

**THE RHETORIC OF EVERYDAY-ENTREPRENEURSHIP:  
REFRAMING ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY & CITIZENSHIP**

by  
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*For everyday-entrepreneurs  
who are all too often overlooked and from whom there is much to learn*

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## **ABSTRACT**

My dissertation forges a response that continues and expands discussions of entrepreneurialism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I seek to answer Welter and colleagues' call to embrace the entrepreneurial diversity offered by the folks that are embedded in local communities. I argue for a reframing of entrepreneurship that acknowledges the work of everyday-entrepreneurs — people that operate in mundane contexts, beyond capitalist agendas, guided by socially aware objectives seeking to promote equity for the greater good. This undertaking is stretched across a three part study informed by feminist perspectives. Tracing the narratives belonging to women of historically marginalized identities reveals not only the exclusionary aspects of mainstream entrepreneurship, but also the innovative practices these women embody as they balance the social variables of identity politics within and across their communities. The participants of this study demonstrate entrepreneurial citizenship, a term I propose as the many ways everyday-entrepreneurs contribute to world-building and history-making for each of the different communities they belong to. Chapter one establishes the exigence for this work and provides commentary on the cultural framework from which entrepreneurship emerged. Chapter two offers a survey of the surrounding literature, and addresses how a bridging of interdisciplinary gaps helps scholars better understand everyday-entrepreneurship. Chapter three presents a case for taking an interdisciplinary approach towards diversifying entrepreneurial scholarship. Chapter four outlines the study design, methods, and methodology. In Chapter five, I present empirical observations that quantify the qualitative data collected for the study. And, finally, chapter six presents participant profiles in conjunction with case study vignettes that highlight snapshots of everyday-entrepreneurship in practice. Ultimately, this project seeks to show that there is much to be learned from the lived realities of everyday-entrepreneurs; widening discourse on entrepreneurship to include these individuals: (1) dismantles grand narratives of entrepreneurship that are intrinsically oppressive, especially for those with intersectional identities, (2) exposes interlocking forms of oppression operating within the obscure, shadowed margins of familiar spaces that render individuals invisible, (3) contributes to new models of entrepreneurial identity, and (4) diversifies entrepreneurial scholarship.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

At nineteen years old Elizabeth Holmes dropped out of Stanford, fashioned herself as the biomedical version of Steve Jobs, and began her own startup company. Holmes spun a narrative that was too good for investors to pass up and she capitalized on the opportunities provided by familial and university affiliated connections. Established in 2003, her company Theranos sought to make blood testing convenient for clients by promising the production of a hypodermic needle that could be drawn from home and uploaded to perform a full range of blood tests usually administered in walk-in clinics. Holmes and Theranos raised hundreds of millions of dollars from investors, but the promises of revolutionary technology were built on a foundation of lies. She's a prominent *Them*.

In stark contrast is the story of an inconspicuous *Who*. Patty Delgado attended UCLA as an English major, but later switched to religious studies. As a student, she spent a great deal of her time working at the university magazine. When graduation came around, though, she didn't have anything lined up. "I didn't really know what my ultimate career goal was," she said — but that didn't stop her from applying for graphic design internships and building a portfolio, which ultimately carved the way for some freelancing opportunities (Delgado, n.d.). An interview with Melissa Gomez of the Los Angeles Times (2019) outlines the way Delgado was inspired by a colorful sequined patch of the Virgin of Guadalupe which she sewed on the back of a denim jacket. In 2016, at twenty-seven years old, Delgado took \$500 from a prior freelancing job and founded Hija de tu Madre — a fashion forward clothing company that is “inspired by [her] cultural crossroads and celebrates the beautiful mess that is being Latina and Latinx” (Delgado, n.d.).

The human brain is hardwired to default to and facilitate a learned behavior of social categorization — thinking about others in terms of group membership (Jhangiani & Tarry, 2017). One common example, for instance, is found in the phenomena that splits what was once a tiered hierarchy structuring the world of celebrities into a bifurcation coined by Lindsey Weber and Bobby Finger (2016) between "Whos and Thems" (Weber & Finger, 2016). As they explain

The traditional A-list-to-D-list hierarchy no longer makes sense when people whose names you've never heard before are trending on social networks with hundreds of millions of users. Instead, the subjects of gossip coverage can be divided into two categories: Whos (as in: \*furrows brow\* "Who?") and Thems (as in: "Oh, them."). (Weber & Finger, 2016)

And, while the Weber and Finger distinction of Whos vs. Thems was crafted as a way of languaging around celebrity statuses, their social categorization divisions extend across discourse communities and into different social arenas as well. Every so often media platforms buzz with headlines sparkling with stories that outline an entrepreneurial rags-to-riches story; these articles trace a trajectory for individuals that are struck by an idea that is seen to fruition, by form of product and/or service, which inevitably changes the world. Elizabeth Holmes is one of these Thems. She is the subject of Netflix and HBO documentaries, New York Times articles, and the feature of many click-bait links across the web; her name is well known in the worlds of business and entrepreneurship. Patty Delgado, on the other hand, is only able to reach about 1,400 folks on Twitter and another 145K followers on Instagram<sup>1</sup>; when asked, most would respond to mention of her name with "Who?". All the same, both Holmes and Delgado offer significant and valuable insights for understanding entrepreneurial identity — concepts that, while widely studied (often separately), are not well understood or defined.

In 2017, Friederike Welter co-published a call urging scholars to adopt a “wider and nondiscriminatory perspective on what constitutes entrepreneurship” as a means for cultivating heterogeneity amid the field’s available discourse on the topic. The Steve Jobs and Mark Zuckerbergs of the world are not representative of the greater majority of entrepreneurs out there. Welter and colleagues suggest that current scholarship is stuck with an infatuation for the glitz and glamor offered by Silicon-Valley models of entrepreneurship. Instead, they push for a need to embrace the entrepreneurial diversity offered by the remaining 99% of individuals who practice “everyday-entrepreneurship” in the different spaces they are a part of; therefore, specific attention to wealth and job creation should be scaffolded across an analysis of the broader context under which entrepreneurship emerges and functions (p. 311).

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<sup>1</sup> Please note: these analytics were recorded in November 2019; it is very likely that these numbers have since changed.

Charles Spinosa, Fernando Flores, and Hubert Dreyfus (1997) explore the complexities of the broader context and social settings that encapsulate successful business practices. Writing “in support of entrepreneurial practices within capitalist market economies, of citizens’ action groups in modern representative democracies, and of the cultural figures who cultivate solidarity among diverse peoples in modern nations,” Spinosa and co-authors offer a sort of guide-book that helps readers develop essential skills for being entrepreneurs, virtuous citizens, and cultural figures so they may “regularly and as a matter of course see [themselves] and the world anew” (p. 1). Despite coming from diverging disciplinary fields, or maybe because of such a wide array of perspectives, the co-authors argue that entrepreneurship relies on the essential skills of articulation, conversation, and communication which coalesce in the creation of shared “new world(s)” resulting in reconfigured sets of practices that often go overlooked and/or taken for granted.

Inspired by each of these texts, my dissertation forges a response that continues and expands discussions of entrepreneurialism in a digital age. I seek to answer Welter and colleagues’ call to embrace the entrepreneurial diversity offered by the greater 99%; I argue for a reframing of entrepreneurship that acknowledges the work of everyday-entrepreneurs — the Whos that operate in mundane contexts, beyond capitalist agendas, guided by socially aware objectives seeking to promote equity for the greater good. This undertaking is stretched across a three part study informed by feminist perspectives. Tracing the narratives belonging to women of historically marginalized identities reveals not only the exclusionary aspects of mainstream entrepreneurship, but also the innovative practices these women embody as they balance the social variables of identity politics within and across their communities. The participants of this study demonstrate entrepreneurial citizenship, a term I propose as the many ways everyday-entrepreneurs contribute to world-building and history-making for each of the different communities they belong to. As this project seeks to show, there is much to be learned from the lived realities of everyday-entrepreneurs; widening discourse on entrepreneurship to include these individuals : (1) dismantles grand narratives of entrepreneurship that are intrinsically oppressive, especially for those with intersectional identities, (2) exposes interlocking forms of oppression operating within the obscure, shadowed margins of familiar spaces that render

individuals invisible, (3) contributes to new models of entrepreneurial identity, and (4) diversifies entrepreneurial scholarship.

### **Cultural Framework**

The emergence of entrepreneurship in the 21st century ruptured with widespread access to information offered by digital and analog outlets. Inquiries of this phenomenon are wrapped up in the following questions: *What sorts of information are people looking for to help them navigate professional and social situations? Where do the majority of people seek resources to help them make an impact on the world? Why are people drawn to specific resources over others? Which entrepreneurship-related texts are most sought after?* This section initiates a direct inquiry on the phenomena of everyday-entrepreneurship, which begins with an assessment of the socio-cultural framework that invites this activity.

### **Some Things Never Change — *How to Win Friends & Influence People***

Outspoken advocate for freedom of information and civil liberties, 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional Librarian Dr. Carla Hayden articulates that “libraries are a cornerstone of democracy — where information is free and equally available to everyone.” Given that many libraries offer a variety of services, they undoubtedly provide positive benefits for their respective communities. The New York Public Library, for example, was founded in 1895 and has since become the nation’s largest public library system (About the New York public library, n.d.). Over the course of 125 years they have accrued 2.4 million library cardholders and 9.9 million circulating materials; as of January 13<sup>th</sup> 2020 — the library compiled the significant undertaking of determining the 10 most checked out books in N.Y. Library history. Since the central circulation system only spans a few decades, Andrew Medlar and his team reviewed recent circulation data, best-seller lists, archives from the National Book Awards and Newbery Medals to develop a more complete picture of circulation traffic (León, 2020). “The idea was to see what has been generally popular out in the world,” Medlar explained, “[because the library wanted] to start from the love of books and the love of reading rather than the numbers.”

The way this study was conducted, in relation to the texts that made the list, suggests clear pockets of information that N.Y. Library patrons have wanted over the years and continue to need today. The majority of the books on the list are non-fiction children's books and notable titles include *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss and *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak. These texts have an advantage over other library resources because they can be read and returned quickly. Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*, George Orwell's *1984*, and J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* also made the list catering to the young adult population. However, only 1 of the 10 books is non-fiction with a target adult audience; 84 years after publication, Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (1936) ranked 8<sup>th</sup> with 284, 524 checkouts (León, 2020). This begs the following questions: *Why does Carnegie's text maintain continued relevance, and what larger cultural implications are at stake for readers?*

According to the book jacket, *How to Win Friends* is a handbook for the unavoidable act of "dealing with people." As the N.Y. Library's list shows, the foundation of Carnegie's text remains relevant despite the added complications of social growth felt today. Some criticize Carnegie's work as too simplistic and/or overly optimistic, and yet it continues to circulate offering core tenants that have since crystalized the self-help genre which has become a multi-billion dollar industry (Sinclair, 2019). As Weisberg (2018) suggests, the self-help industry employs many, many "advice-givers" that bear witness to the "universal torments of being alive" and it offers a tangible foothold for those seeking advice on how to "do life."

Many self-help authors target aspiring entrepreneurs, advertising ways that readers might better understand how to leverage themselves and their assets in the current economy. In fact, the history of 'self-help' runs parallel to its much younger counterpart — entrepreneurship as a field and academic program. The comparative analysis of these timelines, in what follows, offers a window into the reasons why self-help and entrepreneurship continue to hold the attention of so many today.



