

## INTRODUCTION TO SPECIAL TOPIC FORUM

### ENTREPRENEURING AS EMANCIPATION

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We define “entrepreneuring” as efforts to bring about new economic, social, institutional, and cultural environments through the actions of an individual or group of individuals. Thus, we view entrepreneurship as an emancipatory process with broad change potential. This view foregrounds three aspects of entrepreneurship that merit closer attention in future research—seeking autonomy, authoring, and making declarations. We highlight the novel directions for entrepreneurship research suggested by our emancipatory perspective and relate it to the special topic forum articles.

From its early roots in examining what distinguishes entrepreneurs from managers, research on entrepreneurship has expanded to encompass a wide array of topics and perspectives (Busenitz et al., 2003). In reviewing this research, Aldrich (2005) highlights four main approaches. One group of scholars links entrepreneurship with the creation of new organizations. Another group studies high-growth, high-wealth-creating businesses. A third group, following the Schumpeterian tradition, relates entrepreneurship to innovation and the creation of new products and markets. The fourth group, following the work of Kirzner, centers on the recognition and pursuit of profitable opportunities. While these approaches vary in their tenets and nuances, they explicitly or implicitly share an underlying assumption that wealth creation is a (if not *the*) fundamental goal of entrepreneurial efforts.

We readily acknowledge that, in many cases, wealth creation is the main aim of “entrepreneuring.” However, there is at least anecdotal evidence that individuals often engage in entre-

preneuring for motives other than wealth. The story of Jim Corman and Touch 1 Communications, Inc., a telecommunications firm that he started in 1989, is actually quite common. At that time, Jim Corman was a senior vice president at a large long-distance telephone provider. Despite his prestige and high compensation, Corman recalls being “miserable”: “Decisions came too slow, I had little control of the work environment, and all corporate decisions were dominated by their impact on next quarter’s earnings” (quoted in Ketchen, 2007: 111). When his CEO asked Corman to lay off employees in Corman’s hometown in an effort to boost quarterly earnings, Corman refused and left the company. He then created Touch 1 with the hope of providing jobs for sixty of his laid-off neighbors. Pointing entrepreneurship research in a direction that can better account for Jim Corman’s start-up motivation and approach is the intent of both this special topic forum (STF) and the present article.

We define entrepreneurship, the focus of this article, as efforts to bring about new economic, social, institutional, and cultural environments through the actions of an individual or group of individuals. This definition encompasses a wide variety of change-oriented activities and projects. Entrepreneuring, however, differs from the broader set of change initiatives in that it is

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associated with efforts to create something new—a new idea, a new thing, a new institution, a new market, a new set of possibilities for the entrepreneurship individual or group and/or for other actors in the environment. This definition is consistent with prior research defining entrepreneurship in terms of the creation of newness (Ireland, Hitt, & Sirmon, 2003; Lumpkin & Dess, 1996). Our objective is to extend and complement this research.

Specifically, we have two goals in this article. First, we believe that entrepreneurship research perhaps has become a bit too narrowly focused on wealth creation via new ventures; it requires a bit of emancipation. Thus, we seek to broaden the focus of entrepreneurship research by drawing attention to the emancipatory aspects of entrepreneurship. We are motivated by the belief that research that considers both more closely and more broadly the entrepreneurial dreams and efforts to create change in the world may bring us to a fuller, more comprehensive understanding of the processes of discovery, change, value creation, and ultimately wealth creation. Throughout the article we attempt to set the stage for future inquiry by suggesting research questions that build on the emancipation theme. Our second goal is to introduce the papers contained in the STF and to relate them to our emancipatory perspective.

## ENTREPRENEURING

Although various strands of entrepreneurship research have emerged that focus on different specific issues, Busenitz et al.'s (2003) overview of the field suggests an overarching framework that locates entrepreneurship research at the intersection of the study of individuals and teams (entrepreneurs), opportunities (environmental conditions), and modes of organizing (new ventures). This framework characterizes entrepreneurship in terms of three nouns—entrepreneurs, new ventures, and opportunities—reflecting the tendency of entrepreneurship research to focus on entities. While we recognize that such a focus has been valuable in defining a research agenda for the field, we also recognize that it has limited the research attention given to the actions and processes that constitute the domain of entrepreneurship (Steyaert, 2007). As Schumpeter reminds us, "No one is an entrepreneur forever but only while doing a par-

ticular type of activity" (cited in Aldrich, 2005: 455; emphasis added). To promote attention to research that investigates more thoroughly the *doing*, we framed the call for STF papers in terms of "entrepreneurizing," following Weick's (1979) idea that verbs draw attention to actions and processes geared toward change creation.

A second reason for using "entrepreneurizing" was to encourage researchers to study a broader set of actions (e.g., activities, projects, and processes) intended not only to create new wealth but also to bring about new states in relevant economic, social, institutional, and cultural environments. This second important direction was highlighted in one of the core questions in the STF call for papers: "Of what do entrepreneurs dream—value maximization, creative expression, empowerment, autonomy, or enhancing life on the planet?" Despite the abundance of evidence about diversity and richness in entrepreneurial motivations, entrepreneurship research has paid little attention to how wishes for autonomy, expression of personal values, and making a difference in the world can be accomplished (see Baker & Pollock, 2007, for a critique). Taking markets, institutions, and forms of exchange as given is, in our opinion, overly constrictive. Taking a broader focus would mean that entrepreneurship research could (and perhaps should) focus on the genesis of new ideas, new things, new markets, new institutions, new modes of organizing, new forms of exchanges, and new elements in our environments.

