1042-2587

Family Business, Identity Conflict, and an Expedited Entrepreneurial Process: A Process of Resolving Identity Conflict

Dean Shepherd
J. Michael Haynie

Drawing on Identity Control Theory (ICT) and the literature on social identity, we offer a model of the dynamics associated with competing family and business identities brought into conflict by "family-business" events. We introduce the notion of the family-business role as a distinct identity functioning at the intersection of family and business identities. This meta-level identity "manages" conflict between the family and the business identities, and is formulated and transformed within the family structure. To illustrate the dynamics of the family-business meta-identity, in this article we focus on entrepreneurial opportunities as potentially identity conflict-triggering events and illustrate how and with what impact the meta-identity works to resolve identity conflict at the intersection of family and business so as to expedite the entrepreneurial process. We conclude with a discussion of the implications of our model.

"Other things may change us, but we start and end with family."
—Anthony Brandt

Introduction

"The family business is a business governed and/or managed with the intention to shape and pursue the vision of the business held by a dominant coalition controlled by members of the same family or a small number of families in a manner that is potentially sustainable across generations of the family or families" (Chua, Chrisman, & Sharma, 1999). Although there is some debate over the precise definition of a family business, most revolve around the kinship of family members owning and running a venture (Heck & Trent, 1999; Rogoff & Heck, 2003; Wortman, 1994). Indeed, it is the intersection between family members, the family, and the business that is believed to represent the unique set

Please send correspondence to: Dean Shepherd, tel.: (812) 856-5220; e-mail: shepherd@indiana.edu, and to J. Michael Haynie, tel.: (315) 443-3392; e-mail: jmhaynie@syr.edu

of features that explain performance differences between family and nonfamily businesses (Habbershon, Williams, & MacMillan, 2003). This intersection also represents a source of conflict within the family and within the business (Daily & Dollinger, 1993; Harvey & Evans, 1994; Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004). Conflict within the family may arise as a result of business issues such as disagreements over growth targets, succession, product offerings, or even from seemingly mundane issues like hours of operation. Conflict within the business may also be driven by family issues such as time spent away from the home, marital differences, or inattention to important family events. In either case, the origins of these conflicts are often the direct result of the close and repeated interaction between family members, the family, and the business.

Central to understanding the implications of role conflict on family business is understanding the behavioral expectations associated with the identity of family member and also of business owner.[1] Identity can be defined as an internalized set of behavioral expectations associated with a particular role, where a role represents a social category such as parent, teacher, or entrepreneur (Cantor & Mischel, 1979; Stryker, 1968). In this regard, family business represents a situation where the boundaries between those competing identities blur and are often ill-defined (Danes & Olson, 2003). Importantly, the behavioral expectations associated with each role—when considered independently from each other (family and business owner)—are defined by cues from the broader social context; that is, the social context sets an "identity standard" as to the behaviors appropriate for these distinct identities (Burke, 2003). While these socially ascribed standards may not be shared universally (and certainly may vary across cultures [Austers, 2002; Choi, Nisbett, & Smith, 1997]), social categories provide a comparator for behaviors and actions appropriate to a given identity. **Identity conflict** *results when one internalizes a specific identity (i.e., family, business owner, etc.) and subsequently acts in a way inconsistent with the expectations for that role*.

However, in the context of family business a common source of conflict originates at the *intersection* of the family identity and business identity; **family–business identity conflict** *refers to situations or circumstances where the family identity and the business identity are activated together, but to act in a way consistent with one concurrently requires actions inconsistent with the other*. What are the behavioral expectations situated at the intersection of two socially defined identities? Moreover, how and why are those expectations formulated, informed, and adapted? Answers to these questions are central to understanding an important source of conflict in family businesses—identity conflict—and also the dynamics of resolving this conflict in such a way as to open the door to entrepreneurial action.

In this article we draw on Identity Control Theory (ICT) and the literature on social identity to develop the notion that the family and the business identities are subsumed within a meta-identity, a structure we define as *family-business meta-identity*. The **family-business meta-identity** represents a higher-level identity that serves to inform "*who we are as family*" and "*who we are as a business*" in a way that represents the intersection of these sometimes competing identities, thus defining "*who we are as a family business*." The family-business meta-identity represents the structure through which conflict at the intersection of family and business is resolved. We focus on the evaluation of entrepreneurial opportunities as a situation that likely triggers conflict between the family and business identities to explain how the family-business meta-identity resolves identity

1. Consistent with social psychology literature we use the term "identity" to also mean "role identity" (e.g., Burke, 1991; Burke & Tully, 1977; Stryker, 1968; Stryker & Burke, 2000).

conflict by applying previous solutions for similar conflicts and transforming itself (through identity negotiation) to resolve dissimilar conflicts.

Although on the one hand we acknowledge that the diversity of knowledge, experience, and opinions that generate conflict can enhance the comprehensiveness of decisions (Bantel, 1993), our theorizing is based on the "dark side" of conflict for family business, specifically that extended periods of identity conflict can have adverse consequences on a family member's psychological well-being (e.g., Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Perrewé, Hochwarter, & Kiewitz, 1999), the functioning of the family unit (e.g., Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998), and the performance of the business (e.g., Beckhard & Dyer, 1983). For family businesses, "lingering" identity conflict represents an impediment to expeditious decision making with regard to entrepreneurial action.

In developing our dynamic model of managing identity conflict, we make three primary contributions to both the identity and family-business literatures. First, family business represents an ideal context to investigate how identities adapt over time. The central premise of theories of social identity is that identity is socially constructed; that is, the behavioral expectations associated with a given role are defined based on social categories representative of an identity standard (Burke, 2003; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Extant theorizing with regard to situations where roles come into conflict has focused on managing identity boundaries (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Shepherd & Haynie, 2009; Sundaramurthy & Kreiner, 2008) or transitions between identities (Ashforth, 2001; Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). There are numerous studies that highlight the conflict arising from obligations to the family and to the business (Daily & Dollinger, 1993; Harvey & Evans, 1994; Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004). We take the position that in situations where the meanings of competing identities are intimately connected and constantly intersecting, such as in family business, a meta-level identity develops that represents the shared meaning of "who we are as a family business." This meta-identity works to identify and address (resolve) conflicting role expectations between the family and the business identities, which is highly salient in family businesses but less so in nonfamily businesses. This conceptualization is consistent with ICT in that the family-business meta-identity is "located near the top of a prominence hierarchy" and therefore may "control the meanings of identities lower in the hierarchy" (Burke, 2003; Deaux, 1992, 1993).

Second, while the literature on identity formation is extensive in both psychology and sociology, scholars have focused primarily on roles accompanied by relatively clear behavioral expectations, such as teachers (e.g., Snyder & Spreitzer, 1984), parents (e.g., Cast, 2004; DeGarmo & Forgatch, 2005), and students (e.g., Serpe, 1987). The behavioral expectations associated with these identities are often well-defined, relatively certain, and closely held by a society. Such frameworks are inadequate to capture the dynamics of how the family-business identity is constructed and informed, because the behavioral expectations associated with the family-business role are likely *not* broadly socially constructed but instead interpreted and defined in a way that is idiosyncratic to the family itself. Our model acknowledges the idiosyncratic nature of the family-business identity and investigates how the family-business meta-identity is informed over time. We suggest that understanding the dynamics of how the family-business meta-identity operates and is transformed can explain heterogeneity in the ability of family businesses to resolve identity conflict, and act quickly to exploit opportunities (or similarly reject an opportunity and refocus attention elsewhere). It can also inform differences between family and nonfamily firms in the generation and resolution of conflict over opportunities and the speed of the decision of whether or not to exploit a specific opportunity.