## The Rise of the Self-Help Genre

Many scholars agree that the inception of self-help is found in Samuel Smiles' 1859 publication *Self-Help*. In his text, Smiles promotes the freedom of the individual and the realization of one's own potential; the text also serves as "a primer for the poor in self-education and upward mobility [proposing that] even those at the bottom of the social ladder should be able to improve themselves through hard graft and perseverance" (*Self-Help* by Samuel Smiles, n.d.). Not to mention, it was Smiles — the founding father of self-help — that popularized the phrase "heaven helps those who help themselves." After Smiles' publication, there were no major developments until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The next major milestone for self-help came around in the 1920s. During this time Emile Coué introduced elements of psychology, publishing *Self Mastery Through Conscious Autosuggestion* which was based on his work with hypnosis. This decade was marked by the fond attention to repeating positive mantras to impact the unconscious self. In addition, the "Law of Attraction" also found influential grounds.

Around the time of the Great Depression and the 1930s, Dale Carnegie and Napoleon Hill entered the self-help scene. Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* was published in 1936; Carnegie's greatest asset was his mastery of language and, as his text demonstrates, he discovered the significant impact of rhetoric and affect at a time when unemployment was at 16.9% (Weisberg, 2018). Hill's text *Think and Grow Rich* (1937), on the other hand, offers 13 steps to increase income. According to Ritt and Landers (2012), *Think and Grow Rich* is the summation of twenty years of study of people who had accumulated personal fortunes. Hill is best known for his assertion that desire, faith, and persistence are the three variables that significantly aid one's success provided they can also suppress negative thoughts by turning their attention and focus to long-term goals.

After World War II, the United States experienced a shift towards religious and spiritual approaches to self-help. One of the more notable key figures of this time was Dr. Norman Vincent Peale, best known for the *Power of Positive Thinking* (1952). Dr. Peale explains that his sole objective for this text is to "help the reader achieve a happy, satisfying, and worthwhile life"

through the demonstration of the power of faith in action (p. xi). The 1950s laid the groundwork for other avenues of self-help that would later emerge in the coming decades.

In the era of disco, psychedelics, the threat of nuclear destruction, and the Vietnam war, the self-help industry experienced another significant developmental shift. During the 1960s and 70s Americans sought refuge in the countercultural Human Potential Movement, investing their faith in the belief that people have untapped potential lurking in their minds. The self-help industry thusly embraced diet and exercise trends which increased drastically at this time; yoga and other Eastern rituals also went mainstream (Sinclair, 2019).

Moving forward, the 1980s and 90s birthed the emergence of the self-help industry on televised platforms. The benefits of a “life-coach” became a sought after service that consumers purchased via infomercials and cable subscriptions. Tuning into television network programs meant having access to influential figures like Tony Robbins and Oprah Winfrey during late-night and daytime television programming. Among others, these figures set the scene for the upcoming self-help boom that would hit the economy in the early to mid 2000s.

With the rise of technology and the internet, the self-help industry infiltrated all media platforms between 2000-2010. Since then, the clamor for consumption of goods and services in this economic sector only continues to rise. According to Forbes online magazine (2016), by 2015 94% of Millennials reported making personal improvements compared to 84% of Baby Boomers and 81% of Gen X. Additionally, since 2015 the United States has also welcomed the rise of the anti-self-help, sub-market as well. No matter where you look, what platform you’re on, or where you find yourself — the self-help industry is accessible and has permeated every area of life.

### **The Evolution of Critical Studies of Entrepreneurship**

The development and evolution of entrepreneurship as a recognized field of study in academia progressed alongside the booming success of the self-help industry. As a scientific research program, entrepreneurial studies is a relatively new bonafide field; documented interest in the subject, however, dates as far back as the 18th and 19th century writings of classical economists. Over time there have been continued debates about definitions, applications and academic

legitimation; thus, Veciana (2007) suggests that the complicated historical trajectory of entrepreneurship in the academy is best understood across four scaffolded phases. It should be noted, however, that the information outlined below provides a generalized overview of the study of entrepreneurship as it takes up Veciana's argument and builds on it with and through the support of additional scholarship.

The goal of the first stage is focused on the synthesis of scholarship that espouses defining parameters regarding who an entrepreneur is, what they do, and the function they perform in the economic process (Veciana, 2007). A significant amount of credit for work in this context is owed to Jean-Baptiste Say and Richard Cantillon; other key figures include, but are not limited to, Joseph Schumpeter, Frank Knight, and Israel Kirzner.

According to Beattie (2019), "[Scholars generally agree that] the term 'entrepreneur' was originally coined by the economist Jean-Baptiste Say from the word *entreprendre*, which is usually translated as 'undertaker' or 'adventurer'." It is said that Say derived inspiration from Adam Smith's "The Wealth of Nations," but he took serious issue with the fact that attention to the enterprising businessman was left out of the text entirely. "Jean-Baptiste Say pointed out in his own writings," Beattie explains, "that it was entrepreneurs who sought out inefficient uses of resources and capital and moved them into more productive, higher yield areas." Therefore, Say categorized entrepreneurs as individuals that seek opportunities for profit and it is their actions that produce new markets and fresh opportunities for others, ultimately keeping the economy vibrant, moving, and alive (Halton, 2019).

Irish banker and economist Richard Cantillon is credited with the discovery of economic theory in the mid 18th century. He is best known for *Essai sur la nature du commerce en général* (Essay on the Nature of Commerce in General), which is presumed to have been written around 1730. Scholars agree that his text likely circulated as a manuscript for approximately a quarter century in France until its anonymous publication in 1755 (Cengage, 2019). Cantillon's work offers contributions to economics including critical aspects of methodology, descriptions of the circular-flow of the economy, the function of money and the problems produced by inflation. More importantly, as Brown and Thorton (2013) explain, "Cantillon was the first to fully

consider the critical role of entrepreneurship in the economy. [He] described entrepreneurship as pervasive and he casted the entrepreneur with a pivotal role” showing that wealth was determined not by money but the ability to consume as a result of productive labor.

Generally speaking, the lack of consensus surrounding definitions of the entrepreneur by scholars in this first stage is due to an attempt to identify essentialist characteristics of the entrepreneur. Concerns regarding the definition of what it means to be an entrepreneur, as well as the function of an entrepreneur, continue to persist today (Gartner, 1990; Van Gelderen et al., 2012).

## ***Stage 2 — Historical Studies***

Beginning in the 1920s, entrepreneurship as an academic venture paid particular attention to historical studies. At this time, scholarship circulated focusing on enterprises, entrepreneurs, and the entrepreneurial function under the significant influence of Max Weber. Harvard Studies in Business History and the journal *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* additionally became venues for outsourcing information. 1948 saw the peak of “interest in the study of the entrepreneur as a factor of economic development from a historical perspective” as a result of the founding of the Research Center in Entrepreneurial History at Harvard University made possible with a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation (Veciana, 2007, p. 25). Notable key scholars associated with this undertaking include Norman Scott Brien Gras and Arthur H. Cole — among others.

Norman Scott Brien Gras was the first Isidor Straus Professor of Business History, and today he is revered as the “father” or “inventor” of the discipline (“N.S.B. Gras,” 1956). His most notable contribution to the field is the largely theoretical text *Business and Capitalism: An introduction to Business History*, which was published in 1939. Generally speaking, Gras “insisted on the need to separate business from more broadly understood economic history” because economic history failed to focus on the role of the businessman and business administration; as he saw it, the main goal of business history was to highlight those two components in the history of corporations and business developments (Fredona and Reinert, 2017; Wohl, 1954). Despite being greatly respected, Gras was challenged by his colleague Arthur Cole, and their feud set the

precedent for polarities that continue to persist in the field of business history. Debates between these scholars “provides the backdrop for the intellectual ferment that resulted in the full emergence of the figure of the ‘entrepreneur,’ conceived of as an ambiguous and potent force of creative destruction, and of entrepreneurship as business history’s preeminent and vital dynamic” (Fredona and Reinert, 2017, p. 268).

Arthur H. Cole, librarian of Baker Library and professor at Harvard Business School, holds an equally distinguished academic pedigree as his counterpart Gras. The two were students of the Business School’s first dean, Edwin Gay who trained in Germany under Gustav von Schmoller — the leading economist of Germany’s Historical School. Cole, like Gay before him, was known for emphasizing the need for “a holistic study of entrepreneurship and economic development that necessarily invited a heterogeneity of subjects and methods” (Fredona and Reinert, 2017, p. 288). In distinct opposition to Gras, Cole asserted the need to examine scholarship in this domain as a “whole” rather than simply dissecting individual “parts”; in doing so, he argued, we find no clearly marked dividing lines. Cole was particularly interested in “the practical experiences of businesspeople, [which] should supply economics with its “facts”, its bricks — a sentiment still integral to much of contemporary entrepreneurship studies, organizational behavior, and financial economics, among other subfields of the discipline” (Fredona and Reinert, 2017, p. 285). Ultimately, he felt that historical accounts informed the discipline writ large and that academia, society, and business would be better served overall by a focus on human agency and economic change.

Under the direction and leadership of Arthur Cole, the Research Center in Entrepreneurial History at Harvard took on the task of “reconceptualizing economics in relation to the activities and experiences of businesspeople, to formulate ‘a theory of economic growth based primarily upon entrepreneurial conditions and modes of behavior’” (Cole 1968c, 116 as cited in Fredona and Reinert, 2017, p. 269). The group included historians, sociologists, and economists interested in diverse approaches to ‘entrepreneurial history.’ The Center also produced and housed *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* (1949), a journal that provided the “institutional mechanisms for bringing wide-ranging empiricism together in ways that informed common concepts and theories in entrepreneurship” (Sass, 1978). Unfortunately, however, under the

editorship of Hugh Aitken and Richard Wohl the lives of *Explorations* as well as the Center were short-lived; both saw their demise in 1958. As Jones and Wadhwani (2006) explain — at this time, critical studies of entrepreneurship “ran into formidable methodological roadblocks, and attention shifted to the corporation, leaving the study of entrepreneurship fragmented and marginal” (p. 2). Thus, further developments in the expansion of entrepreneurship as an academic enterprise are manifested in Stage 3 wherein the study of enterprises, the entrepreneur and new firm formation are taken up in greater detail as entrepreneurship became a more crystalized and established discipline.

### ***Stage 3 — Entrepreneurship as an Established Discipline***

Several scholars have taken up, as their focus, the debate about what actually constitutes an academic discipline (Veciana, 2007; Urban, 2010; Aldrich 2012). As for the case of entrepreneurship, the lack of consensus regarding parameters and definitions poses difficulties towards the achievement of legitimation as an academic discipline. All the same, scholars note significant strides towards the crystallization of entrepreneurship as an established discipline.

Scholars who wholeheartedly agree that entrepreneurship is its own defined field of study form their argument based on the observation of circumstances that further serve institutional maturity. Veciana (2007), for example, argues that a scientific research program does not begin with a publication by an author posing a new approach or a new theory— instead it emerges when the following variables occur simultaneously:

1<sup>st</sup>: A group of researchers, generally a small group, begin to take interest in a new field of study or a new approach.

2<sup>nd</sup>: This new group of researchers feels the need to exchange information on and discuss the results of their research, and decide to organize a conference or congress.

3<sup>rd</sup>: A new specialized journal is edited in which the results of the research in the new field and the papers presented in the conferences are published. (p. 26)

Additionally, one might note the three variables posed by Veciana fold neatly into the criteria that Ronstadt (1985) and Plaschka & Welsch (1990) present as most necessary for the establishment of an academic discipline. The five criteria presented build a framework grounded

in the rhetorical acknowledgement of the first two stages of the evolution of critical studies of entrepreneurship — defining the entrepreneur and historical studies; they are listed as follows: (1) The field must be distinguishable; (2) Systematic theory and an established body of literature should exist; (3) Authority and professional associations are established; (4) Ethical codes and cultures are prevalent; and (5) Career prospects exist. As the above sections have noted, contributions from key figures like Say, Cantillon, Schumpeter, Cole, Gras and others ultimately encouraged the spread of many concepts directly paralleled to entrepreneurship. The many conferences, journals, and other research sites in this domain also made strides towards providing more sophisticated research designs, methods, and techniques. Moreover, the creation of professionally affiliated groups like the International Council of Small Business (ICSB) and others represent a wide range of functions for educators, researchers, practitioners and policy makers opening up distinct cultural communities and job prospect networks.