To direct more research to the study of entrepreneurial activities as generators of change, we develop a perspective that articulates why and how entrepreneurship can be viewed as an emancipatory process. We chose the term *emancipation* because it refers to "the act of setting free from the power of another" (*Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*, 1996). As such it makes the question of pursuit of freedom and autonomy relative to an existing status quo the focal point of inquiry. Viewing entrepreneurial projects as emancipatory efforts focuses on understanding the factors that cause individuals to seek to disrupt the status quo and change their position in the social order in which they are embedded—and, on occasion, the social order itself.

The need to develop this perspective arises from the observation that a commonly ex-

pressed motivation for entrepreneurship is a desire for freedom and independence from conventional structures of authority and income generation (Baker & Nelson, 2005). For example, Baker and Pollock note that a distinctive contribution of entrepreneurship research has been the empirical demonstration of

values and goals besides maximizing short-term profitability.... studies across a number of nations have consistently shown that values such as desires for autonomy, to express creativity for its own sake, to pursue innovation, and to be one's own boss typically dominate financial goals in motivating entrepreneurship (Agreev, Gratchev, & Hisrich, 1995; Litvak & Maule, 1976)" (2007: 300).

The authors, however, note as well that entrepreneurship research has also "shown that entrepreneurs may continue to operate their firms despite a consistent pattern of substandard financial returns, presumably because continuing to run the firm has strong personal strategic value for them (Gimeno, Folta, Cooper, & Woo, 1997)" (Baker & Pollock, 2007: 300). Thus, evidence exists that entrepreneurs incur personal, social, and economic costs in pursuit of their visions of independence, but these visions often turn into illusions, and entrepreneurs find themselves trapped in the same conventional structures of authority, albeit in slightly different roles. They risk personal and emotional resources in a bid to overcome economic, social, and cultural constraints but may have only a limited understanding of the solidity of the structures they seek to dislodge. Therefore, we argue that entrepreneurship research needs to give closer consideration to entrepreneurs' dreams for autonomy and change and the processes through which these dreams, as opposed to the pursuit of wealth, may be accomplished.

### **EMANCIPATORY ENTREPRENEURING**

To promote research that theorizes and investigates more broadly the individual and social factors associated with entrepreneurial change efforts, in this article we articulate three core elements of entrepreneurship—seeking autonomy, authoring, and making declarations—that are brought to the foreground when entrepreneurship is viewed through an emancipatory lens. Using the etymology of the term *emancipation*, we theorize that the three core elements are

central to an emancipatory process. These elements and their distinctive implications for entrepreneurship research are summarized in Table 1.

First, with regard to entrepreneurial impetus, we highlight that some (and we suspect many) entrepreneurial efforts may involve breaking free from authority and breaking up perceived constraints. Entrepreneuring therefore is undertaken not only to pursue opportunities but to overcome or remove perceived constraints in actors' environments. Importantly, these constraints can be of an intellectual, psychological, economic, social, institutional, or cultural nature. By viewing entrepreneurship as change creation through removal of constraints, an emancipatory perspective both departs from and complements existing research that emphasizes wealth creation through the recognition of profitable opportunities. In doing so it also challenges the extant distinction between "regular" (for-profit) and social (not-for-profit) entrepreneurship. Second, with regard to taking actions, we highlight that authoring and making declarations locate an entrepreneurial project in the domains of organizing resource exchanges and managing stakeholder interpretations.

The three elements we discuss—seeking autonomy, authoring, and making declarations—are not intended to provide a fully articulated theoretical perspective but, rather, to stimulate a conversation in the field about both the research questions that emerge when entrepreneurship is viewed as emancipation and the novel research directions that these questions open up. To this end, we use examples that not only illustrate our arguments but also can stimulate their elaboration and questioning. Specifically, a number of our examples refer to one of the most audacious entrepreneurial projects of our time—the creation of Google. We recognize that choosing Google as an illustration of our perspective seeking to deemphasize wealth creation and to emphasize emancipation may be surprising. We chose Google as an example not because of its outcomes but because of its actions, since so many of its choices vividly illustrate the logic of the emancipatory perspective. Further, the Google example also clearly illustrates that, by emphasizing change creation, the emancipatory perspective does not negate wealth creation but instead emphasizes change creation.

**TABLE 1**  
**Core Elements of an Emancipatory Perspective on Entrepreneuring**

Core Element	Dominant Themes in Existing Entrepreneurship Research	Views from an Emancipatory Perspective	Suggested Research Directions
Seeking autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity recognition</li> <li>• Opportunity creation through technological innovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actors seek to escape from or remove perceived constraints in their environments</li> <li>• Constraints are perceived in a variety of environments—economic, social, technological, cultural, and institutional</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study individuals' dreams to make a difference and "change the world"</li> <li>• Focus on social, cultural, and technological ferment before outcomes have caused ex post rationalizations of opportunities</li> <li>• Examine more broadly the various environments in which entrepreneurs take actions</li> </ul>
Authoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Familiar and legitimate organizational forms enhance survival</li> <li>• Affiliations with high-status actors also increase legitimacy and survival chances</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rules of engagement with key resource providers should reflect change-creating intent</li> <li>• Organizational arrangements can be designed to preserve emancipatory potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the relationship between change intent and the nature of relationships with other social actors—for example, contracts versus social movements</li> <li>• Understand the breadth of a social base for the change project</li> </ul>
Making declarations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tangible investments in technologies, products, and human capital drive perceptions of value and meaning of entrepreneurial efforts</li> <li>• Symbolic and cultural means are used to increase perceived fit of investments with existing values and cultural accounts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making declarations about intended change is essential to mobilize support and generate change effects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Study different types of declaration and the type of contestations they elicit</li> <li>• Incorporate theories and methodologies to analyze the use of rhetoric, style, and symbol. Relate declarations to other entrepreneurial activities. Do declarations need to be backed up by tangible investments, or do they open up possibilities for such investments?</li> </ul>

### Seeking Autonomy

The hope for autonomy is one of the main drivers of efforts to become self-employed (Heron & Sapienza, 1992; Kolvereid, 1996). Autonomy is a goal of emancipation, which we defined earlier as breaking free from the authority of another. The term *emancipation* arose around the Roman practices of keeping, transferring, and selling slaves, wives, and children. "*Emancipatus*" and "*emancipare*" meant the "freeing of a son or wife from the legal authority (*patria potestas*) of the pater familias (father), to make his or her own way in the world" (*Online Etymology Dictionary*). These terms derived from and combined "*ex*" (out, away), "*mancipare*" (deliver, transfer, or sell), "*mancipum*" (ownership),

and "*capere*" (to take). By the nineteenth century, the concept had shifted from an emphasis on single persons to whole populations, such as the American antislavery movement (leading to Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution) and the women's suffrage movement.

