- Harré, R. and van Langenhove, L. (1999), *Positioning Theory*, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., Oxford, UK.
- Holt, R. and Macpherson, A. (2010), "Sensemaking, rhetoric and the socially competent entrepreneur" *International Small Business Journal*, 28, 1, 20-42.
- Hytti, U. (2005), "New meanings for entrepreneurs: from risk-taking heroes to safe-seeking professionals" *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 18, 6, 594-611.
- Ibarra, H. (1999), "Provisional Selves: Experimenting with Image and Identity in Professional Adaptation" *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44, 4, 764-791.
- Ibarra, H. and Barbulescu, R. (2010), "Identity as Narrative: Prevalence, effectiveness, and consequences of narrative identity work in macro work role transitions" *Academy of Management Review*, 35, 1, 135-154.
- Johansson, A. W. (2004), "Narrating the Entrepreneur" *International Small Business Journal*, 22, 3, 273-293.
- Katz, J. and Gartner, W. B. (1988), "Properties of Emerging Organizations" *Academy of Management Review*, 13, 3, 429-441.
- Landau, M. (1984), "Human Evolution as Narrative: Have hero myths and folktales influenced our interpretations of the evolutionary past?" *American Scientist*, 72, 3, 262-268.
- Li, M. and Simerly, R. L. (1998), "The Moderating Effect of Environmental Dynamism on the Ownership and Performance Relationship" *Strategic Management Journal*, 19, 2, 169-179.
- Liao, J. and Welsch, H. (2008), "Patterns of venture gestation process: Exploring the differences between tech and non-tech nascent entrepreneurs" *The Journal of High Technology Management Research*, 19, 2, 103-113.
- Lounsbury, M. and Glynn, M. A. (2001), "Cultural Entrepreneurship: Stories, Legitimacy, and the Acquisition of Resources" *Strategic Management Journal*, 22, 6/7, 545-564.
- Nicholson, L. and Anderson, A. R. (2005), "News and Nuances of the Entrepreneurial Myth and Metaphor: Linguistic Games in Entrepreneurial Sense-Making and Sense-Giving" *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 29, 2, 153-172.
- O'Connor, E. (2004), "Storytelling to be real: narrative, legitimacy building and venturing" in: Hjorth, D. and Steyaert, C. (eds.) *Narrative and Discursive Approaches in Entrepreneurship*. Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK, 105-124.
- Polkinghorne, D. (1991), "Narrative and self-concept" *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 1, 2-3, 135-153.
- Rae, D. (2005), "Entrepreneurial learning: a narrative-based conceptual model" *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 12, 3, 323-335.
- Rae, D. (2006), "Entrepreneurial learning: A conceptual framework for technology-based enterprise" *Technology Analysis & Strategic Management*, 18, 1, 39-56.
- Reynolds, P. D. (2007), "New Firm Creation in the United States: A PSED I Overview" *Foundations and Trends in Entrepreneurship*, 3, 1, 1-150.

This article is © Emerald Group Publishing and permission has been granted for this version to appear here (Chalmers Library). Emerald does not grant permission for this article to be further copied/distributed or hosted elsewhere without the express permission from Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Version of Record available at: <http://doi.dx.org/10.1108/IJEER-04-2012-0049>

- Rigg, C. and O'Dwyer, B. (2012), "Becoming an entrepreneur: researching the role of mentors in identity construction" *Education + Training*, 54, 4, 319-329.
- Robb, A. and Reynolds, P. (2007), "PSED II and the Kauffman Firm Study" in: Reynolds, P. and Curtin, R. T. (eds.) *New Firm Creation in the United States: Initial Explorations with the PSED II Data Set*. Springer, New York, NY USA, 279-302.
- Sarasvathy, S. D. and Dew, N. (2005), "Entrepreneurial logics for a technology of foolishness" *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 21, 4, 385-406.
- Somers, M. R. (1994), "The Narrative Constitution of Identity: A Relational and Network Approach" *Theory and Society*, 23, 5, 605-649.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980), *Participant Observation*, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, New York, NY.
- Suchman, M. C. (1995), "Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches." *Academy of Management Review*, 20, 3, 571-610.
- Taylor, D. W. and Thorpe, R. (2004), "Entrepreneurial learning: a process of co-participation" *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, 11, 2, 203-211.
- Tornikoski, E. T. and Newbert, S. L. (2007), "Exploring the determinants of organizational emergence: A legitimacy perspective" *Journal of Business Venturing*, 22, 2, 311-335.
- Wry, T., Lounsbury, M. and Glynn, M. A. (2011), "Legitimizing Nascent Collective Identities: Coordinating Cultural Entrepreneurship" *Organization Science*, 22, 2, 449-463.
- Zimmerman, M. A. and Zeitz, G. J. (2002), "Beyond Survival: Achieving New Venture Growth by Building Legitimacy" *Academy of Management Review*, 27, 3, 414-431.