In sum, this third stage of entrepreneurship's development as a research program is best observed between 1949-1979. Notable publications, conferences, and milestones of this time include, but are not limited to: the 1<sup>st</sup> Conference organized by the National Council for Small Businesses (1956), McClelland's *The Achieving Society* (1961), Collins and Morre's *The Enterprising Man* (1964), publication of the American Journal of Small Business (1975), and the International Symposium of Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Development (1975). As a result of the growing advancements in technology, it is no surprise that entrepreneurship found rank and rhythm with the self help industry in its final, explosive stage of development.

#### ***Stage 4 — Present & Future Endeavors***

Over the last 40 years, the study of entrepreneurship has continued to blossom and expand as scholarship and practice have found footholds in social milieu. "Entrepreneurship has unfolded in new societal areas" and, as such, the institutionalization of entrepreneurial research has brought to light notable embraces of kairotic opportunities (Fayolle et al., 2018, p. 2); nevertheless, maintenance of continued legitimacy of entrepreneurship as an academic discipline poses distinct challenges for students, educators, scholars, and industry professionals. Consequently, recent scholarship on entrepreneurship seeks to push the discipline towards growth by taking up contested topics adjacent to identity and power politics. In response, Fayolle

et al. (2016) challenge scholars to effectively maximize the benefits of entrepreneurial scholarship by: A) dealing with complexity, B) producing interesting research, and C) becoming more critical and self-reflecting.

From its early history, entrepreneurship as a field of study has generally been dominated by research interested in the process as a purely market-based occurrence; economics, business administration, and organizational leadership provide a whole host of examples that hone in on an individual's unique traits or set of behaviors which drive venture creation. As Tedmanson et al. (2012) explain, "this focus on entrepreneurship as 'desirable' economic activity, perceived unquestioningly as positive, obscures important questions: —of identity, phenomenology, ideology and relations of power" (p. 532). As a result, scholars have begun to push against the margins and boundaries of the discipline opening up conversations of entrepreneurship that were not previously addressed by the discipline's founding figures.

Present and continued growth of the study of entrepreneurship rises to the challenges set forth by Fayolle et al. (2016). Critical perspectives in entrepreneurship research seek to counter hegemonic discourse by disrupting dominant assumptions, grand narratives, and methods. Taking a social justice oriented turn, some scholars have worked to use their positioning to draw audience's awareness towards alternative and often marginalized narratives (Rehn & Taalas, 2004; Calás et al., 2009; Ozkazanc-Pan, 2009; Hindle & Moroz, 2010). Other adjacent scholarship seeks to take on the work of publishing complex, interesting, and critical reflections on the intersections of gender and entrepreneurship. In an effort to go beyond superficial conversations on the differences between male and female entrepreneurs, scholars have begun conversations that are more attuned to the nuanced socio-political influences on the impact and affect of gender differences (Lansky, 2000; Bruni et al., 2004; Essers & Benschop, 2007; Marlow et al., 2009; Hughes & Jennings, 2012). All in all, conversations about gender and marginalized identities are only two of many parallel conversations that seek to expand the boundaries of the discipline; the rich and complex history of entrepreneurship as a recognized academic enterprise offers a window overlooking the past that illuminates the many paths forward.



## **Entrepreneurship in Practice — Moving Beyond Self Help & Academic Programming**

The long, complicated history of the study of entrepreneurship demonstrates scholarly grappling with where direct focus on the entrepreneur as an individual fits within the greater disciplinary framework. The entrepreneur is a figure that is always already enmeshed in networks and communities due, in part, to the ways they interact with and impact consumers, stakeholders, competitive business enterprises, and the economy. Further complicating the matter — the definition of what it means to be an entrepreneur and who, as well as what, is considered entrepreneurial has continued to shift in tandem with socio-cultural changes inside and outside the academy. The cultural turn in the humanities and social sciences helps illuminate the value of placing more direct attention on the entrepreneur by inviting conversations pertaining to identity politics, underrepresented groups, and contexts that house less visible forms of work, process, and organization (Jones et al., 2016; Jones, 2017; Cox, 2019; Williams et al., 2020). Therefore, dedicated attention to the relationship between entrepreneurship and community, the ways entrepreneurs build relationships with individuals, and how they navigate networks offers scholars inroads towards uncovering the reasons why texts like Carnegie's *How to Win Friends* continue to circulate in such high demand.

The relationship between entrepreneurs and other embedded actors connected in complex interactive networks is important for understanding the link between culture and entrepreneurial processes (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2003; McKeever et al., 2014a; McKeever et al., 2014b). Debates on this issue might be better understood when grafted onto the age old argument that questions — *which came first, the chicken or the egg?* Massumi (2002) takes up this line of thought in his exploration of the “political economy of belonging and the logic of relation,” wherein he questions “Which came first? The individual or the society?” (p. 68). Irrespective of which variable is the chicken and which one is the egg, Massumi indicates that individuals and societies are inseparable, simultaneous, and consubstantial (p. 71). In similar agreement, Lindgren and Packendorff (2008) argue “that entrepreneurship, both as concept and practice, emerges dynamically in social interaction between people” (p. 211). Exploring what it means to “read” individuals as part of the larger “text” that is a community or network, therefore, requires consideration of the ways culture influences entrepreneurial values, dispositions, and skills that are cast in different permutations across a variety contexts on a day-to-day basis.

Successful individuals hone their entrepreneurial craft in much the same way that professional athletes train — all the time, there is no off-season. So, while consumers stand to benefit from the vast array of available self-help resources that have been made accessible via technology, the drawback is that these are often marketed under slogans that offer superficial and/or instant gratification. The disconnect between a refined craft and the quick-fix that most self-help resources offer continues to fuel the market demand for individuals seeking personal and financial success.

Prior studies paying particular attention to entrepreneurial practices position the entrepreneur within the nexus of community/ies and their respective culture(s); the continuous circuit between community, culture, and the individual co-creates entrepreneurial identity as a process of ‘becoming’ (Spinosa et al., 1997; Hosking and Hjorth, 2004). Lindgren and Packendorff (2008) explain this process in greater detail in their recapitulation of Spinosa et al.’s (1997) work stating that entrepreneurial individuals are remarkably attuned to everyday anomalies and/or disharmonies that come with life’s many opportunities and challenges. They remark:

[Entrepreneurial individuals handle] the anomaly/disharmony by innovation and social interaction with others in the same world, socially constructing the innovation as both sensible and strange. Sensibleness is about constructing belongings in the world, about changing practices, and strangeness is about constructing deviations from that world, about making history. Entrepreneurship [...] is thus a process of socially constructing deviations and belongings in a certain world and maintaining these tensions long enough for historical changes to materialize — establishing a new way to see the world rather than constructing a brief division that in the end reinforces tradition. (p. 212)

Individuals that develop the entrepreneurial capacity to architect successful interpersonal exchanges hone a unique, coveted skill set that most people seek in the form of consumable resources like the Dale Carnegie Course Series and Toastmasters club memberships. The willingness to remain fluid within the process of ‘becoming’ facilitates an ever-evolving sense of identity that, as a result, does not limit entrepreneurial individuals to the confines of socio-cultural norms. In this radically free space, Spinosa et al. (1997) suggest that entrepreneurial individuals develop an awareness for how they might impact and drive perspectives on various ways to relate to people and things; and, it should come as no surprise that the tool most commonly leveraged by entrepreneurial individuals to transform perspectives is found in language and communicative practices.

### *Leveraging Communication Practices*

Barring some extreme cases, language is essentially a universal tool that drives interpersonal interactions. As a result, it has the potential to be deeply impactful. By default, then, a study of entrepreneurial identity requires explicit consideration for how individuals operate within the world, which is — in large part — oriented by language acquisition and articulation. In previous work, I've echoed the principle understandings posed by scholars that lay the foundation for the philosophy of language (Ruiz, 2017). Those same sentiments continue to remain worthy of consideration, recapped briefly as follows.

Simply put, humans are symbol making/using creatures; we collectively rely on mutually agreed upon symbolic structures to understand, navigate, and communicate about the world. Foss et al. (2002) explain that “because we create our worlds through symbols, changing our symbols changes our worlds” (p. 2). This is a process that Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) describes as the shifting of metaphors, which ultimately change the way the world is interpreted and understood. The process of developing new labels and terms for specific situations and contexts thusly produces new experiences thereby placing people in control over the situations in which they find themselves as well as the ways they respond to them; as Foss and company explain “people in possession of the vehicles of communication are in partial possession of their lives” (Foss et al., p.2; Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 100). Indeed, language plays a significant role in shaping identity and people's perceptions which become lived realities.

It is through constant interaction and exchange with others that individuals develop a sense of who they are. Heidegger (1962) presents this idea in his initial definition of ‘Others’ as he explains “by ‘Others’ we do not mean everyone else but me, [instead] they are rather those [...] among whom one is too” (154/118 as cited in Braver, 2014, p. 43). Language shared and exchanged through interpersonal communication practices, therefore, helps individuals develop more concrete understandings of who they are in relation to those around them. People that possess entrepreneurial identities operate within the familiarity of disclosive spaces (which Spinoza et al. define as familiar webs of practices and meanings) and respond to the volatility of life by harnessing tools, developing skills, and deploying strategies in specific coordinated styles

that constitute a type of history-making, sending rippled affect back into the communities they are a part of.

The benefits of leveraging communication practices are not solely relegated to entrepreneurship alone. Most people seek guides, resources, courses, and events that identify the skills and tools that successful entrepreneurial individuals use as a way of compensating for the inability to identify the challenges associated with communication. However, the tacit nature behind language acquisition and execution poses certain frustrations for folks that lack the cultivated attunement that is unique to entrepreneurial identity.

Dale Carnegie recognized the importance and value of specialized communicative practices explaining, in the introduction of his book, that “dealing with people is probably the biggest problem you face” whether you find yourself in business or any other profession (p. xvi). Language, among other life skills, is increasingly rooted in forms of tacit knowledge that seem to disappear or fade into the background of most cognitive processes as one matures from infancy to adulthood. On very few occasions do we actually have to think long and hard about how to string together sentences in response to friends, family, co-workers, and/or passersby. Spinoza et al. (1997) contend that it is “only when there is a disturbance of some sort do we appear to ourselves as agents, with beliefs and desires directed toward goals that require some particular action” (p. 18). For example, a disagreement with a close friend may cause an unintended argument and hurt feelings; events like these, where miscommunication is brought to the foreground, requires self-reflective moments to shed light on *what* about the way the communicative exchange took place brought about unintended effect(s). Entrepreneurial individuals are particularly attuned to this felt need for felicitous communicative exchanges and they respond with an embrace of the continued transformation of language, technology, and human practices.

Channels of communicative distribution widen and constrict with advancements of technology in interesting ways. Entrepreneurial individuals seize these opportunities by ensuring that the medium of communication supports focused goals. Even though technology complicates communication, the link between people expressed and performed through language and

communication nevertheless remains the same. Carnegie & Associates (2012) describe it this way:

“Hardwired into all of us is the desire for honest communication — to understand and be understood. Beyond that, for authentic connection — to be known, accepted, and valued. Beyond that still, for successful collaboration — to work together toward meaningful achievement be it commercial success, corporate victory, or relational longevity. The crowning essence of success lies along a spectrum between authentic human connection (winning friends) and meaningful, progressive impact (influencing people).” (p. xvi)

Insights like this help scholars better understand the logic behind why entrepreneurial individuals value specific communication practices as they compose beneficial, advantageous, and worthwhile experiences for themselves and others in a variety of contexts.