The "*e*" in *emancipation* is a shortening of "*ex*" and connotes two distinct but related processes—*breaking free* and *breaking up* (as in "*excommunicate*" and "my *ex-husband*"). While *breaking free* suggests the desire to make one's own way in the world, *breaking up* draws attention to the "striving to imagine and create a better world" (Sarasvathy, Dew, Velamuri, &

Venkataraman, 2003: 155). Both connotations are represented in the theorizing and stories of entrepreneurial activities. For example, Baker and Nelson showed how entrepreneurs who lacked formal and professional education sought to break free from extreme resource constraints by applying broad sets of "amateurish" and "rudimentary" skills "with little regard to craft or professional boundaries" in order to engage in "activities that other firms... would reject as impermissible.... In so doing, they developed deep knowledge of what they could get away with and which apparent constraints they... [could] ignore and even disdain" (2005: 345). In a sense, these entrepreneurs broke free by escaping existing hard-pressing constraints. Yet, in doing so, they also "created new services from physical inputs that other firms rejected... extracted services from unpaid customers or bystanders... (and) created customers from people whose resources and choices kept them from buying from conventional firms" (Baker & Nelson, 2005: 349). These entrepreneurs, thus, also broke up constraints for themselves and others and created new possibilities in their environments.

Google's founding story—as recast in the following stylized description—similarly exemplifies the elements of breaking free (setting out to do things their own way) and breaking up (downloading the internet to improve upon early search engines):

Brin and Page—the sons of college professors who introduced them to computing when they were toddlers—met in 1995 at Stanford, where they were both Ph.D. candidates in computer science and technology. They became inseparable and set out to do things their own way. Professors laughed at Page when he said one day that he was going to download the Internet so he could improve upon the primitive early search engines (Vise, 2005).

This story also suggests that although the subsequent success of Google has been associated with the superiority of their PageRank technology, the entrepreneurship process began with a dream to break free from perceived technological constraints (in terms of the available algorithms for conducting search) and cultural constraints (in terms of the information content that these algorithms made available).

Analyzing the seeking autonomy aspects of entrepreneurship opens up three novel directions

for entrepreneurship research. To a certain extent, the breaking up aspect of emancipation resonates with a Schumpeterian view of entrepreneurship as "creative destruction." Yet the emancipatory view goes beyond the Schumpeterian view by attending to both the breaking free and the breaking up. The difference between the two raises questions about how entrepreneurial efforts may be affected by different conceptualizations of autonomy. Do entrepreneurs who view autonomy as freedom for themselves do things differently and achieve different outcomes from those who view autonomy as freedom (and change) for the social collectivity of which they are a part? Such questions can guide entrepreneurship research toward escaping the default individualist assumptions derived from the disciplines of psychology and economics that have informed it (Steyaert, 2007), and toward theorizing and researching both the deeply individualist (and individuating) and deeply social (and change-creating) aspects of entrepreneurship.

The second important idea associated with the notion of seeking autonomy as an emancipatory act is that it involves the breaking up of constraints. In a certain sense, while the Schumpeterian perspective sees creative destruction as the means of entrepreneurship, the emancipatory perspective recognizes it as one of its goals. It stresses that entrepreneurship involves creating and amplifying cracks in otherwise stable (and potentially rigidified) social and economic relationships that impose constraints on certain types of activities that the entrepreneur him/herself and other members of their social world may value.

Recognizing the escape from or removal of constraints as a central object of entrepreneurship calls for a more systematic consideration of the interplay between the experience of constraints and the extent of change pursued with an entrepreneurial project. As we suggested in the call for papers, when we asked, "What can we learn about entrepreneurship from the arts and the sciences?" both the field of arts and the field of scientific discovery can serve as fertile grounds for gaining insights in this regard. For example, in analyzing artistic innovation, Becker offers the following insightful observations about the relationship between change and constraints:

In general, breaking with existing conventions and their manifestations in social structure and material artifacts increases artists' trouble and decreases the circulation of their work, but at the same time increases their freedom to choose unconventional alternatives and depart substantially from customary practice. If that is true, we can understand any work as the product of choice between conventional ease and success and unconventional trouble and lack of recognition.... Conventions make collective activity simpler and less costly in time, energy, and other resources; but they do not make unconventional work impossible, only more costly and difficult (2008: 34).

Becker (2008: 32) illustrates his arguments with the example of Harry Partch's entrepreneurial efforts to introduce a new musical scale changing the conventional Western scale of twelve tones to one including forty-two tones. As Becker observes:

Conventional instruments cannot produce these microtones, and some cannot produce them at all, so conventional instruments must be reconstructed or new instruments must be invented or built. Since the instruments are new, no one knows how to play them.... Conventional Western notation is inadequate to score forty-two tone music, so new notation must be devised and players must learn to read it.... While music scored for twelve tones can be performed adequately after relatively few hours of rehearsal... [for forty-two tone music] seven or eight months of work finally would result in two hours of music (2008: 32-33).

Becker concludes that "the difference in the resources required measures the strength of constraint imposed by the conventional system" (2008: 33).