Finally, family-business scholars acknowledge the interaction between family and business as the defining attribute of the research area (Brockhaus, 1994; Lee & Rogoff, 1996). As a result, identity conflict at this intersection has been central to the family-business literature (Beckhard & Dyer, 1983; Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004). However, the role of conflict in *transforming* identity is new to family-business research. We suggest in this article that identity conflict, and the resolution of conflict within the family structure, serves as the impetus for the development of a dynamic, family-business meta-identity. Further, our model relates the transformation of the family-business identity to an expeditious—speedy and comprehensive—entrepreneurial process.

An Expeditious Entrepreneurial Process

For a family business, like for all firms, prior research suggests important benefits to making speedy strategic decisions and in turn acting on those decisions. Eisenhardt (1990) proposed that "the best strategies are irrelevant if they take too long to formulate," especially in fast-moving, high-technology environments. Indeed, speed is believed to be a key to building a competitive advantage (Brown & Karagozoglu, 1993; Kessler & Chakrabarti, 1996). As Baum and Wally (2003) argued, decision speed leads to early adoption of new products or business models that generate competitive advantage (Jones, Lanctot, & Teegen, 2000), the early adoption of efficiency-gaining process technologies, and preemptive resource and organizational combinations that create synergies. Specifically, speed to discover an opportunity, develop it, and introduce it to the marketplace or to internal operations is a key dimension of firm performance (Mansfield, 1988; Shepherd & Levesque, 2002). Although speed is of greater value in fast-moving environments, it appears to also be an advantage in the pursuit of opportunities in stable environments (Stevenson & Gumpert, 1985; Baum & Wally).

That said, some have argued that speedy decision making may not always lead to actions that result in superior performance or competitive advantage. For example, it has been suggested that accelerated decision making can produce *negative* outcomes born of substantive reductions in the comprehensiveness of one's decision-making process (Fredrickson, 1984; Kahneman, Treisman, & Gibbs, 1992). For example, while decision speed can be enhanced by forgoing conflict resolution, as noted earlier the process of conflict and its resolution can enhance the comprehensiveness of the strategic decision-making process (Bantel, 1993; Eisenhardt, 1990). Further, while ignoring conflict might speed the decision-making process, it also likely marginalizes other necessary factors central to the speedy pursuit of opportunity—primarily the commitment of those required to enact the exploitation decision (Jermier & Berkes, 1979; Knoop, 1995).

Our theory development, in the context of family business, is focused on understanding the mechanisms that facilitate both an expeditious and comprehensive decision-making process. Speed can enhance the comprehensiveness of actions by providing valuable information to inform subsequent actions necessary for successful adaptation (Eisenhardt, 1989; Mosakowski, 1997). The decision can be speedy and comprehensive—expeditious—when the firm has a mechanism for more quickly resolving conflict and for integrating this decision with previous choices and tactics (Eisenhardt). In the model that follows, we focus on the role that resolving identity conflict within a family business has on expediting the entrepreneurial process. For those family businesses that pursue opportunity without resolving family–business identity conflict, the entrepreneurial process is unlikely to be expeditious; the decision is unlikely to be comprehensive, and action will be slowed by uncommitted, unwilling family members. For those family businesses that can quickly resolve identity conflict, the entrepreneurial process is expedited—either (1) the decision not to pursue an opportunity will lead to the speedy reallocation of resources to the evaluation of other potential opportunities (reduce the opportunity cost associated with the evaluation process), or (2) the decision to pursue an opportunity will be more comprehensive and its pursuit more expeditious, such that the family business is in a position to exploit the opportunity to its fullest potential.

Resolving Identity Conflict in Family Businesses

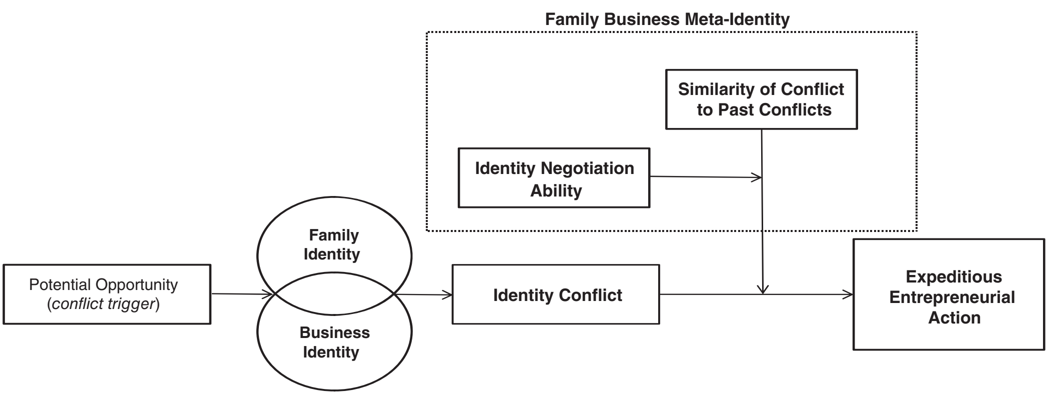
A Model of Identity Conflict Resolution in Family Businesses

Building on ICT (Burke, 1991, 2001) and the social identity literature (e.g., Tajfel & Turner, 1986), we develop a model of identity conflict resolution in family businesses. As illustrated in Figure 1, we focus on the assessment of an opportunity as an event that may trigger conflict between the family and business identities. We define opportunity assessment as the evaluation of a perceived opportunity to bring into existence future goods or services for gain (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). While we do not necessarily suggest that opportunity assessment represents the only source of potential conflict within the context of a family business, we do argue that the pursuit of new and different (to the family business) opportunities is highly likely to trigger family–business identity conflict. This identity conflict, in turn, interrupts the entrepreneurial decision-making process, slowing the comprehensive consideration of whether or not to pursue an opportunity. Identity conflict is resolved either within the existing routines represented by the current family-business meta-identity or resolved by the transformation of that family-business meta-identity. Our model of identity conflict resolution provides insight into a unique process of family businesses. Family businesses differ (from each other and from nonfamily businesses) in the generation and resolution of identity conflict. Resolution of identity conflict is enhanced when the conflict is similar to past, resolved identity conflicts and/or for those family businesses that are more able to renegotiate their meta-identity.

We now develop our model in detail. In what follows, we state our key assumptions and boundary conditions, develop the mechanisms represented by the model in more detail, and then offer propositions that relate entrepreneurial opportunities and the resolution of family–business identity conflict that may result from those opportunities to decisions to act (or not).