### ***Shifting Metrics of Success & Moving to a Philanthropic Lens***

To begin, success is a subjective and the metrics for assessing success pose a significant exclusionary barrier for everyday-entrepreneurs. Fisher et al. (2014) further elaborate on this point stating that “entrepreneurial success is a phenomenon that seems to be understood by implication or context” (p. 479). The current metrics and evaluation processes in place for measuring entrepreneurial success further complicate the dissensus surrounding what it means to be an entrepreneur in the twenty-first century. In many cases — the term ‘success’ serves a grammatical function that modifies/describes surrounding constructs and is made visible only by the presence of specific indicators. For example, depending on the researchers’ foci, success is often paired with one or more of the following constructs: “entrepreneur’s success”, “venture’s success”, “entrepreneurial success.” The indicators appended to each of these focal pairs are also broadly conceived; these may include (or exclude), and are certainly not limited to: timeframes, spatial references, psychological markers, social signals, and or existence of a particular variable. Rauch and Frese (2000) also add culture and cultural issues into the mix explaining how they might be dependent on or factor into individual perspectives.

Generally speaking, assessment of entrepreneurial success is typically framed in ways that produce empirical evidence through the use of performance indicators. For example, Fried and Tauer (2009) propose an index that comprises total cost, owner hours, total revenue, and revenue

growth. Liechti et al. (2014), on the other hand, suggest using industry-adjusted scales to measure aggregate income and return on initial invested capital. As with any study, however, the structure and frame for these assessment metrics is critical because of the direct impact and influence had on the collected data. Table 1 outlines sample studies that sought to define entrepreneurial success.

**Table 1** *Entrepreneurial Success Assessment Designs*

Study	Findings
Brockner et al., 2004	Identifying indicators of entrepreneurial success is problematic because it has many different dimensions and is a multistage process.
Delmar et al., 2003	Each indicator of entrepreneurial success is a multidimensional phenomenon in its own right, as exemplified by the work on the heterogeneity of growth indices.
Rauch & Frese, 2000	Choosing to examine only one aspect of entrepreneurial success is restrictive because it does not illuminate all the processes involved in success.
Davidsson et al., 2009	An indicator of success from one view may imply unsuccessful business activities from another.
Maritz & Nieman, 2006	Performance indicators are attractive indices for researchers because they are recognized as being less prone to common method bias.

This research shows just how nebulous current evaluation metrics surrounding entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial practices are. What these criterion fail to capture, though, is the essence of what Welter et al. (2017) call “everyday-entrepreneurship.”

Carnegie’s *How to Win Friends* remains relevant because it offers the average individual a human relations handbook for dealing with people and navigating a variety of social interactions. Since its publication, people have continued to crave the information presented in his text because the message is optimistic and the advice is appropriately scaled, never seeming too far out of reach. A certain disconnect remains between the way Carnegie presents entrepreneurship as an obtainable way of being and the current scholarship circulating within the field that focuses on high-profile individuals or large corporate ventures. This polarizing spectrum does not

account for the majority of the population which exists either somewhere in the middle or on the periphery of what counts as entrepreneurship — those everyday-entrepreneurs that are embedded within and across our local communities. Turning people into data overlooks the entrepreneurial contributions offered by the huge swaths of people who do not fit mainstream conceptions of what it means to be entrepreneurial. The felt need for Carnegie’s text and other resources that are often plucked from the self-help genre cater to a population that understands that every interaction throughout the day is an opportunity to “win friends and influence others” in positive ways. In order to better capture these values and this disposition, it is necessary to re-evaluate the priority for quantitative metrics of success.<sup>2</sup>

Carnegie and associates (2012) propose a paradigmatic shift towards alternative understandings of what it means to be entrepreneurial within a day-to-day context. They explain “those who succeed daily lead quite successful lives. But this sort of success comes at a philanthropic price some aren’t willing to pay” (p. x). Despite the fact that people generally associate ‘philanthropy’ with non-profit organizations, it is important to recall that at its core philanthropy contrasts with business initiatives and the word references the disposition or active effort to promote the happiness and well-being of others (“Philanthropy, n.,” n.d.). Philanthropic perspectives put people before numbers thereby embracing the dignity of their humanity, which most individuals find particularly refreshing as it contrasts the techno-mediated backdrop in front of which so many perform. To this end, “Carnegie’s assertion[s] remain relevant, albeit counterintuitive, because [they] remind us that the secret to progress with people is a measure of selflessness swept under the drift of the digital age” (p. x). Shifting metrics in this way helps tap into the networks of everyday-entrepreneurs that do not fit the mold for traditional conceptions of entrepreneurship and it opens up ties and connections to Spinoza et al.’s (1997) suggestion that entrepreneurs change and disrupt disclosive spaces as a way of positively impacting history.

The proposed philanthropic framework as a metric for entrepreneurial success illuminates the ways in which generosity, trust, authenticity, and empathy are fostered at the core of carefully

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<sup>2</sup> I do not mean to suggest that the empirical evidence produced by the aforementioned performance indicators should be abandoned entirely. Instead, I think it’s necessary to question why ‘success’ needs to be measured, for what purpose, and whom all is involved.

considered interpersonal interactions. Moreover, the interplay between these feelings, characteristics, and actions feed the psychosocial needs that individuals seek to satiate with Carnegie's text and other related self-help resources. Weisberg (2018) taps into this idea in her exploration of key figures that managed to influence huge sections of the American population in her text *Asking for a Friend*. She explains that the people featured in her book (Dorothy Dix, Dale Carnegie, and Dear Abby — to name a few) are each advice givers that responded, in their own way, to the emotional needs of their readers and that's what drove their success (p. 5). Therefore, what's lacking in contemporary frameworks for evaluating entrepreneurial success is: A) broadened conceptions of what it means to be entrepreneurial, and B) a balance between qualitative and quantitative data. The narrative component to the lived experiences, values, and dispositions of entrepreneurs is arguably equally important to the numbers in developing nuanced understandings of entrepreneurial identity.

### ***Reprioritizing the Value of Soft Skills***

*How to Win Friend and Influence People* continues to circulate with such high demand because it demonstrates the value of what has been coined “soft skills.” Even though scholars often disagree on a unified definition of what soft skills are, the general consensus is that “soft skills are a collection of people management skills [that are] important to many professions and job positions” (Matteson et al., 2016, p. 71). Robles (2012) further extends the definition of soft skills articulating them as “character traits, attitudes, and behaviors — rather than technical aptitude or knowledge. Soft skills are the intangible, nontechnical, personality-specific skills that determine one's strengths as a leader, facilitator, mediator, and negotiator” (p. 457). These unique skill sets are inherent to entrepreneurial success, and should be reprioritized within scholarly inquiry and the consideration of entrepreneurial identity — despite the fact that the business community and industry professionals in general “tend to patronize soft skills [...] as if to conclude they are complementary to hard skills at best” (Carnegie & Associates, 2012, p. xiv).



Robles (2012) reports the top 10 soft skills needed in today's workplace; they are:

- Integrity
- Communication
- Courtesy
- Responsibility
- Interpersonal Skills
- Positive Attitude
- Professionalism
- Flexibility
- Teamwork Skills
- Work Ethic

(p. 455)

Soft skills are often overlooked and undervalued because they pose significant assessment challenges, and they are difficult to reduce to steps. But, what is often forgotten is that soft skills drive the productivity and data that correlate back to more traditional entrepreneurial success metrics because they are grounded in human commitment. That is, soft skills are at the core of entrepreneurial work that operates within philanthropic lenses since person-to-person interactions are given priority. Star and Strauss (1999) contend that layers of silence and arenas of voice are found in the ecology of visible and invisible work; conversations of soft skills fold into extensions of their argument insofar as these skills are often found in the background of entrepreneurial behaviors. They explain “if one looked, one *could* literally see the work [of soft skills] being done — but the taken for granted status means that [they are] functionally invisible” (p. 20). Background work like that performed via the function of soft skills is vulnerable to oversight and devaluation “partly as it is diffused through the working process [and] partly due to the social status of those conducting it” (p. 21). Thus, the invisible infrastructure of everyday-entrepreneurship does not become visible until the functions performed by the soft skills in question are disrupted and/or discontinued.

Everyday-entrepreneurs — especially those with marginalized identities are more attuned to the sociocultural power structures that constrain and dictate boundaries around different day-to-day contexts. As a result, they harness soft skills for the benefit of facilitating social and cultural awareness, which in turn helps them succeed as communicators to diverse audiences. For example — Williams et al. (2020) take up conversations of gender and culture in their presentation of a case study that details the ways international women entrepreneurs negotiate their identity in technology startups. Turning attention to race, Jones (2017) examines the ways

black entrepreneurs work within oppressive systems, resisting damaging dominant discourses by harnessing rhetorical agency in and through their narratives. These and other scholars task future research with “foregrounding differences among individuals rather than attempting to aggregate individual experiences into homogenous characterizations” (Williams et al., 2020, p. 1). Nuanced perceptions like these foster and cultivate attention to diversity and inequity which opens up opportunities for scholars, practitioners, and entrepreneurs to utilize soft skills in their reshaping of workplace practices via thoughtful communication strategies.

Unsurprisingly, many scholars also tether soft skills to the traits that are commonly associated with effective leadership because the two are grounded in performance, communication and interpersonal interactions (Carnegie, 1936; Nealy, 2005; Sinek, 2014; Spinoza et al., 1997; Robles, 2012). Leaders engage in what Spinoza et al. (1997) extensively discuss as history making. History-making, they explain, is “the special skill that underlies entrepreneurship, citizen actions and solidarity cultivation” (p. 2). Therefore, individuals that occupy leadership positions have the capacity to change history in a variety of different ways through their influence on large groups of people. They understand that:

There is no such thing as a neutral exchange. You leave someone either a little better or a little worse. The best among us leave others a little better with every nod, every inflection, every interface. This one idea embodied daily has significant results. (Carnegie & Associates, 2012, p. x)

Everyday-entrepreneurs demonstrate the value and importance of soft skills in each interaction they share with others. Not to mention, the conscious considerations of and for the way soft skills enable history-making are of elevated importance given the paradoxically complicated nature of technology.

### ***Media, Medium, and Meaning in the Digital Era***

Advancements in technology pose interesting opportunities and barriers for communication and many scholars have theorized different ways that technology affects communication and entrepreneurial practices; for example, Potts (2014) examines the way “emerging social web tools provide researchers and practitioners with new opportunities to address disaster communication and information design for participatory cultures.” Though Potts and others

present positive ways of harnessing technology to promote a greater social good, other scholars contend that technology has oversaturated environments and culture in negative ways as well. Spinosa et al. (1997) comment critically in their assertion that socio-cultural waves (like the prominence of technology) disrupt “the skillful way of being human that bring together entrepreneurship, citizen action, and solidarity cultivation” requiring scholars and practitioners to perpetually find inroads that encourage a renewal of this way of being (p. 1).

The ways technology disrupts how people understand, navigate, and operate within the world produces benefits and consequences that bear further consideration. On the one hand, academics have embraced technology and social media producing scholarship that seeks to build nuanced understandings of language and entrepreneurial identity. Design thinking, usability, accessibility, public rhetorics, and research methods like photo-voice and data visualization provide just a few examples (Carlson & Overmyer, 2018; Lane, 2018). In addition, the widespread ubiquity of technology, as well as the internet, and the various associated discourse communities that have emerged over the last couple decades encourage perceptions of identity as fluid, multiplicitous, and emergent (Turkle, 1997, p. 180). Not to mention, advances in technology and mobile communication have also restructured conceptions of time and space insofar as various media defy spatial and geographic limitations to communication (Ling, 2017).