We believe that entrepreneurship researchers can make important contributions by systematically examining the relationships between change and constraints and investigating the processes through which constraints are not only overcome but also removed. Research embracing the emancipatory view can seek to understand how, by dislodging or rearranging the structures that organize markets, entrepreneurs may release their reified power for new productive and developmental purposes, creating new possibilities for various social groups.

The third important direction that emerges from the emphasis on seeking autonomy is the recognition that entrepreneurship individuals and groups often solve technological and other problems because they are internally motivated to change their worlds (Ketchen, Ireland, &

Snow, 2007; Rindova & Fombrun, 2001; Sarasvathy et al., 2003). Without attention to these motivations, research focusing on start-up activity strictly from a technological point of view, for example, may be overlooking essential elements of the process. For example, such research is unlikely to account for the effects of the entrepreneurs' dreams about the specific ways in which they choose to deploy their technological discoveries. In contrast, an emancipatory perspective suggests that understanding the constraints that entrepreneurship individuals seek to overcome may give us better insights into the process through which entrepreneurs create—first change and then opportunities. By focusing on the relationships between change and entrepreneurship, researchers can begin to examine more systematically the creation, rather than only the discovery, of opportunities. Our arguments here align with the growing body of work focusing on opportunity creation as an "inside-out" process that differs from the "outside-in" process of identifying and seizing opportunities (Alvarez & Barney, 2007; Rindova & Fombrun, 2001; Sarasvathy, Dew, Read, & Wiltbank, 2008).

Google's growth trajectory offers glimpses into an unfolding entrepreneurship process, where the breaking up of constraints and structures is central to understanding not only the technological and strategic evolution of the firm but also the expanding scope of its growth trajectory, in terms of "Google's disdain for the status quo and its voracious appetite for aggressively pursuing initiatives to bring about radical change" (Vise, 2005: B01). As a media report explains:

Google is testing the boundaries in so many ways, and so purposefully, it's likely to wind up at the center of a variety of legal battles with landmark significance.... Google is compiling a genetic and biological database using the vast power of its search engines; scanning millions of books without traditional regard for copyright laws; tracing online searches to individual Internet users and storing them indefinitely; demanding cell phone numbers in exchange for free e-mail accounts (known as Gmail) as it begins to build the first global cell phone directory; saving Gmalls forever on its own servers, making them a tempting target for law enforcement abuse; inserting ads for the first time in e-mails; making hundreds of thousands of cheap personal computers to serve as cogs in powerful global networks (Vise, 2005: B01).

Interestingly, many available accounts discuss Google's far-reaching aspirations for change in

terms of an almost institutionalized opposition between "dreaming" about social change and making money. To wit, "Google's altruistic tone masked its savvy, hard-nosed business strategy—more books online means more searches, more ads and more profits" (Kawamoto, 2003).

While we believe that it is important to recognize the multiplicity of the goals of complex organizations, we also wish to highlight that the implied opposition between emancipatory projects to create change and a "hard-nosed business strategy" is a false one. Yet it is one that may also be carried into research approaches that couch entrepreneurial efforts to tackle various problems and constraints in their environments as the pursuit of profitable opportunities. Such *ex post* rationalizations—by researchers and entrepreneurs alike—may blind both groups to the nature of the activities directed toward removing constraints and creating change.

The emancipatory perspective suggests that entrepreneurship research should more closely consider the social change agendas inherent in many entrepreneurial projects in order to understand their emancipatory potential. Such an approach will also do away with the now institutionalized distinction between regular and social entrepreneurship. An emancipatory perspective on entrepreneurship would suggest that such a distinction is not only unnecessary but potentially not valid, since many entrepreneurs seek to improve their economic positions through the impact of broader social change (Lounsbury, 2001; Rindova & Fombrun, 2001; Weber, Heinze, & DeSoucey, 2008). In fact, an argument can be made that such a distinction is detrimental because it overlooks how dreaming up "brave new worlds" and the entrepreneurial efforts this inspires can result in large fortunes (such as Starbucks, Yahoo!, and Google, to name a few). It also couches social change efforts as inherently lacking in profit potential and, therefore, potentially less legitimate in the eyes of many stakeholders (we return to this point later).

## Authoring

If the term *emancipatory* begins with the "ex" of breaking free and autonomy, its middle consists of the "mancipare" of taking ownership—of oneself, of one's acts, and of becoming a trader. To transition from one who was

"traded" to one who "trades," the entrepreneur must consider how to act relative to existing structures that organize exchange. Having broken free from a given authority, he or she must, in effect, become his or her own author, inscribing and authorizing not only him/herself but also others in the exchange relationships required to pursue change. With this, the entrepreneur must necessarily attend to the variety of relationships, structures, norms, and rules within which an entrepreneurial project is undertaken.

Existing entrepreneurship research emphasizes the importance of connecting to networks of established and prestigious actors (Stuart, 2000) and of adopting legitimate organizational forms (Aldrich & Ruef, 2003; Rao, 1998) to increase the survival chances and performance of new firms. In other words, existing research tends to emphasize how gaining support from structures of power and authority ensures the success of acts of breaking free.

Following this logic, however, individuals who seek freedom and independence often find that they become controlled by the arrangements they make to gain legitimacy and access to resources. For example, although venture capitalists (VCs) may provide financial resources that enhance the economic potential of a new venture, they may also crop down the entrepreneur's dream to improve its fit with alleged market realities. VCs therefore may serve to reproduce structures of power, reduce variety in organizational forms and strategies, and ultimately blunt the social change potential of entrepreneurial projects. We highlight these issues not because we mean to imply that VCs always play such a role but, rather, to call attention to the trade-off between the emancipating aspects of entrepreneurship and the accommodation of constraints in the process of mobilizing resources from strongholds of power. This is a fundamental paradox of the entrepreneurial dynamic, yet one that has been given only limited attention in entrepreneurship research.