Figure 1

A Model of Identity Conflict Resolution in Family Businesses



Key Assumptions and Boundary Conditions

The first boundary condition relates to the level of analysis. The family business is the focal level of analysis for our model. The family-business outcome of the expeditious pursuit of opportunity is explained by the resolution of conflict between the family and business identities at a meta-identity level. Although these relationships are likely influenced by factors at a more macro level (e.g., institutional and cultural-level factors) and a more micro level (e.g., an individual's characteristics, micro-identities, and behaviors), we focus on developing a more middle-range theory.

Second, family businesses likely vary in their capability to respond expeditiously to potential opportunities. For example, some firms have structures, facilities, and/or operations that are more time consuming to change than those of other family businesses. We focus on one aspect of an expedited entrepreneurial process in the family business—the family's ability to resolve identity conflict.

Third, there are numerous types of conflict—e.g., process, general cognitive, and affective. We focus on identity conflict and its resolution to enable the expeditious evaluation, and where appropriate, pursuit of opportunity. The nature, interrelationship, and performance implications of these other forms of conflict are interesting but beyond the scope of the current article.

Fourth, although most environments appear to be fast moving and hypercompetitive (D'Aveni, 1995; Ireland & Hitt, 1999), there is likely variation in the extent to which an environment rewards speed. Consistent with empirical studies (Baum & Wally, 2003; Eisenhardt, 1989), we assume there is a positive relationship between decision-making speed and performance (holding constant decision comprehensiveness), but our model does not depend on it.

Finally, we develop our model in the context of family businesses because they offer an exemplar, where the family and business identity are inseparably intertwined. Our model may apply to other contexts that place high importance on the development and evolution of a meta-identity for resolving conflict with subordinate identities but is beyond the scope of the current article. We also start with an existing family business and the transformation of a family-business meta-identity and not with a nascent family business creating its meta-identity (although we believe that the principles of transformation are likely to be similar to creation). Although we focus on explaining heterogeneity among family firms, the model's nuanced relationships are starker when the comparison shifts to family versus nonfamily firms. Nonfamily firms are less likely to face identity conflict (between family and business) over the assessment of opportunity and therefore are unlikely to develop a comprehensive meta-identity for resolving such conflict, the implications of which are explored in the discussion.

Identity, Identity Conflict, and the Family Business

In order to understand how individuals conceptualize their own identities, it is necessary to take into consideration the broader social context in which they work, socialize, and engage in all forms of human interaction (Burke, 2003; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). Generally, theories of social identity are grounded in the premise of social categories (Tajfel & Turner, 1979, 1986). Social categories are self-defining and based upon the notion of intragroup similarity in behaviors and attributes prototypical to the referent social group (Cantor & Mischel, 1979; Fiske & Taylor). For example, to describe an individual as a "business owner" invokes a meaning and a set of attributes that define and bound this social category "business owners," such as how that individual acts, dresses, and speaks, with whom he or she associates, his or her education level, etc. The more features an individual shares with other category members, the more consistently, consensually, and quickly that individual is identified as a group member (Fiske & Taylor). Social categorization serves two important purposes for the group: (1) social categories serve to give "order" to the social environment, and (2) they also serve to situate the group within that environment (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Turner, 1985). Put simply, social categorization allows one to formulate an identity grounded in a social comparator (Burke, 2003). The notion of a socially situated identity becomes more complex, however, when you acknowledge the fact that groups maintain multiple identities (Ashforth et al., 2000).

The different identities that may be together representative of a given group membership are each associated with behavioral expectations defined, in large part, by the norms and customs ascribed by the broader social context in which the role is situated (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stryker & Statham, 1985). Especially in the case of family business relative to nonfamily businesses, individuals juggle the competing behavioral expectations ascribed by at least two distinct roles—the family member and the business owner. As identity is defined based upon behavioral expectations associated with a socially ascribed role (Stryker & Burke), we define the **family identity** as *the set of behavioral expectations associated with the family role*. As generally characterized by psychologists and sociologists, the family role represents behavioral expectations focused toward nurturing (Giordano, 2003), caregiving (Lechner, 1993), protection (Goldberg, Grusec, & Jenkins, 1999), commitment and loyalty to family members (Knoester, Petts, & Eggebeen, 2007), and a collective gain/loss orientation (Berger & Janoff-Bulman, 2006). The nature of the behavioral expectations for a specific family may be explicitly stated in the form of a family creed and/or as part of the family culture reflected in artifacts, stories, and rituals.

Similarly, we define the **business owner identity** *as the set of behavioral expectations associated with the business owner role*. As generally characterized in the psychology and business literatures, the business owner role represents behavioral expectations focused toward extrinsic rewards (income, growth, public success) (Kuratko, Hornsby, & Naffziger, 1997), devotion to the business and its employees (Muse, Rutherford, Oswald, & Raymond, 2005), social legitimacy (i.e., attainment of education, experience, and status) (Pines, Levy, Utasi, & Hill, 2005), and family prosperity and security (Kuratko et al.). For a particular business, specific behavioral expectations may be reflected in the organization's mission statement (Kaplan & Norton, 1992) and/or organizational culture (Kuratko et al.).

In a family business, the roles of family and business can be mutually reinforcing; however, this context can also result in conflicting role expectations. Identity conflict refers to the perception by the individual that the demands of one role (role A) make it difficult to satisfy the demands or expectations of a competing role (role B) (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Work and family typically represents such a situation, and therefore scholars have considered mechanisms to manage or avoid conflict between traditional work and family roles through compartmentalization (Bird, Bird, & Scruggs, 1983). Compartmentalization refers to a strategy by which individuals preserve the distinctiveness of each identity by invoking different identities at different times in response to different contexts and expectations (Breakwell, 1986; McCall & Simmons, 1978; Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). In research on work–family conflict, compartmentalization strategies have been shown to be effective when there are physical boundaries (home versus work) or temporal boundaries (time of day for work, family) that serve to distinguish disparate identities (Allen, Wilder, & Atkinson, 1983; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Such boundaries are central to "managing" competing identities to promote psychological well-being.

However, as opposed to nonfamily businesses, compartmentalization strategies are likely inadequate and inappropriate for family businesses as a mechanism to manage or avoid conflict resulting from the competing behavioral expectations of the family and business identities. First, the physical and temporal boundaries central to successful compartmentalization are not practical (or even appropriate) in the case of family business. Talk of issues related to the family business spills over to the dinner table, work schedules must be coordinated with soccer schedules, and discussions of family concerns and weekend plans likely coincide with stocking shelves at the family store. In cases such as this, research suggests that the level of self-regulation required to compartmentalize these intimately related roles likely leads to a state of mental fatigue (Baumeister, 2000), resulting "in poor performance on subsequent tasks requiring self-control" (Seeley & Gardner, 2003).

Second, compartmentalization strategies preclude the family business from capitalizing on synergies between the two identities that may be important for the success of the family business (Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004) and also for the psychological well-being of family members (Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). The systemic influences of family ties have been suggested to represent a source of competitive advantage (Habbershon et al., 2003; Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004). For example, attributes such as commitment, trust, and loyalty that are engendered and reinforced through family relationships serve the aims of the business. Further, the family's unique knowledge and insights into its members' distinctive talents, shortcomings, and belief systems may allow for a more effective and efficient execution of strategy than for a comparable nonfamily business.