On the flip side — in exchange for convenience and wider audiences across multiple platforms, the sheer speed of communication has negatively affected judgement regarding how messages are crafted. Instant “connection(s)” and gratification intrude on the composition of meaningful responses. Carnegie and associates (2012) comment that “we live in a driven, digital world where the full value of human connection is often traded for transactional proficiency. Many have mastered the ironic art of increasing touch points while simultaneously losing touch” (p. xxi). Moreover, one of the more significant drawbacks associated with technology and media is the commodification of people as data; having a digital presence means acquiescing rights to privacy. People consequently become data that is tracked, traded, and sold which poses significant harm for individuals that are marked and marginalized. Noble (2018) dedicates her research to data discrimination and bias online. Writing about the repercussions that result from the widespread reliance and use of technology, Noble explains:

There is a missing social and human context in some types of algorithmically driven decision making, and this matters for everyone engaging with these types of technologies in everyday life. It is of particular concern for marginalized groups, those who are problematically represented in erroneous, stereotypical, or even pornographic ways in search engines and who have also struggled for non stereotypical or non racist and nonsexist depictions in the media and in libraries. (p. 10)

As we can see, and have likely experienced ourselves, digital interactions mask what it means to be connected in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The affordances and limitations are two sides to the same coin, though, and rarely (if ever) are there loopholes for capturing only the good.

Entrepreneurial individuals acknowledge the paradoxical conundrum constituted by composing and communicating via technology and they choose to embrace the silver lining in the aforementioned drawbacks. Simply put, everyday-entrepreneurs are resourceful about the way they make understandings about their identity as history-makers known to themselves and others. One venue for engaging in these behaviors and activities is among communities; entrepreneurial individuals also do this when harnessing the available means at their disposal in order to communicate effectively and change one's disclosure space. Spinoza et al. (1997) explain that "there seem to be at least three ways one can change one's disclosure space in response to the realization that one's practices are not in harmony; these are articulation, reconfiguration and cross appropriation" (p. 24). Amid available media and choices of medium, technology highlights the importance of conveying meaningful clarity in communication. People seek informative resources that teach this and other skills. For this reason, resources like Carnegie's original text, subsequent updates, and other consumable self-help materials are highly sought after. In exchange for wider audiences, convenience, and instant gratification, individuals have lost sight of the original goals presented in *How to Win Friends*: connection, influence, agreement, and collaboration — these core values have never changed and they drive tactical applications of soft skills and interpersonal interactions.

### ***Value of Discovering and Embracing "Why?!"***

Self-help resources encourage entrepreneurial identities to have and develop a crystalized sense of what drives, inspires, and motivates life mottos and everyday behaviors. They also cater to

human desires for connection and tout having answers and strategies for ways people can overcome contemporary social challenges. Additionally, a good few of the more popular self-help resources make similar moves to Dale Carnegie's text by offering handbooks and guides for developing the necessary skills to deal with people.

In the early 2000's, British-American author and organizational consultant Simon Sinek made a profound discovery that drastically changed his view on how the world worked and the ways people operate in it. He explains that great organizations and inspiring individuals prioritize how they think, act, and communicate in a way that runs against human nature, and this is completely opposite to the way most people think, act, and communicate. Sinek (2009) codifies this behavior in his offering of the "Golden Circle," an idea that explains why some organizations and some leaders are able to inspire where others aren't.

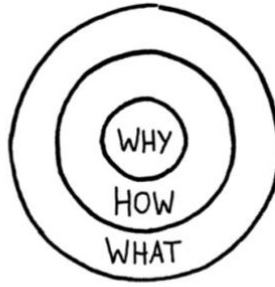
The terms that comprise the Golden Circle are defined by Sinek as follows:

**Why** - The purpose, cause, and/or belief(s) of a leader/organization. The answer to this term dictates why anyone should care (i.e., about the *what*). Few people have a definite grasp on the answer to *why*.

**How** - These are the qualities that make the organization/leader special, the things that set them apart from the competition. *How*s are often given to explain the ways something is different or better, and they are often motivating factors in a decision. Most people can articulate this variable.

**What** - The product or service/consumable capital rendered by an individual or an organization. The *what* is the thing people take away with them as a result of their interactions with a person/organization; for some, this includes - but is not limited to - the products or services a company sells, or the job function they have within that system. Everyone knows this component.

(p. 39)



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**Figure 1** *Simon Sinek's Golden Circle*

Sinek organizes these terms on a target; he explains that when most organizations/people think, act, or communicate — they do so by moving from the clearest thing, *what*, to the most indistinct idea, *why*. Rather than work from the outside in, though, great leaders/organization communicate from the inside out (see Figure 1). Sinek goes on to build the ethos of his argument by explaining that the Golden Circle is grounded on the tenets of biology; the heuristic offers a recommended framework for structuring thought(s), action(s), and communication that draws on the functionality of the brain. He explains, “When we communicate from the inside out, we’re talking directly to the part of the brain that controls decision making [i.e., the limbic brain, where the *why* and *how* are housed], and our language part of the brain [i.e., the neocortex] allows us to rationalize those decisions [i.e., to act on the *what*] ” (*Start With Why*, 2009, p. 56).

Heuristics like the Golden Circle help entrepreneurial individuals understand the potential stored in language and communication practices. These practices and the rhetorical choices behind them are informed by an understanding that “there are only two ways to influence human behavior: you can manipulate it or you can inspire it” and entrepreneurial individuals recognize that when people do not have a clear sense of why they are choosing to act, say, or do any number of things, they are forced to default to various forms of manipulation (p. 17). More specifically, the self-help industry and resources like Carnegie’s, Sinek’s and others expose entrepreneurial individuals to the possibility of engineering outcomes with others from the onset. Carnegie and associates (2012) offer a reminder that echoes Sinek’s advice — “the reasons we do things are more important than the things we do” (p. xx). And, the things people choose to do on a daily basis — the habituated practices that become rote — provide both scale and filter for future interactions.

## **Embracing Everyday-Entrepreneurship**

This chapter explored the cultural framework within which entrepreneurship is embedded. The rise of the self-help genre and its parallels with the evolution of entrepreneurship studies establish the context from which the phenomena emerged; juxtaposed against these, other practices of entrepreneurship that extend beyond these contexts establish the exigence for an embrace of everyday-entrepreneurship. As the popularity of Carnegie's timeless text shows, people are drawn to information on how to deal with people, and while their motives might span a whole host of different reasons what is certain is that texts like these help facilitate understandings about identities that are constantly in flux, always evolving and becoming.

My project is dedicated to (re)framing entrepreneurship. In some ways it was born out of a selfish desire to more clearly articulate for myself how my degree might translate on to an Alt. Ac. career, but it evolved into something much larger, something much more important. The quest to articulate where I might fit into society after graduate school lead me on a journey of social discovery; as I became more attuned to the privileges inherent within my own identity as an educated, white-passing, Hispanic, researcher, the dark underbelly of intrinsically complex social systems that organize human behavior came into better focus. My inquiry shifted gears. This project is dedicated to highlighting the narratives of people who often go unseen because their intersectionality does not fit the socio-cultural criteria designated by the exclusionary grand narratives of entrepreneurship that only accommodate 1% of the population. Mainstream conceptions of entrepreneurship in the United States focus primarily on the creation of new organizations and innovative ventures that are locked into capitalist agendas, which prioritize financial profits. However, new models of entrepreneurship are emerging.

Honoring the raw and vulnerable experiences study participants shared with me, I seek to create an inclusive space for nuanced narratives of everyday-entrepreneurship. My goal is to carry forward the work of carving out liberatory spaces that embrace the diversity of local community members who orient their lives around serving others. Their innovative efforts are responsible for rewriting history and creating equitable experiences for others and themselves. Drawing inspiration from their stories, I present everyday-entrepreneurship as a form of *techné* and I

propose entrepreneurial citizenship as a framework for better understanding the entrepreneurial behaviors that are foundational for the rhetorical architecture that discloses new worlds.



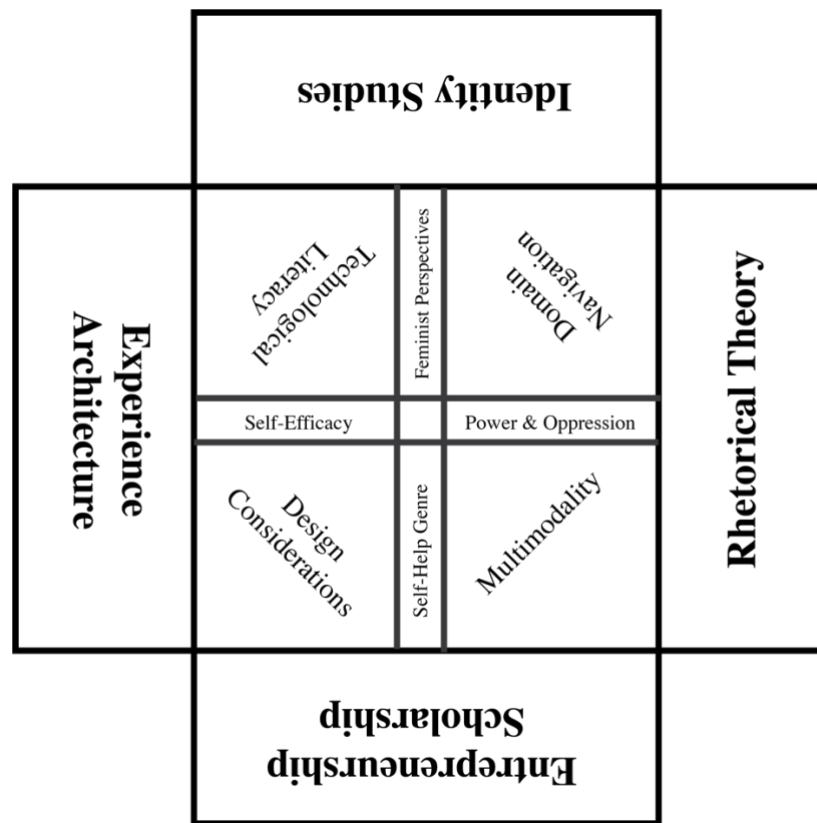
## **2. BRIDGING INTERDISCIPLINARY GAPS**

In chapter one, I presented the cultural framework out of which entrepreneurship emerged and within which the exigency of everyday-entrepreneurship is established; the social norms in place serve as power systems that palpably orient bodies in particular ways, ultimately directing ways of living and connecting with others over and around entrepreneurial domains. The focus of this work is to create an inclusive space for intersectional individuals who are excluded from grand narratives of entrepreneurship, which necessarily requires a dismantling of what has already been assembled. Exploring the territories of scholarship that covers the different segments of this argument, much-lived-in spaces for others, helps facilitate the act of building this feminist dwelling.

At its core, the concept of everyday-entrepreneurship is comprised of four core tenets — experience architecture (XA), identity studies, rhetorical theory, and scholarship on entrepreneurship. Individually, each of these pillars present partial and fragmented illustrations that do not accurately account for the intricacies of everyday-entrepreneurship. Additionally, surrounding scholarship in adjacent fields also stake claims discussing identity and entrepreneurship as well. For example, the fields of business, sociology, and psychology each contribute to ongoing conversations held about these topics — to name a few. Not to mention, every disciplinary field has their own reservations about the choice of words used to describe the subject, as well as the impact of those words on the larger arguments concerning the folks involved and affected.