Viewed from an emancipatory perspective, we argue, entrepreneurship involves authoring—defining relationships, arrangements, and rules of engagement that preserve and potentially enhance the change potential of a given entrepreneurship project. An example of authoring is Google's unconventional leadership structure,

variously referred to as a *trio*, a *troika*, or a *triumvirate*. When former Novell CEO Eric Schmidt took the job of Google's first professional CEO, he found himself having "to do everything in groups," which by his own account was "exactly the inverse of how you're supposed to run companies" (quoted in Kopytoff, 2001: E-1; emphasis added). The design of this unconventional structure of leadership departs from the more commonly observed appointment of a seasoned executive in a promising start-up to introduce "adult supervision." The structure Google's founders authored enabled them to act in accordance with institutionalized expectations, but without giving up authority over their entrepreneurial project. In doing so they were able to preserve their autonomy and to mobilize the resources necessary to support it. This example also illustrates the idea that authoring does not refer to an outright rejection of all established norms and forms of authority but, rather, designing arrangements that support the change-creating intent of the entrepreneurship individuals.

Authoring therefore can be understood as involving activities within the entrepreneurship process through which entrepreneurs engage economic and social resources in a manner that enables them to preserve, institutionalize, and expand the social base of the entrepreneurship process. Previous research has emphasized the need for entrepreneurs to mobilize resources to accomplish objectives (Aldrich & Ruef, 2003), but it has not fully explicated the consequences of the "strings attached" that come with these resources. The emancipatory perspective emphasizes the need to consider the possibilities for resource mobilization through authoring as a process for protecting the emancipatory potential of new ventures.

Google's actions are instructive in this regard. At the time of its IPO, it established that the management trio (founders and CEO) would hold approximately one-third of Google's shares but would control over 80 percent of the shareholder votes (Eisenmann, 2004). The IPO prospectus was accompanied by an unusual letter from Page entitled "Owner's Manual" that explained this as follows:

Google is not a conventional company. We do not intend to become one. . . . We are creating a corporate structure that is designed for stability over long time horizons. By investing in Google, you

are placing an unusual long-term bet on the team, especially Sergey and me, and on our innovative approach. We want Google to become an important institution. That takes time, stability, and independence (Google Inc., 2004: 27).

The letter outlined several additional practices intended to protect the founders' intent to remain focused on change creation despite powerful resource holders who might have vested interests in protecting the status quo. For example, Google refused to provide guidance to Wall Street analysts or to "smooth" earnings to create the appearance of steady growth. In addition, it auctioned its IPO shares rather than allowing an underwriter to allocate shares according to its discretion. These practices are claimed to manifest one of Google's core values: "We make our own rules."

Using Google as an example of authoring can convey a misleading impression that authoring is a privilege of the rich and powerful—of the entrepreneurs who control valuable proprietary technologies that give them bargaining power. Indeed, as noted earlier, the idea of authoring refers to the acts of taking ownership and changing the positions of power in the trading process. In our view, however, a key direction for entrepreneurship research suggested by the concept of authoring is to examine the conditions and processes through which entrepreneurs can effect such "trading of places." For one, many entrepreneurs who control valuable proprietary technologies do not leverage them by recauthoring relationships and rewriting rules but, rather, by simply getting larger pieces of deals written within the existing rules of exchange. For another, entrepreneurs can seek alternative paths to power as suggested by Ozcan and Eisenhardt (in press).

Finally, authoring is not only about devising relationships with powerful resource holders but is more generally about attending to the variety of relationships, structures, norms, and rules within which the entrepreneurial project is undertaken. Many of these relationships can be with underprivileged and disempowered actors, for whom the entrepreneurial project can generate positive change. The Grameen Bank provides an example of this type of authoring. Rather than expecting clients at its door, Grameen Bank's 24,325 staff members have met, as of this writing, 7.61 million borrowers in their homes in 83,343 villages spread out all over Ban-

gladesh to deliver the bank's service. Repayment of Grameen loans is made very easy by splitting the loan amount in tiny weekly installments. These types of activities break up the constraints associated with lending to the poorest parts of the population.

Authoring is an important part of this emancipatory entrepreneurial project. Here are some examples: There is no legal instrument between the lender and the borrower. There is no stipulation that a client will be taken to a court of law to recover the loan. When a client gets into difficulty, conventional banks direct their efforts to recover the money (including taking over the collateral), whereas Grameen directs its efforts to help a borrower regain strength. And in conventional banks interest charged on a loan can be a multiple of the principal, depending on the length of the loan period, whereas in Grameen, under no circumstances can total interest on a loan exceed the amount of the loan, and no interest is charged after the interest amount equals the principal (Grameen Bank, 2008). Such examples suggest that entrepreneurship research can make important contributions by directing greater research attention to the creative authoring of relationships and rules through which entrepreneurs can pursue their dreams and create change.

### Making Declarations

An emancipatory perspective recognizes the making of declarations—unambiguous discursive and rhetorical acts regarding the actor's intentions to create change—as an important part of the change creation process. The emphasis on declaration has continued from the word's origins until now (e.g., the Emancipation Proclamation and the emancipatory Declaration of Independence), highlighting the importance of declarative acts. Just as authoring points to the need to position an entrepreneurial project in a system of exchange relationships with resource holders, the idea of making declarations points to the need to position the project in the webs of meaning within which stakeholders interpret the value of products and activities (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Hargadon & Douglas, 2001; Rindova & Fombrun, 1999; Weber et al., 2008).