Ultimately, as we consider the case of identity conflict in family business it is important to note that we are adopting a focus on identity at a higher level that represents the identities of family, business, and the intersection of the two. This is because, as Burke (2003) suggests, in the case of family business it is likely that this intersection represents a ***distinct case*** defined by the *shared meaning* between the family and business owner identities. Such an acknowledgment represents a distinguishing characteristic of our research lens in that we are not focused on transitions between distinct role identity boundaries. Instead we are focused on the identity standard that represents the shared attributes of the family and business owner identities. Further, family business represents an extreme case in the context of "managing" multiple identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Shepherd & Haynie, 2009). The intersection of the family and business owner identities is shared and activated simultaneously on an ongoing basis. We now turn to ICT to develop the notion of a meta-identity to "manage" the identities of family and business and their intersection.

The Family-Business Role Identity: A Meta-Identity

ICT (Burke, 2001) is based on the foundational assumptions of social identity; however, the focus of ICT is on the relationship between an identity and the *behaviors* within the context of the social structures in which these identities are embedded. People's roles link them to both the social context and also to other actors within that context, providing an identity "standard" that is socially situated. That is, how one perceives his or her identity—and how one behaves—is relative to a standard that is socially derived. "A person's identity motivates, directs, and limits his behavior" (Webster, 1975), and the focus of ICT is on the linkages between identity and behavior. For example, the role of teachers is linked to students, the role of fathers is linked to sons, and the interactions between these groups are measured against a social standard as being consistent (in alignment) or inconsistent (nonalignment) with that standard. Where ICT diverges from other theories of social identity is its emphasis on identity change.

Burke (2003) argued that in cases where identities have shared meanings, intersect, and are activated together, those identities likely exist in a hierarchy of meaning where identities at the top of the hierarchy "control the meanings of identities lower in the hierarchy." In the case of family business, the family-business meta-identity is a higher-level identity—"who we are as a family business"—that serves to conjointly inform family members as to "who we are as a family" and "who we are as a business" and how the two intersect. An existing family-business meta-identity can resolve identity conflicts between the lower-level identities of family and business that are similar to those experienced in the past. Further, this meta-identity is dynamic as people begin "negotiating, modifying, developing, and shaping expectations through interaction" (Burke, 2003). This role-transforming process happens in response to situations in the environment that trigger identity conflict between the competing roles of family and business owners that are dissimilar to those experienced in the past. Given the general negative consequences of enduring and intense periods of identity conflict in family businesses, understanding the dynamics of the family-business meta-identity takes on an even greater importance.

Family Business, Opportunity, and Identity Conflict

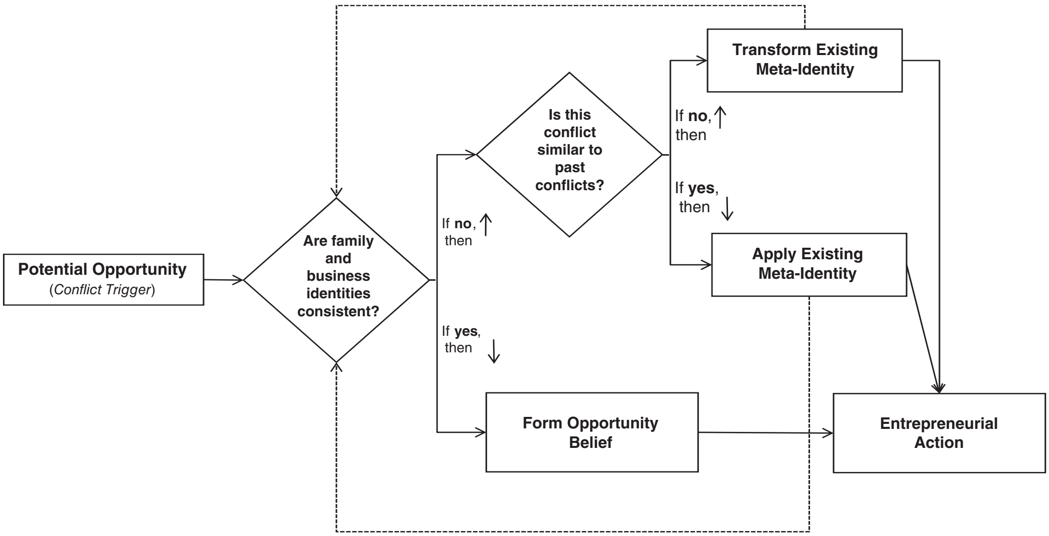
Although there are many activities and tasks that a family business may undertake that bring the family and business identities into conflict, the evaluation of entrepreneurial opportunities represents a task that is important for family businesses and is highly likely to trigger conflict between expectations of the family and business roles. In this paper we define an entrepreneurial opportunity (hereafter referred to as "opportunity") as a situation conducive to introducing future goods and services for gain (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). Opportunity evaluation is likely to trigger identity conflict in family business for two reasons: (1) because the activity is enduring and represents a chance to do something new, implying a context of high uncertainty (Knight, 1921; McMullen & Shepherd, 2006); and (2) because the process of evaluating opportunities requires one to envision the future actions and behaviors that may be required to successfully exploit that opportunity, thus making those future behaviors explicit and readily comparable with the existing behavioral expectations associated with the family-business identity.

Decisions as to whether or not to pursue a given opportunity and the timing of the decision are critical to the survival of a growing business (Bourgeois & Eisenhardt, 1988). Ultimately, entrepreneurship is about action. Entrepreneurial action refers to acting "upon the possibility that one has identified an opportunity worth pursuing" (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006). Action stems from the formation of a belief that an opportunity for someone represents an opportunity for the family business. That is, the pursuit of the potential opportunity is desirable and feasible. The assessment of a potential opportunity involves the family business answering questions that are focused on a common understanding of "who we are" as a family business. For example, opportunity evaluation in a family business is focused on understanding "is this an opportunity for us?" Is this opportunity something that is desirable for the family, for the business? Is this opportunity one that we can successfully exploit given our current knowledge, skills, experience, and resources?

Generally, in the context of identity conflict and family business, the process of opportunity evaluation is likely to represent one of three outcomes: (1) an opportunity that does not create a conflict between family and business identities; (2) an opportunity that creates conflict between family and business identities in a way similar to past instances;

Figure 2

A Decision Process Model



and (3) an opportunity that creates conflict between family and business identities in a way dissimilar to past instances. In terms of the relationship between opportunity evaluation, identity conflict, and expeditious action, each scenario represents a distinct case that is reflected in the process model illustrated in Figure 2.

Opportunity Does Not Create a Conflict Between Family and Business Identities. In some cases, opportunity evaluation does not trigger identity conflict because the opportunity is one that is perceived to be consistent with the family identity *and* in a way that is consistent with the business identity. For example, the pursuit of an opportunity to introduce a new, high-quality educational toy can be consistent with the role expectations of being a business owner and also of being a family. There is no identity conflict; the behavioral demands of one role (family role) do not make it difficult to satisfy the demands or expectations of the other role (business owner role). Similarly, a potential opportunity might violate both what it means to be a family and what it means to be a business. For example, the opportunity to introduce an educational toy that children do not want (no market for the product) and that is cheaply manufactured and coated in lead paint. Again, there is no identity conflict because the opportunity represents a bad business decision (inconsistent with the expectations of the business owner role) and is also inconsistent with the family role expectations associated with the safety and nurturing of children.