For the purposes of this project, I position my dissertation work at the intersection of the rhetorical tradition, scholarship on entrepreneurship, discourse of experience architecture, and identity studies (see Figure 2). The research shows that simple queries for each of these terms renders a prolific amount of scholarship on the particular topics themselves, but few projects take these concepts together. Not to mention, the particular configuration of these topics overlaid on top of one another exposes relevant thematic concerns pertinent to everyday-entrepreneurship. Conversations about experience architecture and identity studies bring up the critical impact of technological literacy, for instance. Thus, the goal of this review is to begin building a bridge

spanning the interdisciplinary gap(s) amid these spaces, which I believe could point towards the answers to two broad, guiding research questions: 1) *How is entrepreneurial citizenship typically defined?* And, 2) *In what ways is entrepreneurial citizenship embodied and performed?*



**Figure 2** *Overlaps in Disciplinary Discourse pertaining to the study of Everyday-Entrepreneurship*

### Experience Architecture

Experience architecture (XA) is an umbrella term for an array of professional sites that merge technology with classical rhetorical knowledge. This project demonstrates experience architecture is, and has been, overlooked in the surrounding scholarship regarding entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial identity because it is most often associated with user experience and design. However, it is precisely because experience architecture is at the center of mediated systems — including those systems used to communicate — that it is relevant to entrepreneurial citizenship in the twenty-first century.

Important, albeit uncommon, connections can be drawn between Welter et al.'s (2017) call for “everyday-entrepreneurship” and Michel de Certeau's (1980) *The Practice of Everyday Life*. In his text, de Certeau posits the idea that ordinary people are active agents that have the capacity to manipulate environments through everyday actions. He argues that a perspective that targets people as merely passive and submissive consumers of cultural capital neglects an acknowledgment of the impeding power structures/hierarchies that users contribute, adapt, and resist. Thus, folks that oscillate across roles and contexts in various domains are exposed to opportunities that enhance a rhetorical toolkit that is made manifest in the practice and execution of interpersonal communication and relationships.

A number of scholars take up the task of defining and justifying the different components of experience architecture as well. Potts' and Salvo's (2017) edited collection, for example, offers field defining essays, methodologies for doing research, and an overview of sites where experience architecture research has been conducted. The editors explain “experience architecture is the most generalizable expression of creating an environment: it includes investigative research such as contextual inquiry and survey design, analysis techniques like usability testing and task analysis, and practical applications such as interaction and information design and taxonomy creation” (p. 5). Thus, bringing experience architecture into the arena as a contingent variable for understanding entrepreneurial citizenship foregrounds an individual's attunement to a reciprocal process of analyzing and constructing social experiences while producing circulating forms of knowledge and cultural capital.

The field of experience architecture also sheds light on the integration of technology, which affects the way entrepreneurial citizenship is defined. Technology is a dominant variable in the socio-cultural landscape to the extent that many individuals benefit and capitalize on an accrued tacit technological literacy that has become an extension of identity; however, this is not without significant, observable benefits and consequences. Technological infrastructure and information architecture become visible when they cease to function in effective, efficient, and convenient ways. Entrepreneurial citizenship is found in the persistence of an individual to persevere among the peaks and valleys of “success” — however success may be culturally defined, whether in terms of profit, material gain, or by some other metric. For this reason, the contributors to

Rhetoric of Experience Architecture (Potts & Salvo, 2017) stress the value of merging the tenants of rhetorical theory with the values and objectives of design and usability. Ultimately entrepreneurial citizenship reverberates with the same tenants of experience architecture; rhetorical know-how helps attune individuals to the construction of social experiences on many meta-theoretical levels — communication, action (i.e., through the production of service/product), and via technology. Cait Ryan speaks to this point asserting that:

Our success in becoming strategic experience architects can be greatly enhanced by developing a keen ability to understand, engage with, and appeal to various audiences throughout the process of researching, creating, and delivering meaningful experiences across technologies, products, policies, and services. (Potts & Salvo, 2017, p. 198)

Experience architecture eloquently informs entrepreneurial performance and the effects of delivering the meaningful experiences that Ryan articulates are felt in reciprocal feedback loops between senders and receivers circulating among different cultural domains. The rhetorical undercurrents within experience architecture present an awareness of the different variables that affect the way messages, actions, products, and services are received by others in the community. Ultimately, these interactions influence identity creation and performance in interestingly profound ways. The Sophists offer a classical example and, as this dissertation seeks to demonstrate, contemporary cases gesture toward a brighter, more intersectional future.

### **Rhetorical Tradition**

The rhetorical tradition offers a rich starting point for uncovering issues of identity politics beginning as far back as the inception of rhetorical teaching. In fact, many scholars have dedicated their work to noting the nuanced intricacies of rhetorical history over time. A brief review of pertinent scholarship demonstrates many accounts that recapitulate theories of rhetorical history spanning from the Classical era to the present, and a survey of literature that is specifically focused on the Sophists — perceptions towards them, their work, and impact on rhetorical history — proves most useful for better understanding nascent forms of entrepreneurial identity. The Sophists offer what Barbara Cassin (2014) calls a “paradigm of discourse that does things with words,” her work and others demonstrates the ways scholars can turn to historical practices as a way of casting crucial light on present day phenomena. As a result, this perspective

poignantly carves new roads for creating and circulating knowledge within human sciences, repositioning rhetorical thinking about historical gestures (Herrick, 2017).

The Sophists' title is derived from the Greek word *sophos* (i.e., wise or skilled) and *Sophistes* carried with it the present day connotation of expert or professor (Schiappa, 2013). Collectively, the Sophists specialized in one (or any combination) of three particular services: speechwriting, teaching, and orating, all of which were rendered in exchange for money. The Greeks thusly sought an education in the "arts of discourse" from the Sophists, who had traveled from outside Athens. John Poulakos (1993) explains that the reason Sophistic practices were so rapidly accepted on the horizon of the Hellenic city-states is due to the fact that major political reforms were already taking place at the same time. The scene was changing from an aristocracy to a democracy and all free male citizens of Athens were allowed to rule the polis. Consequently, there was a desperate need for a new education system, one that would mold the politics of the new democracy. In response, the Sophists offered to teach rhetoric to anyone regardless of class which provided an entry to previously inaccessible arenas of power for many people. As the first recorded entrepreneurs, the Sophists offer a rich history of entrepreneurial identity and their performance across cultural domains demonstrates entrepreneurial citizenship in unique and interesting ways.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, our knowledge of the Sophists is filtered and the issue of filtered perspectives on historical figures has also prompted work that is more directly targeted towards the implications and characterization(s) of historical figures on present day scholarship. Susan Jarratt (1998) opened the door to a critical questioning of historical work in her text, *Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured*, bearing witness to the difficulties, challenges, and obstacles posed by historical research. As a result, Jarrett's aims are twofold: she examines the ways historians of the last two centuries have drawn Sophistic maps, and offers commentary on how rediscovering the Sophists opens up the "possibility for examining the ways histories are written." Jarrett uncovers three orientations toward the Sophists —legitimation, deconstructive revisionist, and

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<sup>3</sup> Due to their immigrant status, the Sophists incorporated lessons from cross-cultural experiences into their art. The *Dissoi Logoi* offers an example, specifically in the instances that discuss different manifestations of morality and the ways that would be incorporated into their art; despite being sexist and rather tame, it was shocking then, and a step that was huge — one that we are still trying to make today. Scholarship on the Second Sophistic reveals interpretations of rhetorical practices that inform present day teachings in new ways as well (Whitmarsh, 2005).

anthropological— each of which she contends change the way others understand history writing. Ultimately, Jarrett insists that “the revisionary histories of Sophists [that she reviewed] and of feminists like Mary Daly and Hélène Cixous move in the direction suggested by the historical work of the Sophists themselves: a playful critique of philosophy animated by a progressive political vision” (p. 29). Work in this vein thusly amplifies scholarly understandings of rhetorical histories that encapsulate classical conceptions of the Sophists.

In contrast to Jarrett’s revisionary history, Michael Gagarin (2001) — sets the scene for a contextual representation of the Sophists in which he argues that Plato is to blame for the hyper sensationalized view of the Sophists as focused solely on teaching the art of persuasion. “For the most part,” Gagarin explains, “the Sophists treated persuasion as ineffective or harmful, and they distanced themselves and their *logoi* from it. For the Sophists, *logos* was more a tool for thinking than for persuading” (p. 275, 290). Thus, the Sophists regarded language with an amount of respect that deserves more than just a passing glance at the cost of negative stereotypes associated with their practices. Advertisements about the services they rendered point to the beginnings of entrepreneurial awareness prior to the ubiquity of technology that eases this processes in the twenty first century. Nevertheless, it is clear that — as primitive entrepreneurs — Sophistic practices reverberate with present day entrepreneurial citizenship practices.

To review, the Sophists’ pedagogy pulls back the curtain on some ideas that continue to persist today. The institutionalization of rhetorical education put in place by these teachers documents that knowledge and learning are co-determinant and both fluctuate and adapt to social circumstances across the passage of time. From this frame of mind, the Sophists show contemporary scholars that it is necessary to reaffirm conceptions of rhetorics as being products of social realities, social content, and social values — ultimately fertilizing a shifting ground for rhetorical theorization as well. As this dissertation argues, the same is true for entrepreneurship.

In both past and present, rhetorical prowess and entrepreneurship are sources of power which can be used to impact socio-cultural contexts in negative and positive ways; views on this matter spur further debates about who should have access to such power, and questions how that power is to be used (Herrick, 2017). In turn, rhetoric and entrepreneurship are constituted by society,

and rhetorics and entrepreneurship constitute society; people harness language as a way of establishing common grounds and building bodies of knowledge and cultural capital that advance their beliefs and comprehension. In this way, the relationship between rhetoric, knowledge, and cultural capital also addresses contingent issues, tests ideas, and builds communities. Thus, despite the passage of time, the goals for rhetoric have not changed; rhetors from past and present times continue to harness language as a vehicle for achieving common knowledge, building understandings about the world, and as Protagoras says — to try to make things better (Plato & Fowler, 2006).

As I (Ruiz 2021) have presented elsewhere, Pender's (2011) work on *techné* offers an essential schema for building a nuanced understanding of entrepreneurial identity in that it articulates the way everyday-entrepreneurs engage in rhetorical processes of innovation in their contributions to the various communities they belong to. Though linking rhetoric and *techné* is productive, certain challenges are confronted in this work because the terms (i.e., rhetoric and *techné*) are defined and understood in many different ways. With no English equivalent, *techné*—the Latin version of the Greek word “τέχνη”—is typically understood as either art, skill, or craft, but none of those placeholders provide a suitable encapsulation for the term itself. Indeed, many interpret *techné* as a more precise distillation of rhetorical work itself.

The origins and definitions of rhetoric and *techné* are entangled and long steeped in classical debates that contest the technical differences between art and skill. As the differences proposed by Plato and Aristotle show, *techné* retreats from definition(s) because its essence is manifested in highly contextual ways. In the *Gorgias*, for example, Plato uses Socrates to argue that rhetoric is not an art (*techné*—a learned kind of expertise); instead, he suggests rhetoric is a routine or knack learned from experience and habit. In the *Phaedrus*, however, this argument is reversed under rule-based prescriptions. Socrates argues that art produced without an understanding of its own mechanisms is no art at all—but it is a *techné* if it can withstand rigorous analysis while being itemized and organized by the rhetor with a capacity to understand differences in discourse and deploy specific strategies/tools for persuasion. Aristotle likewise follows suit taking up the art or knack issue in the *Metaphysics* and *Nicomachean Ethics*, arguing that it is the instrumentality of *techné* that distinguishes it from theoretical and practical knowledge. In his

work, the tensions between art and skills are reasoned as follows: “knowledge and understanding belong to art rather than to experience because artists (*technitai*) know the cause, and men of experience do not” (*Metaphysics* 981a24-981b2). The differences in proposed definitions for *techné* in the *Gorgias*, *Phaedrus*, and in Aristotle’s writings confirm that rule-based measures fall short of accounting for a *techné*. In essence, both theoretical principles and lived experience(s) are needed to extract the value of *techné* in any given situation; this ‘yes + and’ gray space is, therefore, the basis for opportunities to reclaim the value of *techné* and its applicability to entrepreneurship. That being so, the debates about *techné* that began as far back as the Greeks continue presently among scholars in search of a definitional consensus.