Existing entrepreneurship research recognizes the importance of activities that influence established patterns of meaning for the success

of new ventures (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). It has analyzed how symbolic and cultural resources, such as stories (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001), strategic narratives (Martens, Jennings, & Jennings, 2007), and symbolic actions (Rindova, Petkova, & Kotha, 2007; Zott & Huy, 2007), are deployed to influence the interpretations of stakeholders. Yet this research has tended to emphasize how such resources increase the comprehensibility and acceptability of a new venture by connecting it to familiar and valued accounts (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001; Zott & Huy, 2007). In contrast, the emancipatory perspective directs research attention to the costs and benefits associated with relying on familiar but possibly imprisoning framings of entrepreneurial efforts. Becker's insights, discussed earlier, about the need for artists breaking from conventions to incur additional costs to present and exhibit their novel works, point to this trade-off, as does research on technological innovations that analyzes how symbolic devices that facilitate the acceptance of novel technologies may hinder the ability of stakeholders to recognize their novel functionality and value (Hargadon & Douglas, 2001; Rindova & Petkova, 2007).

An emancipatory perspective suggests that rather than disguising the differences associated with entrepreneurial activities and masking the potential contradictions through legitimization activities, entrepreneuring may involve (or even require) explicitly exposing contradictions in an effort to generate stakeholder support for the intended change in the status quo. For example, Amazon.com entered into the book retailing market with a declaration that it was the "Earth's biggest bookstore" (Rindova et al., 2007). Underscoring the audacity of the declaration is the fact that Barnes & Noble filed a lawsuit against it for making "a false claim," since it had neither stores nor an inventory of books. Undeterred, Amazon.com enhanced its declaration by launching ads that featured the images of the Pentagon and the Taj Mahal as physical yardsticks of the size of its virtual "collection." Its declaration not only influenced perceptions of what a bookstore is but conveyed the superiority of the online retail category through vivid symbols.

The idea of making declarations suggests several new directions for entrepreneurship research. First, making declarations raises conse-

quential questions of "What should be said and how should I/we say it?" (signaling and disclosure), "Who gets to say and who am I to say?" (voice), and "Who out there cares?" (audiences). Because declarations are intended for specific audiences and are bound by customs of rhetoric, speaking, and listening, greater attention to the discursive practices that highlight change and connect to audiences is warranted. For example, in their analysis of the creation of the market for grass-fed meat and dairy products, Weber et al. (2008) used semiotic analysis to identify how cultural codes were used to emphasize the difference between the grass-fed and grain-fed products and the importance of the change created by entrepreneurs involved in grass-fed production. The cultural codes employed pointed to substantive social values, which mobilized expanding social networks and constructed a collective identity for a social movement. As the authors observe, "Key characteristics of movements are their diffuse boundaries and limited formal organization, the articulation of conflict with prominent practices in the name of a greater good, and the sustained nature of these efforts (McAdam, Tarrow, & Tilly, 2001)" (Weber et al., 2008: 532). This study highlights the importance of systematically analyzing the making of declarations for understanding the mobilization of broad stakeholder support for change-oriented entrepreneurial projects—an issue we see as central for future research on entrepreneurship.

In drawing attention to the importance of declarations, an emancipatory perspective also enables researchers to consider more systematically the inevitability of contestations arising once declarations are made. Hargadon and Douglas's (2001) analysis of the adoption of electrical light provides some instructive illustrations of how entrepreneurial declarations of freedom typically result in contestations. When Edison declared that he had "discovered how to make electricity a cheap and practical substitute for gas" (Israel, 1998: 502; cited in Hargadon & Douglas, 2001: 488), a British parliamentary council proclaimed that Edison possessed "the most airy ignorance of the fundamental principles of both electricity and dynamics" (Conot, 1979: 129–133; cited in Hargadon & Douglas, 2001: 486). Similarly, American competitors declared Edison's ideas to be "so manifestly absurd as to indicate a positive want of knowledge

of the electrical circuit and the principle governing the construction and operation of electric machines" (Conot, 1979: 162; cited in Hargadon & Douglas, 2001: 486).

Google's efforts to organize information embedded in different forms similarly have been met with pronounced opposition and contestation:

For years, Larry Page [a Google cofounder] dreamed of tearing down the walls of libraries, and eliminating the barriers of geography, by making millions of books searchable by anybody in the world with an Internet connection. After Google began scanning thousands of library books to make them searchable online, book publishers and authors cried foul, filing lawsuits claiming copyright infringement. Many companies would have reached an amicable settlement. Not Google. Undaunted, Google fired back, saying copyright laws were meant to serve the public interest and didn't apply in the digital realm of search (Kawamoto, 2003).

These examples illustrate that the dynamics of making declarations and facing contestations are important yet understudied processes that shape the fates of entrepreneurial efforts. For example, it will be fruitful for researchers to explore if the magnitude of a declaration and the strength of contestation it elicits affect the breadth and intensity of stakeholder support that a change project may marshal. The idea of declarations and contestations may enable entrepreneurship researchers to connect more directly to the established body of work on competitive attacks and counterattacks in strategy research (cf. Porter, 1980; see also Ferrier, 2001). While we believe that fruitful cross-pollination is likely to result from such connections (cf. Baker & Pollock, 2007), we also wish to emphasize that the process of declaration and contestation is not simply one of deploying economic resources to alter the attractiveness of an opportunity but is also one of meaning and rhetoric, and ultimately of altering societal beliefs about the very nature of things.

This difference in emphasis suggests the need to systematically examine the use of cultural and symbolic resources for effecting change, rather than acquiring legitimacy, for example. An emancipatory perspective encourages greater research attention to the means through which agents of change imprint their creative visions on the reality that surrounds them and can stimulate fuller exploration of the cultural

aspects of entrepreneurship (Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001). In contrast to much current research on new venture legitimization that takes existing institutions as given and as a resource to be used to increase legitimacy, an emancipatory perspective suggests the need to attend to the institutional work that accompanies entrepreneurship activities (Van de Ven & Garud, 1992) and the constitution of new institutions around new products, projects, and activities.