The cases offered above can be represented by the lower path of Figure 2. In both cases the answer to the question of whether the expectations of the family and business identities are consistent was "yes," which leads directly to a belief of whether or not to act on the opportunity and subsequent action. The process was expeditious. In the first example, the family business rapidly acts on the opportunity, and in the second example the family business rapidly decides to "pass" on the potential opportunity and focus action on other aspects of the business.

Conversely, in cases where the perceived opportunity is evaluated to be consistent with one identity and inconsistent with the other, identity conflict is triggered. Identity conflict has the effect of consuming information-processing capacity slowing the decision-making process (Weick, 1990; c.f. Argyris, 1990; Staw, Sandelands, & Dutton, 1981). It also likely encourages procrastination. Procrastination refers to the postponement of a behavior that is experienced as emotionally unattractive but cognitively important because it will lead to positive outcomes in the future (Van Eerde, 2000). If the nature of the identity conflict is new, it is likely to persist (not be immediately resolved). Persistent identity conflict arising from the assessment of an opportunity will likely negatively impact the family business by delaying the decision to terminate search, and either act or not on the opportunity. Thus,

> **Proposition 1:** The lesser a family business's identity conflict, the more expeditious its opportunity belief formation.

Opportunity Creates Conflict Between Family and Business Identities in a Way Similar to Past. The extent that identity conflict delays opportunity belief formation depends on the relatedness of the conflict to past, conflict-triggering events. Identity conflict activates reference to the family-business meta-identity, which works to reconcile the meanings of identities lower in the hierarchy, in this case, that of the family and business. The meta-identity represents both the shared meaning of the family and business identities, and the intersection of the two, which includes common routines for reconciling conflict based on past situations that engendered identity conflict between the family and business roles. That is, the meta-identity assumes routines that compare current with past identity conflicts to determine the extent to which the current conflict is similar or dissimilar to past (resolved) conflicts. Identity conflict is categorized as "similar" when the nature of the conflict between family and business identities is *consistent* in nature to an identity conflict dealt with in the past. By similar we mean that regardless of the source of the conflict, the conflict is "located" at the same intersection point of family and business identities. For example, previously the family business evaluated an opportunity that would require a significant change in the level of family commitment to the business (increased work hours, weekends in the store). This level of commitment would in turn impact the family, requiring the children to forgo involvement in a weekend sports program. The intersection of family and business identities, in this case, is represented by the nature of the conflict—the appropriate (for this family) balance of commitment to family and business activities. When faced with an opportunity that triggers identity conflict over a similar issue, such conflict can be resolved by drawing on a past solution. The past solution exists as part of the family-business meta-identity (content).

This path is reflected in Figure 2. The first determination is whether the opportunity is consistent with both family and business identities. The answer is "no." Is this identity conflict similar to past conflicts? The answer is "yes." The routines of its existing meta-identity engage to manage the family and business identities to reconcile and resolve the new conflict in a way consistent with how a similar, past conflict was resolved; identities are no longer in conflict, and the family business forms a belief of whether or not to act on the opportunity. Thus,

> **Proposition 2:** The similarity of identity conflict with the past moderates the relationship between a family business's identity conflict and expeditious opportunity belief formation. The negative relationship between a family business's identity conflict and expeditious opportunity belief formation is more negative for opportunities that trigger dissimilar identity conflicts than opportunities that trigger similar identity conflicts.

Opportunity Creates Conflict Between Family and Business Identities in a Way Dissimilar to Past. Not all new opportunities will have a reference in past experiences that can be applied to resolving conflict. Opportunities are unique and characterized by uncertainty and therefore can represent a new (to the family) point of intersection between the family and business identities. In such a case, the family business does not have an existing routine in its meta-identity repertoire that is appropriate for resolving the identity conflict located at this new intersection. This is the same situation likely faced by a newly formed family business. To resolve the identity conflict, the family must adapt its existing family-business meta-identity and thus modify the notion of who we are as a family business to reconcile the formerly irreconcilable. This requires modifying the meta-identity. To modify the family-business meta-identity requires role transformation: the process of "negotiating, modifying, developing, and shaping expectations through interaction" (Burke, 2003). Because the family-business meta-identity is idiosyncratic—and bounded by the intersection of family and business—role transformation must be accomplished within the family structure and through the interaction of family members.

The process of role transformation is dynamic, socially situated, and involves behaviors that work to bring the perceptions of what is (or is not) appropriate behavior in line with the relevant identity standard (equilibrium). The family-business identity standard is formed based on a collective understanding of the behavioral expectations that span the family and business roles and the interaction of the two. As such, for that standard to change (modified or extended) requires the collective to develop a new understanding of "who we are as a family business." Returning to an earlier example where an opportunity presented itself that was incongruent with the family's collective understanding of the balance between a commitment to work and family activities, to act upon this opportunity would require the family to transform their collective understanding of the family-business identity through role renegotiation.

This notion of a negotiated identity is substantiated in the literature (Burke, 1991, 2003; Turner, 1985). In response to situations that generate conflict that cannot be accommodated by the existing routines of the meta-identity (the conflict is new and dissimilar to past conflicts), the meta-identity must be transformed to incorporate a new conception of the intersection of family and business. Such a transformation results in a change in "who we are as a family business" that accommodates "who we are as a family" and also "who we are as a business." This transformation happens as an outcome of the conflict resolution process and thus further builds the family business's repertoire of solutions for resolving subsequent identity conflict. The speed of resolution of identity conflict (and thus the speed of opportunity belief formation) depends on the effectiveness of the renegotiation process. We acknowledge that family businesses are likely heterogeneous in their ability to resolve identity conflict so as to inform the meta-identity. For example, one family business may be highly capable of consensus building and therefore is better able to transform its meta-identity to resolve an identity conflict than a family business that is less capable of consensus building within the family structure. Furthermore, this ability likely increases with experience. Thus, as a family business experiences more opportunities that bring their family and business identities into conflict—and subsequently renegotiate their meta-identity to resolve this conflict; it develops this identity renegotiation ability critical for meta-identity transformation. That is, the greater the ability of the family business to rapidly transform its meta-identity, the more capable it is to resolve conflicts between the family and business identities. Thus,

Proposition 3: The negative relationship between a family business's identity conflict and expeditious opportunity belief formation is more negative for opportunities that trigger more dissimilar identity conflicts, but this moderating role of dissimilarity of identity conflict is greater for family businesses with low identity negotiation ability than for those with high identity negotiation ability.