Pender (2011) demonstrates how *techné* finds its origins in a complex linguistic structure that points towards an articulation of process(es) of making and/or producing accounting for the essence that links art, skill, and craft together; any attempt to “re-establish the value of *techné*,” she argues, hinges on the issue of definition(s), which vary “depend[ing] entirely on whom you ask and when you ask them”—similar to the challenges presented by the terms entrepreneurship and identity (p. 13). To this end, Pender summarizes *techné*’s key defining features—dependence on time, circumstance, experience, the contingencies of human interaction, and the situational potential of rhetorical ecologies (2011, p. 123). These key features are intrinsically embedded within the social situations that encapsulate entrepreneurship and identity; thus, using *techné* as a schema for the better understanding of new models of entrepreneurship offers an interdisciplinary contribution towards the diversification of discourse in the fields of rhetoric, entrepreneurship, etc.

Despite the fact that the origins of *techné* are rooted in classical rhetoric, important links can be drawn to present day contexts that expose the way everyday-entrepreneurs are able to harness available means for innovative purposes that operate outside the bounds of capitalist agendas. Critical analysis of the material culture(s) that encapsulate entrepreneurial identity (in each of its genres, models, and forms) exposes factors that pose harmful threats to individuals that do not match the preconceived conditions to qualify as an entrepreneur in the U.S. and elsewhere. Those that inhabit intersectional identities are, therefore, forced to work within the margins of a society that has “engineered inequity explicitly working to amplify social hierarchies based on



race, class, and gender” as a “precondition for the fabrication of technologies” necessary for entrepreneurial work (Benjamin 2019, p. 23-24). For these reasons, the ways everyday-entrepreneurs engage *techné* as a “non-instrumental mode of bringing-forth” and a means of “inventing new social possibilities,” per Pender’s (2011) categorization, are highlighted by the participants of this study in the vignettes included herein.

## **Identity**

Identity is an inescapably complex vehicle that everyone relies on as a means for navigating the world; though abstract, having a grip on identity offers folks tangible expressions of being that ossify ontological frustrations with language, action, and communication at large. Exploring the concept in explicit detail sheds light on how complicated identity construction and performance is. Literature that takes up identity studies offers elusive definitions despite the growing number of scholarly publications that seek to articulate the term. The breadth and depth of the concept is very often applied as an all-inclusive label for biological characteristics, psychological dispositions, and/or socio-demographic positions (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011). Even though identity is one of the most commonly studied constructs in the social sciences (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Côté, 2006), scholars face perpetual disagreements about what identity really means, and the core issues associated with the term. To complicate matters even further, each discipline has different understandings of how the concept of identity is applied in their own field. Nevertheless, identity is a powerful construct that guides life paths, allows people to draw strength from their affiliation with social and collective groups, and explains the behaviors individuals exhibit in specific contexts (Kroger, 2007; Schildkraut, 2007).

While divisions in the available literature demonstrate a diverse array of contents, processes, theories, and metatheoretical perspectives about identity, scholars generally tend to agree that individuals possess multiple facets of identity that intersect, interact, and are constantly in flux. As Sedikides and Brewer (2001) point out, a person’s identity is comprised of perceptions and performances of “self” across an array of domains at individual, relational, and collective levels. The individual, or personal self, focuses on the autonomous role of a person in creating their own identity (e.g., goals, values, beliefs, self-esteem/evaluation). At the relational level, identity encompasses a person’s roles with others in interpersonal spaces (e.g., mother, teacher, co-

worker). Lastly, the collective self is built among a person's identification with groups and social categories to which they belong (e.g., ethnicity, gender, religion). These performances of "self" graft well onto the cultural domains that encompass entrepreneurial identity that widen at each iteration across the *micro-*, *organizational-*, and *collective-* forms of spheres of entrepreneurial identity and citizenship.

As the available literature demonstrates, every text offers its own take on the different facets that comprise, affect, and contribute to identity formation. In fact, Johnny Saldaña (2016) writes that "identity is a concept (or construct, process, phenomenon, etc.) that has multiple approaches to and definitions of it, depending on the discipline - if not the individual." He goes on to expand saying "some will say identity is a state of being; others will say it is a state of becoming [...] some say it is how you perform; and others say it is what you own and consume [...] but] the point here is that identity exists by how it is defined" (pp. 71-72). Thus, my dissertation seeks to take up identity as a core pillar for articulating a focused (re)definition of entrepreneurial citizenship. More specifically, a tracing of three localized case studies — as outlined in the "Study Logistics" portion of this document — will aim to showcase the inconsistencies across definitions of entrepreneurship as I pay direct attention to the way identity is constructed, embodied, and performed for each of my participants. And, since entrepreneurial identity manifests itself in ways that are most observable in and by folks who operate in and among social hierarchies and power structures, feminist perspectives help ensure that appropriate respect and dignity is maintained throughout the course of this inquiry and (re)definition.

## **Feminist Perspectives**

I rely heavily on feminist perspectives as I undertake an analysis of the ways entrepreneurial citizenship manifests itself most observably for individuals of marginalized identities. Taking inspiration from Sara Ahmed (2017), I believe this approach ultimately informs a methodology that is best prepared to confront a systemic issue impactful to many populations; Ahmed reminds that feminism is particularly adept for this undertaking, stating "feminism is at stake in how we generate knowledge; in how we write, in who we cite [...] Feminist theory is world making" (p. 9). Indeed, the embodied experiences of my study participants show that "by residing as well as we can in the spaces that are not intended for us there is disruption, even invention"; not to

mention, these women further prove that “those who arrive in an academy that was not shaped by or for us bring knowledges, as well as worlds, that otherwise would not be here” which are “resources for generating knowledge” via the particulars of embodied ethos (p. 9)

The history of identity is long, complicated, fraught with fragmentation, and wrapped up in social hierarchies and power structures that organize daily life (Heyes, 2018). However, among others, the feminist movement is credited with significant contributions towards the reframing of identity politics. In the 1970s, when many second-wave feminists public roles and entered into academic work much more significantly than ever before, standpoint theory emerged. Grounded in de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* (1949), standpoint offered a basis for rethinking the nature and role of women in social life and it was critiqued and challenged by many as strategic essentialism<sup>4</sup>.

Standpoint theory and its subsequent criticisms gave way to fractured identity feminisms, which illustrate the effects of language, access, and power on identity construction. In the mid-1980s Haraway (1985) breathed life into the cyborg and made famous the idea that “identities seem contradictory, partial, strategic” and always “fractured”, at least for those that are often excluded and marginalized. While Haraway grounds her argument on the permeating essence of nature and technology, Anzaldúa (1987) offers an alternate embodiment of fractured identity, demonstrating the ways she and others inhabit geographic and metaphorical fractures. In the 1990s, scholarly conceptions of identity as fractured placed a spotlight on the detrimental implications of hegemonic interpretations of people’s lived realities.

Credited to critical race theorist and legal scholar Crenshaw <sup>5</sup>(1989, 1991), intersectionality finds its origin in Black feminist theory and seeks to disrupt monolithic readings of identity.

Crenshaw’s work, alongside that of Collins’ <sup>6</sup>(1990), and other scholars all seek to trouble

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<sup>4</sup> Lorde (1984/2013) is recognized for offering criticism of standpoint in her paper “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” wherein she admonished white feminists for their ignorance of the striking differences between lived experiences and among feminisms; her last line illuminates nuanced understandings as she tells “each one of us to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch the terror and loathing of any difference that lives there.”

<sup>5</sup> Specifically, Crenshaw’s 1989 article “Demarginalizing the Intersections of Race and Sex” as well as her “Mapping in the Margins” of 1991 propose intersectionality as a lens through which difference becomes legible.

<sup>6</sup> Collins uses standpoint to address matrices of domination in her 1990 text *Black Feminist Thought*.

singular and essentialist readings of identity. In addition to studying the social category of gender, these works underscore how gender intersects and interacts with race, class, sexuality, national identity, etc. (Beal, 1970; King, 1988; Ward, 1970). Crenshaw's intersectionality, along with its predecessors in critical race theory and legal scholarship, contributed to feminist readings of identity theory by subverting universalized identity politics and underscoring the violence and erasure enacted by simplistic understandings of identity.

From its inception, intersectionality has been intertwined with social justice and praxis. In addition to its complex readings of identity, intersectionality offers a framework through which to envision intersecting or interlocking forms of oppression. Accordingly, intersectionality supports hooks' (2003) notion of imperialist white supremacist capitalist patriarchy and Firoenza's (1992) understanding of kyriarchy — a concept that expands patriarchy by acknowledging other structures of oppression including, but not limited to, racism, ableism, capitalism, etc. Both analyze the interconnected nature of systems of domination and oppression. Dill and Kohlman (2012) too, describe intersectionality as a lens that speaks back to power. They describe intersectionality's "recognition – of social power axes, not of social identities" as an act of "crucial political importance" (p. 203). With this nod to praxis and social politics, intersectionality lends itself to both academic and non-academic frameworks. Dill and Kohlman trace the trajectory of intersectionality across and beyond academic spheres and note the complicated reality of revolutionary or transformative theories within the elite spaces of the academy. Considering the exclusionary divisions of knowledge production and ownership over knowledge, they write, "the production of knowledge is an academic enterprise and has been controlled and contained with predominantly white, elite, and middle to upper middle institutional structures" (p. 164). All the same, academic language used to further feminist ideas can itself be alienating — even when shrouded in the best of intentions (Ahmed, 2017, p. 11); recognition of this point helps ground my own style, tone, and language in the everyday experience(s) embedded in the performance of entrepreneurial identity, which this dissertation takes as its main focus.

In chapter four, I offer more commentary about how these feminist perspectives influence the methodology and data analysis for this study; each of these feminist identity theories thusly offer

ways to explore everyday-entrepreneurship enacted by individuals who have been driven to craft entrepreneurial identities amid oppressive structures as a way of reclaiming their own agency in what would otherwise be exclusionary spaces.

## **Entrepreneurship**

Entrepreneurship is a relatively new field of study that has emerged as a byproduct of cross-disciplinary influences. Not to mention, there are many different approaches for situating entrepreneurship studies. The surrounding scholarship presents foci targeted towards the intersections of sociological theory, gender, business management, behavioral economics, and organizational sciences — but few scholars, if any, take up the impact of entrepreneurial practices beyond the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of industry related concerns. As Welter and company (2017) suggest, there remains room for additional discourse that diversifies the field, capitalizing on the heterogeneity that current socio-cultural contexts offer.