Entrepreneurship research conducted from an emancipatory perspective may therefore render yet another prevalent distinction between regular and institutional entrepreneurship unnecessary. The distinction may lead scholars to attend to a subset of factors involved in the process—either the economic or the institutional. Moving past this distinction may make entrepreneurship research simultaneously broader in its focus and more distinctive.

### THE STF ARTICLES

Each of the four articles contained in this STF extends current thinking about entrepreneurship in novel directions and contributes to the conversation we seek to initiate about entrepreneurship as emancipatory change creation. For example, one limitation of the existing research is that it almost exclusively examines entrepreneurship within formal economies. Yet, as a practical matter, a huge amount of commerce takes place within the informal economy—that segment of economic activity that is illegal within a society but is viewed as legitimate by sizable groups within the society. In "You Say Illegal, I Say Legitimate: Entrepreneurship in the Informal Economy," Justin Webb, Laszlo Tihanyi, Duane Ireland, and David Sirmon take important initial steps toward explaining how the informal economy provides opportunities for emancipation to some individuals. The authors recognize that autonomous actions that involve breaking away from legal authority may be related to collective identities. They skillfully integrate theory on entrepreneurship, institutions, and collective identity in order to offer insights about the recognition and exploitation of opportunities in the informal economy.

Consistent with the emphasis on change creation within an emancipatory perspective, activities can move over time from the informal economy to the formal economy. The repeal of

Prohibition in the United States is a prominent historical example, but such shifts remain ongoing. For example, ticket "scalping" (i.e., selling a ticket to an event for more than its face value) has long been illegal in most American jurisdictions but has been viewed as acceptable behavior by many. Recently, scalpers have entered the formal economy by creating small physical operations in locations that allow scalping and by conducting their transactions via the internet. The dynamics surrounding such entrepreneurship acts offer fertile ground for studying the relationship between entrepreneurship and the different types of authorities against which or through which entrepreneurs pursue their goals. These ideas also suggest the importance of examining entrepreneurship activities in fluid institutional environments, such as economies in transition and developing economies where entrepreneurship activities may help shift the boundaries set by legal structures and norms (or where necessary frameworks for traditional approaches to entrepreneurship may not exist or be well-developed).

At the same time, the ideas developed by Webb et al. pose the question "When do emancipatory desires and efforts result in formal freedom, and when do they consign their agent(s) to an 'illegal yet legitimate' existence?" For example, Baker and Nelson's (2005) analysis of entrepreneurial bricolage discussed earlier shows that, having achieved a certain measure of autonomy in this realm, entrepreneurs often become locked into it. Collectively, these points suggest that individuals may be breaking free without creating a change in the status quo and that future research on entrepreneurial efforts that do not fit standard templates of opportunity exploitation may provide important answers to the question of how entrepreneurship simultaneously affects entrepreneurship individuals and their relevant social groups.

In "The Nature and Experience of Entrepreneurial Passion," Melissa Cardon, Joakim Wincent, Jagdip Singh, and Mateja Drnovsek define entrepreneurial passion and detail how it shapes entrepreneurs' cognitions, behaviors, and effectiveness. The authors construct an intriguing amalgam of entrepreneurship theory, psychological theory on emotions and feelings, and theory on self-regulation in order to raise and address a series of important questions regarding the role of passion in entrepreneurial

activities. While the idea that passion often plays an important role in entrepreneurship has much face validity and is readily supported by anecdotal evidence, their conceptual model and testable propositions lay a solid foundation for future studies.

Further, the paper offers some provocative ideas about the origins of autonomous action and the pursuit of "dreams" through entrepreneurship. The emphasis on emotion offered by Cardon et al. is important for understanding the emancipatory potential of entrepreneurship, because breaking free and breaking up are seldom solely rational processes. The protagonist in our introductory story, Jim Corman, described himself as well paid but "miserable" within a shortsighted corporation. His passion had disappeared, but it was reignited when he set out to build a company that would provide employment for his displaced neighbors. Given the evidence that money as a motivator for entrepreneurs has limits (Graebner & Eisenhardt, 2004), we believe that careful and systematic examination of the role of passion in entrepreneurship may lead scholars to better understand why and how individuals take their first steps on the entrepreneurship path. For example, Cardon et al.'s arguments about how passions and role identities (i.e., whether an entrepreneur identifies with being an inventor, founder, or developer) intermingle to differentially shape entrepreneurial outcomes suggest interesting possibilities for elaborating all dimensions of our emancipatory perspective.

With these ideas come questions about how entrepreneurs persist when their passions wane but their beliefs do not. We believe that inquiry into emotions and their roles in entrepreneurship can provide important contributions. Because both can be motivational and are related to creativity and innovation, we encourage inquiry that considers both positive emotions, such as passion and joy, and negative emotions, such as spite and vindictiveness. There may be value, for example, in investigating whether there are inflection points beyond which passion becomes counterproductive in entrepreneurship.

In "Tough Love: How Communal Schemas and Contracting Practices Build Relational Capital in Entrepreneurial Teams," Ruth Blatt builds on the observation that new ventures involve a great deal of novelty, which poses a wide range of challenges to the new venture's functioning

and survival. Blatt leverages theories of social psychology and interorganizational relationships to suggest how entrepreneurial teams can overcome the challenges novelty poses by developing relational capital. She views adopting communal relational schemas (caring about one another's needs) and contracting practices (making expectations explicit and transparent) as mechanisms to cope with novelty.