Discussion and Conclusion

The notion of conflict oriented around the competing demands of the family and the business is central to family-business research (Daily & Dollinger, 1993; Harvey & Evans, 1994; Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2004). One such conflict arises when situations, such as the assessment of a potential opportunity, trigger a conflict between the role expectations associated with the identity of being a family and that of being a business. In this article we have developed the notion of a family-business meta-identity that represents "who we are as a family business" by incorporating "who we are as a family," "who we are as a business," and "how we manage overlap between the two identities." Fundamentally, we make the case that identity conflict, and the resolution of identity conflict within the structure of the family, serves as the primary input to the family-business meta-identity. We embrace the notion that action and identity are inextricably linked in a causal relationship (Webster, 1975). In the case of family business, in order for the family to act expeditiously in response to an opportunity, there must be an understood and shared meaning associated with "who we are as a family business"—one that allows action without unresolved identity conflict.

Although we have acknowledged that there are numerous activities and situations that may trigger conflict between the family and business roles, we focus on opportunity evaluation as representative of identity conflict triggering events because acting upon such opportunities is central to the entrepreneurial process (McMullen & Shepherd, 2006) and the success of the family business. Taken together, the insights suggested by this research into the dynamics of the family-business identity and specifically how the resolution of identity conflict expedites the entrepreneurial process suggest several important implications.

First, implicit in our theorizing but not made explicit in our model is the assumption that the dynamics of family business are "different" from nonfamily businesses. While speed has been empirically demonstrated to represent a competitive advantage in nonfamily businesses (Baum & Wally, 2003; Bourgeois & Eisenhardt, 1988), in the case of family business our model suggests that family businesses have unique challenges and opportunities in expediting the entrepreneurial process. We have suggested two attributes of the family business that may influence this ability—the similarity of the triggered conflict to identity conflicts triggered in the past and the ability to renegotiate the meta-identity; undoubtedly there are others representing avenues for future research.

These unique challenges faced by a family business may represent competitive disadvantages and/or advantages over nonfamily firms. On the one hand, without (or minimal) identity conflict between family and business identities in assessing opportunities, nonfamily businesses may be able to act more expeditiously—they are not slowed by conflict and the need for its resolution. This provides an instance where the personalism of a family business involves more (not fewer) internal constraints to the pursuit of opportunities relative to nonfamily businesses (Carney, 2005). On the other hand, it could be the family businesses that are at an advantage because identity conflict may highlight salient issues about the attractiveness of the opportunity. Additionally, the resolution of identity conflict could help ensure that organizational members are on "the same page" for exploitation activities. The ability to resolve identity conflict efficiently and effectively (represented as the family-business meta-identity) may represent an important dynamic capability. It could be that this capability, while developed and focused on identity conflict between family and business, is somewhat transferable to other intraorganizational identity conflicts. There is much to be done in exploring the advantages and disadvantages of a family-business meta-identity by comparing family and nonfamily businesses.

For example, when socio-emotional wealth was threatened, such as from a threat to identity, family businesses were found to accept a financially riskier alternative to preserve their socio-emotional wealth (Gomez-Mejia, Haynes, Nunez-Nickel, Jacobson, & Moyano-Fuentes, 2007). How is such a threat to identity determined at the family-business level and accommodated in its choice between alternative opportunities? We propose that that answer, in part, relies on the family-business meta-identity to reconcile "who we are as a family" with "who we are as a business" to inform "who we are as a family business"; such a determination likely influences risk preferences when identity is initially perceived to be under threat. It could be that identity conflict (between family and business) is resolved by rejecting a less risky opportunity for the business because it conflicts with the family identity and accepting a more risky business opportunity that does not trigger identity conflict. A nonfamily business does not face the same identity conflict and is able to act on the less risky (to the business) opportunity. Such an explanation is consistent with the notion of particularism, where family firms are free to use criteria in their decisions that deviate from the rational-calculative decisions of managers of nonfamily businesses to maximize benefits solely for the firm (Carney, 2005).

Second, we develop the notion that in situations where the meanings of competing identities are intimately connected and constantly intersecting, such as in family business, a meta-level identity develops that conveys the shared meaning of "who we are as a family business" and that represents the mechanism that *deals with* the source of identity conflict and ultimately eliminates it. Further, this meta-level identity is distinct from both family and business identities and works to "control the meanings of identities lower in the hierarchy" (Burke, 2003; Deaux, 1992, 1993). We theorized that the routines represented in the meta-identity work to influence identities lower in the hierarchy, in this case the family identity and the business identity. As such it is likely that the routines for conflict resolution represented by the meta-identity—and appropriate for resolving conflict at the intersection of family and business—may be invoked in response to conflict squarely grounded (1) in the family, or (2) in the business. It could be that while the conflict resolution routines represented in the meta-identity are wholly appropriate for family-business conflict, they are less so for distinctly family or distinctly business conflict. As such, the application of those routines toward the resolution of identity conflict based primarily in the family, for example, may have dysfunctional consequences.

Finally, our model suggests powerful implications for family business in terms of opportunity search. We have suggested that as the family and the business grow together and become organizationally complex, the family business will rely more heavily on the meta-identity as a systematic means of dealing with identity conflict in a way akin to a decision heuristic. However, the meta-identity may work to bias opportunity search in favor of opportunities consistent with the existing content of the heuristic; the family business will focus on cues from the environment (opportunities) most consistent with what they believe to be true about the family business. While this bias will likely result in a decline in the frequency of conflict-triggering opportunities discovered by the family business, it also suggests that the nature of the opportunities discovered by the business may represent more incremental (less novel) opportunities for growth. What are the consequences for those family businesses with dominant family-business meta-identities who are more expeditious in their entrepreneurial process but at the same time less likely to detect opportunities that have the greatest potential to grow the business? The implications of this paradox represent a compelling avenue for future research.

There are numerous research opportunities. We offer three examples. First, we offer opportunity as a potential trigger of identity conflict between the family and the business identities in a family business. However, there is heterogeneity in opportunities, which can influence the extent of identity conflict. Future research can explore the fine-grained relationship between the attributes of the opportunity and the level of generated identity conflict.

Second, future research can develop and validate a measure of family-business meta-identity. Such a process will likely start with scales that capture the meaning of self-in-role and relate it to counter identities (Burke & Tully, 1977). At the individual level and for single identities, semantic differential scales have been used to maximally distinguish between the two (Osgood, Suci, & Tannenbaum, 1957). The development of the family-business meta-identity will likely require a simultaneous distinction between the family business and the business identities and between the family business and the family identities.

Third, there is also heterogeneity in family businesses such that where an opportunity might generate considerable conflict for one family business the same opportunity may generate minimal conflict for another. Future research that investigates the nature of the "misfit" between opportunity and family business in the generation of identity conflict is likely to make an important contribution to the literature. Third, we focused on the organizational level of analysis (the family business), but there is an opportunity to explore a multilevel model of identity conflict arising in family businesses. For example, perhaps a family business's path of meta-identity development (through transformations given the nature of the opportunities triggering conflict) is different for different environments.

Finally, Burke (2001) noted that some social structures are more open to role transformation than others. Therefore, it is likely that families are heterogeneous in their ability to transform their family-business meta-identity to resolve identity conflict. Future research can draw on the sociology and organizational behavior literatures (as well as others) to investigate those attributes and characteristics of the family that may make the family-business meta-identity more open (or closed) to role transformation. For example, researchers focused on how generational differences impact organizations have found that while disparate generations may share many of the same values and qualities, often what motivates members—from one generation to the next—is very different (Kunreuther, 2003). Therefore, the goals and motivations of family members become more divergent across generations (Smola & Sutton, 2002); it is likely that different generations perceive the intersection of family and business *differently* in the context of opportunity evaluation. Further, as the diversity created by intergenerational distance increases, the process of reinterpreting and renegotiating the family-business meta-identity to accommodate identity conflict becomes exceedingly complex.