In our view Blatt's paper offers some pertinent insights into the process of authoring relationships, teams, and ultimately organizations within an entrepreneurial context marred by the uncertainty and rejection that tend to accompany novel endeavors. In particular, her work suggests that emancipatory efforts can partially offset the challenges of novelty if they are couched both in communal, "beyond me" terms and in more individualist and contractual ways. As she argues:

On the surface, the combination presents a conundrum. Communal schemas imply caring, while contracting implies suspicion. . . . I contend that the implications of novelty in a start-up situation make both necessary. In a new venture there is no organizational history and little (if any) structure, so the entrepreneurial team is the organization. The team must therefore cultivate its ability to function as an organization. Communal schemas enable entrepreneurs to be a team rather than a collection of individuals, and contracting practices enable entrepreneurs to be an organization that takes collective, coordinated action (p. 545).

This poses interesting questions about the relationship between seeking autonomy and developing teams that can cope with the demands of change creation. If the initial motivations for venturing out may be driven by a passionate, personal wish to break away, adopting a communal schema might be very difficult. In contrast, when entrepreneurship is focused on freeing and changing the status quo for others, this balance may be far easier to achieve. Coupled with Cardon et al.'s work, these ideas suggest that entrepreneurship research should give closer consideration to entrepreneurs' experiences of the relationship between "self" and "others"—between one as an individual and one as a member of both proximal and distant social groups.

Further, Blatt's paper reminds entrepreneurship researchers to continue to move beyond the popular press portrayal of dynamic individuals

such as Richard Branson and Mary Kay Ash as the driving force behind entrepreneurship. We are certainly guilty of this. The call for papers for this STF emphasized great men and women in noting that "the dreams, discoveries, and creations of Sam Walton (Wal-Mart), Sakichi Toyoda (Toyota), Anita Roddick (Bodyshop), Yves Saint Laurent, Mary Kay Ash (Mary Kay), Ingvar Kamprad (IKEA), David McTaggart (Greenpeace), and many others have changed the way billions of people work and live." Blatt's insightful emphasis on team-based entrepreneurship prompts us to consider the need for and the possibilities associated with a "great group" theory of entrepreneurship.

The final STF article is perhaps the most provocative of the set. In "Extending the Boundaries: Reframing 'Entrepreneurship As Social Change' Through Feminist Perspectives," Marta Calás, Linda Smircich, and Kristina Bourne elegantly challenge traditional assumptions about entrepreneurship. Calás et al.'s paper responds to the same perceived need to expand the domain of entrepreneurship research as the one that motivated the STF. Their goal is also similar—to redirect entrepreneurship research away from its extensive focus on wealth creation and toward developing a better understanding of entrepreneurship as a social change activity with a variety of possible outcomes, such as poverty alleviation and the elimination of oppression in society. Such a move requires the adoption of new assumptions, a shift in definitions of established terms, and a critical mindset. Calás et al. therefore draw on a variety of feminist theoretical perspectives to carefully elaborate the directions for such shifts, the different assumptions that underlie them, and the different foci they would present.

The critical view they offer is especially important from our perspective. Although successful entrepreneurs are placed on proverbial pedestals within our capitalistic society, it is clear that entrepreneurship has a "dark side" and that this dark side has been largely ignored within existing research. In our view entrepreneurship research that recognizes the potentially destructive and exploitative aspects of entrepreneurship with respect to human and natural resources would be quite valuable.

The directions proposed by Calás et al. also resonate with the other three papers in the STF—with Blatt's conjoint emphasis on commu-

nal thinking and contractual engagement; Cardon et al.'s desire to reincorporate the human, emotions and all, into entrepreneurship; and Webb et al.'s focus on how entrepreneurs might move from the "underground" to "above ground." Yet in asking, "What would happen, theoretically and analytically, if the focus of the literature were reframed from entrepreneurship as an economic activity with possible social change outcomes to entrepreneurship as a social change activity with a variety of possible outcomes?" (p. 553), Calás et al. push the whole question of entrepreneurial intent, direction, and outcome to a different order—one where questions of rights and emancipation play critical roles.

## CONCLUSION

In framing entrepreneurship as a process involving dreaming, discovering, and creating in the call for papers for this STF, we considered how Marco Polo's explorations in the thirteenth century led to a rich exchange of goods and concepts (including paper currency) between Europe and Asia, and how Christopher Columbus's efforts in the fifteenth century began a chain of events that reshaped geopolitical structures. Yet media and academic attention tend to center on the titans of industry, and especially on high-technology entrepreneurship. While we recognize that such entrepreneurial efforts create enormous wealth for individuals and societies, we also believe that ideas about the role of an entrepreneur and the behaviors that accompany it can become institutionalized—through popular press clichés, financiers' expectations, or narrow conceptualizations of the phenomenon by academics. In our view an important direction for entrepreneurship research is to consider the entrepreneurship that occurs in contexts not traditionally considered within the domain of entrepreneurship, including the activities of explorers, scientists, artists, freelancers, and social cooperatives, as well as the many small-scale initiatives through which individuals and groups seek to change their worlds. Examples like those of former migrant workers Pablo and Juanita Ceja, who created Ceja Vineyards in the Napa Valley region of California, suggest that entrepreneurship is all around us. To better account for the fact that entrepreneurship is all around us—and to provide a lens for

seeing it—in this article we articulated some ideas about how entrepreneurship can be seen as acts toward emancipation.

Although we focused on articulating some elements that affect the emancipatory potential of entrepreneurship, our arguments are not intended to champion a heroic view of the entrepreneur who breaks away from authority and dislodges structures of power. What we emphasize is that it is important for entrepreneurship research both to acknowledge that entrepreneurship is often an act toward emancipation and to draw attention to challenges entrepreneurs face. Addressing these opportunities and challenges will require approaches that cross levels of analysis and extend beyond prevalent theoretical views, integrating theory that enables inquiries into the micro and macro aspects of entrepreneurship. Our hope is that future research scholars will direct greater attention to the entrepreneurship that is all around us and its emancipatory potential.

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