Conclusion

We represent this article as a novel and innovative lens through which to consider what has been a common theme in family-business research—conflict. Understanding the dynamics of how the family-business meta-identity operates and is transformed can explain heterogeneity in the ability of family businesses to resolve identity conflict, to grow, and to prosper. There is more work to be done in exploring the family-business meta-identity and the mechanisms by which it resolves conflict and impacts the performance of the family and the business.

REFERENCES

Allen, V.L., Wilder, D.A., & Atkinson, M.L. (1983). Multiple group membership and social identity. In T.R. Sarbin & K.E. Scheibe (Eds.), *Studies in social identity* (pp. 92–115). New York: Praeger.

Argyris, C. (1990). *Overcoming organizational defenses*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Ashforth, B.E. (2001). *Role transitions in organizational life*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ashforth, B.E., Kreiner, G.E., & Fugate, M. (2000). All in a day's work: Boundaries and micro role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, *25*, 472–491.

Ashforth, B.E. & Mael, F. (1989). Social identity theory and the organization. *Academy of Management Review*, *14*(1), 20–39.

Austers, I. (2002). Ability to take an out-group's perspective in explaining positive and negative behaviors. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, *43*, 407–412.

Bantel, K.A. (1993). Comprehensiveness of strategic planning: The importance of heterogeneity of a top team. *Psychological Reports*, *73*, 35–51.

Baum, J.R. & Wally, S. (2003). Strategic decision speed and firm performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, *24*, 1107–1129.

Baumeister, R.F. (2000). Gender differences in erotic plasticity: The female sex drive as socially flexible and responsive. *Psychological Bulletin*, *126*(3), 347–374.

Beckhard, R. & Dyer, W. (1983). SMR forum: Managing change in the family firm—issues and strategies. *Sloan Management Review*, *24*, 59–65.

Berger, A.R. & Janoff-Bulman, R. (2006). Costs and satisfaction in close relationships: The role of loss–gain framing. *Personal Relationships*, *13*, 53–68.

Bird, G.A., Bird, G.W., & Scruggs, M. (1983). Role-management used by husbands and wives in two-earner families. *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, *12*, 63–70.

Bourgeois, J. & Eisenhardt, K. (1988). Strategic decision processes in high velocity environments: Four cases in the microcomputer industry. *Management Science*, *34*, 816–835.

Breakwell, G. (1986). *Coping with threatened identities*. London: Methuen.

Brockhaus, R.H. (1994). Entrepreneurship and family business research: Comparisons. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *19*, 25–40.

Brown, W.B. & Karagozoglu, N. (1993). Leading the way to faster new product development. *Academy of Management Executive*, *7*(1), 36–47.

Burke, P.J. (1991). Identity processes and social stress. *American Sociological Review*, *56*, 836–849.

Burke, P.J. (2001). Relationships among multiple identities. The Future of Identity Theory and Research, a Guide for a New Century Conference, Bloomington, Indiana.

Burke, P.J. (2003). Relationships among multiple identities. In P.J. Burke, T.J. Owens, R.T. Serpe, P.A. Thoits (Eds.), *Advances in identity theory and research* (pp. 95–114). New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.

Burke, P.J. & Tully, J. (1977). The measurement of role identity. *Social Forces*, *55*, 881–897.

Cantor, N. & Mischel, W. (1979). Traits as prototypes: Effects on recognition memory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *35*, 38–44.

Carney, M. (2005). Corporate governance and competitive advantage in family-controlled firms. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *29*, 249–265.

Cast, A.D. (2004). Role-taking and interaction. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *67*, 296–309.

Choi, I., Nisbett, R.E., & Smith, E.E. (1997). Culture, categorization and inductive reasoning. *Cognition*, *65*, 15–32.

Chua, J.H., Chrisman, J.J., & Sharma, P. (1999). Defining the family business by behavior. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *23*, 19–39.

Daily, C.M. & Dollinger, M.J. (1993). Alternative methodologies for identifying family- versus non-family managed businesses. *Journal of Small Business Management*, *31*, 79–90.

Danes, S.M. & Olson, P.D. (2003). Women's role involvement in family businesses, business tensions, and business success. *Family Business Review*, *16*(1), 53–68.

D'Aveni, R.A. (1995). Coping with hypercompetition: Utilizing the new 7S's framework. *Academy of Management Executive*, *9*, 45–60.

Deaux, K. (1992). Focusing on the self: Challenges to self-definition and their consequences for mental health. In D.N. Ruble, P.R. Costanzo, & M.E. Oliveri (Eds.), *The Social Psychology of Mental Health* (pp. 9–33). New York: Guilford.

Deaux, K. (1993). Reconstructing social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *19*, 4–12.

DeGarmo, D. & Forgatch, M. (2005). Early development of delinquency within divorced families: Evaluating a randomized preventive intervention trial. *Developmental Science*, *8*, 229–239.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989). Making fast strategic decisions in high-velocity environments. *Academy of Management Journal*, *32*, 543–576.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1990). Speed and strategic choice: How managers accelerate decision making. *California Management Review*, *32*(3), 39–54.

Fiske, S. & Taylor, S. (1991). *Social cognition* (2nd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Fredrickson, J. (1984). The comprehensiveness of strategic decision processes: Extensions, observations, and future directions. *Academy of Management Journal*, *32*, 516–542.

Frone, M.R., Russell, M., & Cooper, M.L. (1992). Antecedents and outcomes of work–family conflict: Testing a model of the work–family interface. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *77*, 65–78.

Giordano, P.C. (2003). Relationships in adolescence. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *29*, 257–281.

Goldberg, S., Grusec, J.E., & Jenkins, J.M. (1999). Confidence in protection: Arguments for a narrow definition of attachment. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *13*, 475–483.

Gomez-Mejia, L.R., Haynes, K.T., Nunez-Nickel, M., Jacobson, K.J.L., & Moyano-Fuentes, J. (2007). Socioemotional wealth and business risks in family-controlled firms: Evidence from Spanish olive oil mills. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *52*, 106–137.

Greenhaus, J.H. & Beutell, N.J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, *10*, 76–88.

Habbershon, T.G., Williams, M.L., & MacMillan, I. (2003). Familiness: A unified systems theory of family business performance. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *18*, 451–462.

Harvey, R. & Evans, R. (1994). Family business and multiple levels of conflict. *Family Business Review*, *7*, 331–348.

Heck, R. & Trent, E. (1999). The prevalence of family business from a household sample. *Family Business Review*, *12*, 209–224.

Ireland, R.D. & Hitt, M. (1999). Achieving and maintaining strategic competitiveness in the 21st century: The role of strategic leadership. *Academy of Management Executive*, *13*, 43–57.

Jermier, J.M. & Berkes, L.J. (1979). Leader behavior in a police command bureaucracy: A closer look at the quasi-military model. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *24*, 1–23.

Jones, G.K., Lanctot, A., Jr., & Teegen, H.J. (2000). Determinants and performance impacts of external technology acquisition. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *16*, 255–283.

Kahneman, D., Treisman, A., & Gibbs, B. (1992). The reviewing of object files: Object-specific integration of information. *Cognitive Psychology*, *24*, 175–219.

Kaplan, R.S. & Norton, D.P. (1992). The balanced scorecard—Measures that drive performance. *Harvard Business Review*, *70*, 47–54.

Kellermanns, F. & Eddleston, K. (2004). Feuding families: When conflict does a family firm good. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *28*, 209–228.

Kessler, E.H. & Chakrabarti, A.K. (1996). Innovation speed: A conceptual model of context, antecedents, and outcomes. *Academy of Management Review*, *21*, 1143–1191.

Kinnunen, U. & Mauno, S. (1998). Antecedents and outcomes of work–family conflict among employed women and men in Finland. *Human Relations*, *51*, 157–177.

Knight, K. (1921). *Risk, uncertainty and profit*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Knoester, C., Petts, R.J., & Eggebeen, D.J. (2007). Commitments to fathering and the well-being and social participation of new, disadvantaged fathers. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *69*, 991–1004.

Knoop, R. (1995). Influence of participative decision-making on job satisfaction and organizational commitment of school principals. *Psychological Reports*, *76*, 379–384.

Kreiner, G.E. & Ashforth, B.E. (2004). Evidence toward an expanded model of organizational identification. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *25*, 1–27.

Kunreuther, F. (2003). The changing of the guard: What generational differences tell us about social-change organizations. *Nonprofit and Volunteer Sector Quarterly*, *32*, 450–457.

Kuratko, D.F., Hornsby, J.H., & Naffziger, D.W. (1997). An examination of owner's goals in sustaining entrepreneurship. *Journal of Small Business Management*, *35*, 24–33.

Lechner, V. (1993). Racial group responses to work and parent care. *Families in Society: Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, *74*, 93–103.

Lee, M. & Rogoff, E. (1996). Do women entrepreneurs require special training? An empirical comparison of men and women entrepreneurs in the United States. *Journal of Small Business and Entrepreneurship*, *14*, 4–30.

Mansfield, E. (1988). Industrial R&D in Japan and the United States: A comparative study. *The American Economic Review*, *78*, 223–228.

McCall, G. & Simmons, J. (1978). *Identities and interaction* (2nd ed.). New York: Free Press.

McMullen, J. & Shepherd, D.A. (2006). Entrepreneurial action and the role of uncertainty in the theory of the entrepreneur. *Academy of Management Review*, *31*, 132–152.

Mosakowski, E. (1997). Strategy making under causal ambiguity: Conceptual issues and empirical evidence. *Organization Science*, *8*, 414–442.

Muse, L., Rutherford, M., Oswald, S., & Raymond, J. (2005). Commitment to employees: Does it help or hinder small business performance? *Small Business Economics*, *24*, 97–111.

Osgood, C.C., Suci, G.J., & Tannenbaum, P.H. (1957). *The measurement of meaning*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Perrewé, P., Hochwarter, W., & Kiewitz, C. (1999). Value attainment: An explanation for the negative effects of work/family conflict on job and life satisfaction. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *4*, 318–326.

Pines, A.M., Levy, H., Utasi, A., & Hill, T.L. (2005). Entrepreneurs as cultural heroes: A cross-cultural, interdisciplinary perspective. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, *20*, 541–555.

Rogoff, E. & Heck, R. (2003). Evolving research in entrepreneurship and family business: Recognizing family and the oxygen that feeds the fire of entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *18*, 556–566.

Seeley, E.A. & Gardner, W.L. (2003). The "SelXess" and self-regulation: The role of chronic other-orientation in averting self-regulatory depletion. *Self and Identity*, *2*, 103–117.

Serpe, R.T. (1987). Stability and change in self: A structural symbolic interactionist explanation. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *50*, 44–55.

Shane, S. & Venkataraman, S. (2000). The promise of entrepreneurship as a field of research. *Academy of Management Review*, *25*, 217–227.

Shepherd, D.A. & Haynie, J.M. (2009). Birds of a feather don't always flock together: Identity management in entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *24*(4), 316–337.

Shepherd, D.A. & Levesque, M. (2002). A search strategy for assessing a business opportunity. *IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management*, *49*, 140–156.

Smola, K.W. & Sutton, C.D. (2002). Generational differences: Revisiting generational work values for the new millennium. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *23*, 363–382.

Snyder, E. & Spreitzer, E. (1984). Identity and commitment to the teacher role. *Teaching Sociology*, *11*, 151–166.

Staw, B., Sandelands, J., & Dutton, J. (1981). Hreat-rigidity effects in organizational behavior: A multi-level analysis. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *26*, 501–524.

Stevenson, H.H. & Gumpert, D.E. (1985). The heart of entrepreneurship. *Harvard Business Review*, *85*(2), 85–94.

Stryker, A. & Statham, A. (1985). Symbolic interaction and role theory. In G. Lindsey & L. Aronsen (Eds.), *Handbook of social psychology* (3rd ed., pp. 311–378). New York: McGraw Hill.

Stryker, S. (1968). Identity salience and role performance. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, *4*, 558–564.

Stryker, S. & Burke, P.J. (2000). The past, present, and future of an identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *63*, 284–297.

Sundaramurthy, C. & Kreiner, G.E. (2008). Governing by managing identity boundaries: The case of family businesses. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *32*, 415–436.

Tajfel, H. & Turner, J.C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Tajfel, H. & Turner, J.C. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Worchel & W. Austin (Eds.), *Psychology of intergroup relations* (2nd ed., pp. 2–24). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

Turner, J.C. (1985). Social categorization and the self concept: A social cognitive theory of group behavior. In E. Lawler (Ed.), *Advances in group process: Theory and research* (Vol. 2, pp. 77–121). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Van Eerde, W. (2000). Procrastination at work and time management training. *Journal of Psychology*, *137*, 421–434.

Webster, F.E. Jr. (1975). Determining the characteristics of the socially conscious consumer. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *3*, 188–205.

Weick, K. (1990). Technology as equivoque: Sensemaking in new technologies. In P.S. Goodman (Ed.), *Technology and organizations* (pp. 1–44). San Francisco: Jossy-Bass Publishers.

Wortman, M. (1994). Theoretical foundations for family-owned business: A conceptual and research-based paradigm. *Family Business Review*, *7*, 3–27.

Dean Shepherd is the Randall L. Tobias Chair in Entrepreneurial Leadership in the Kelley School of Business at Indiana University.

J. Michael Haynie is an assistant professor of entrepreneurship in the Department of Entrepreneurship and Emerging Enterprises at the Whitman School of Management.

We would like to thank Jim Chrisman for his editorial comments and Llyod Steier, Jess Chua, the attendees of the Theories of Family Enterprise conference in Alberta, two anonymous reviewers, and Trish Reay for their comments on previous versions of the manuscript.