Scholarship on entrepreneurship is fragmentary (Cerulo, 1997; Mendelson, 2011; Essers et al., 2017; Duval-Couetil & Hutcheson, 2015; Schwartz et al., 2011; Van Gelderen and Masurel, 2012; Welter, 2017). Beginning with the very definition of entrepreneurship — scholars tend to disagree on *what* entrepreneurship is and *how* to talk about it in relation to identity. The significantly limited and contained signification offered by the noun — entrepreneurship, as opposed to the more flexible condition of the adjective — entrepreneurial opens up ambiguity about how individuals perceive their own identity across contexts as well. Many scholars choose to keep the two as separate parts of speech, some join them subconsciously, and others pair them resolutely. Nevertheless, an author's designation of this placement has a significant rhetorical impact on the way these terms are understood.

William Gartner (1990) recognizes this tension in his question “What are we talking about when we talk about entrepreneurship?”. He argues for the critical impact of making beliefs and understanding about the concept explicit so that differing perspectives might be organized in ways that allow the field at large to understand how the various arguments about entrepreneurship make up a greater whole. In a similar vein, J. Cunningham and Joe Lischeron (1991) seek to offer the necessary background research for readers to establish their own

conceptions of *who* an entrepreneur is and *what* they do for society. They explain, “the term ‘entrepreneur’ has often been applied to the founder of a new business, or a person who started a new business where there was none before.” However, there are still others that “reserve the term to apply only to the creative activity of the innovator.” Competing notions on the term suggest that “others refer to the identification and exploitation of an opportunity as entrepreneurial [...] those who develop a niche in the market or develop a strategy to satisfy some need are also, by some, called entrepreneurs” (p. 45). To better explain their point, Cunningham and Lischeron offer vignettes of six different schools of thought which offer varying outlooks on entrepreneurship; and, in an effort to “reconcile the seemingly chaotic and contradictory literature,” David B. Audretsch and company (2015) seek to define entrepreneurship (n.) by presenting an eclectic economic perspective that merges disparate theories based on organizational status, behavior, and performance. Their contribution acknowledges shifting social perceptions and encourages the identification of static and dynamic variables that affect entrepreneurship and the field at large.

My work seeks to build on the existing scholarship by widening the scope of inquiry on entrepreneurship as it specifically relates to identity and the practices of entrepreneurial citizenship. By placing the aforementioned discourse in conversation with texts from other disciplines and highlighting the rhetorical threads that facilitate observable entrepreneurial identity in practice, this dissertation will acknowledge and expand the boundaries and borders of entrepreneurial scholarship.

### 3. DIVERSIFYING ENTREPRENEURIAL SCHOLARSHIP

In chapter 2, I discussed the way this project is rhetorically situated among different scholarly conversations concerning entrepreneurship. Here, I dig even deeper into the available discourse on entrepreneurship by outlining the key characteristics of three notable research waves. These waves, I suggest, reveal scholarly opportunities for continued development for entrepreneurship studies, which are facilitated by transdisciplinary approaches like the one I have taken up for this work. In this chapter, I also address the available scholarship that has begun the work of diversifying entrepreneurial scholarship by acknowledging the many credible and articulate cases for reframing entrepreneurship to include everyday-contexts; simply put, my work synthesizes these arguments and argues in support of everyday-entrepreneurship as being a series of practices that are best identified via an examination of identity and the performance of entrepreneurial citizenship. As a primer for the case study vignettes included in chapter five, I finish this chapter with a brief discussion about *techné*; indeed, *techné* offers a productive framework for better understanding everyday-entrepreneurship as a constant process of making and becoming — as shown in the case study vignettes presented in chapter five.

#### Entrepreneurship Research Comes in Waves

A broad strokes review of entrepreneurial scholarship reveals that one of the most significant challenges scholars confront is a lack of consensus regarding an agreed upon definition of entrepreneurship and, consequently, what and whom all constitute this field of study (Gartner 1990; Welter 2011; Bruyat and Julien, 2001). While the history of the discipline extends over a significant period of time, with recorded interest in entrepreneurship dating as far back as the 18th and 19th century, the last two decades have shown considerable growth as a result of grappling with ideological and epistemic issues. At the crux of these challenges, scholars have had to confront concerns for negotiating a strict balance between the limitations imposed by over simplicity and the consequences offered by the convenience of broadening discussions so far that just about anything goes. Welter, Baker, and Wirsching (2019), and much of Welter's other work (2011; 2016a; 2016b; 2018; 2020) actively demonstrates the discipline's need for contextualization as well. Audretsch, Lehmann, and Schenkenhofer (2020) continue in this vein

offering that “contextualization is necessary to understand the type or emergence of a particular manifestation of entrepreneurship, its intensity and frequency, and geographical location and its dynamics, in which entrepreneurship actually occurs” (p. 2). In turn, scholars can chart specific shifts in entrepreneurial research that delineate specific moments of growth for the discipline overall. Here, I make the case for supporting Welter et al.’s (2017) call for the diversification of entrepreneurial scholarship, arguing for specific attention to a widening of scope that acknowledges a dynamic reciprocity between the social sphere and what it means to inhabit an entrepreneurial identity in the 21st century.

### **First and Second Waves of Entrepreneurship Research**

While many scholars have done the much needed work of documenting contributions to the field, Welter et al. (2019) outline three specific waves of the “rising tide of contextualization in entrepreneurship research.” Although this work started long before Gartner (1990) questioned “what are we talking about when we talk about entrepreneurship?”—his sentiments sum up the focus of the first wave, which seeks to move beyond mere documentation of entrepreneurship to an explanation of entrepreneurship as a human phenomenon (Low and MacMillan, 1988). During this time, scholars questioned what the contexts for entrepreneurship were/are and they explored the implications of those contexts on the way entrepreneurship is understood at large. Collectively, the work scholars produced in this first wave served to influence the “direction of research by motivating scholars to ask questions about who, what, when, where, and why” as well as “serving as a checklist and analytical toolbox of factors to consider” in their address of entrepreneurship (Welter et al., 2019, p. 322).

The second wave of research in this field took a critical stance toward the treatment of context as apriori, external, and static in relation to the entrepreneurship being studied. In response, thought leaders like Welter and Gartner (2016) argued that “we should stop talking about ‘context’ and instead move to considering talking about ‘contexts,’ in order to acknowledge the diversity, heterogeneity and multiplicity required to adequately contextualize” the work being done (p. 156). Work in this domain largely responded by widening existing conversations to include other variables like structural, temporal, and historical contexts, which necessarily draws attention to the affective and material dimensions of entrepreneurs’ lived realities; others investigated how



individuals enact and construct contexts as opposed to passively experiencing them (Baker and Welter, 2017; Wadhwani, 2016; Corbett and Katz, 2013). Likewise, another important substream in this second wave addressed the value and importance of understanding the implications imposed by the language scholars use to produce and circulate understandings of entrepreneurship. Brännback and Carsrud (2016) and Steyaert (2016) offer just two examples that emphasize the importance of the underlying cognitive processes at stake that have a direct impact on the efficacy of research approaches for studying entrepreneurship. As they suggest, context and cognition are only two dimensions of a much larger entrepreneurial ecosystem that dictates and influences how entrepreneurs understand and perceive themselves and their own actions, as well as the ways others (i.e., folks that are not entrepreneurs) understand entrepreneurship at large.

### **Third Wave to Present**

As one would expect, Welter et al. (2019) outline a third wave, where scholars presently find themselves, that challenges us to deepen theorization by broadening the domain of entrepreneurship research (p. 320). This wave is most notably characterized by an explicit rejection of Silicon Valley models of entrepreneurship. Since one of the key components to entrepreneurship is the creation of new organizations, Welter et al. explain, scholars work in this wave to increase the variety of organizations recognized by entrepreneurship research. Shane and Venkataraman (2000), for example, discuss the promise of entrepreneurship as a field; they demonstrate the growth potential offered when we extend the boundaries of what's considered entrepreneurship beyond what is solely limited to new venture creation. Not to mention, they also explore frameworks for better understanding the ways individuals recognize and act on entrepreneurial opportunities. Other scholars take up third wave priorities in an examination of the way capitalism operates across nations (Herrmann, 2018), entrepreneurship models that differ from what is dominant in the US (Pahnke and Welter, 2018), and the impact of crowdfunding (Stevenson et al., 2018) — to name a few.

The sheer amount of research focused on entrepreneurship in each of the three pivotal waves illustrates significant growth which has, in turn, revealed prominent themes that circulate within research on entrepreneurship. Scholars are now reaching out to survey branches of

entrepreneurship that carry forth the priorities of each of these waves of scholarship to greater and lesser degrees. Cross sections of the available literature highlight prominent themes like identity (Swan, 2020; Žur, 2020; Beattie, 2016; Kašperová and Kitching, 2014), networking (Zheng et al., 2019; Albourini et al., 2020; Engel et al., 2017), and pedagogy/curriculum planning (Kuratko and Morris, 2018; Middleton and Donnellon, 2014; Piperopoulos and Dimov, 2015). All the same, despite the fact that scholars have broken ground on so many different facets of entrepreneurship, a lot of the preexisting materials have yet to be realized to their full potential. The three waves of entrepreneurship research continue to ebb and flow in the present moment and current scholarship is moving in the direction of acknowledging the flux which signals “entrepreneurship is not ‘all the same’ at any given time,” nor is it also “‘not all the same’ from one time to another” (Welter et al., 2019, p. 326).

Considering where entrepreneurship research finds itself now, I embrace the third wave’s rejection of Silicon Valley models of entrepreneurship because the model necessarily excludes the other 99% of the population. Instead, I turn my attention to naming and acknowledging everyday-entrepreneurship, valorizing the work that embedded members of our communities do on a day-to-day basis — work that, until recently, has been rejected for not having met the criteria for entrepreneurship. As the case studies in chapter five will demonstrate, this project acknowledges the intersections between context(s) and identity insofar as I specifically examine widening domains of entrepreneurship (i.e., micro-, organizational-, and collective-). I also prioritize personal narratives, in concert with other methods, as a means for capturing what entrepreneurship looks like in the 21st century — especially in this moment in time for each of my participants. As a result, I’ve formed an inclusive space for multiply-marginalized women to share their story, and I open up room for dialogue about the fluidity of entrepreneurial behavior, as well as consider the ways identity and community inform one another.

### **Opportunities for Continued Development**

The fact that scholars have already started moving in the direction of addressing the possibility of hybrid forms of entrepreneurship (Davies and Chambers, 2018; Demir et al., 2020; Kurczewska et al., 2020), entertained the idea of entrepreneurship as boundary crossing (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2008; Perrault et al., 2015), and have begun focusing on the lived

realities of entrepreneurs from ethnic backgrounds (Stone, 2012; Hisrich and Brush, 1986; Indarti et al., 2020; Dana et al., 2020) demonstrates overall growth for the field. However, a deeper dive into themes like gender, race, and ethnicity for example, shows how gaps continue to persist within the scholarship. Welter et al. identify these areas as ones that hold latent potential for the field of entrepreneurship; in response, my work contributes towards efforts that provide a “window into and tools for shaping social and economic equity construed to include not only issues of structural inequality but also empowerment and emancipation more broadly” (2017).

While it may be the case that scholars have begun work that explores various entrepreneurial topics outside the bounds of economic profit models and new venture creation — the work that is available which focuses on gender, race and ethnicity beyond these domains is severely limited. The field has begun to see work that focuses on gender, race and ethnicity and its success demonstrates how more work on this is needed (Hughes et al., 2012; Yousafzai et al., 2018; Williams et al., 2020). The fact that the work cited here is available and circulating shows that scholars have moved toward an attempt to embrace diversity, but gaps continue to persist. As such, my work seeks to continue in this vein; the case studies included herein set a foundation that demonstrates how grand narratives of entrepreneurship have influenced canonical understandings of who is considered entrepreneurial and how systemic biases have created challenges for marginalized entrepreneurs. At the onset of this work, for example, the multiply-marginalized women of color participating in this study did not consider themselves to be entrepreneurs. In fact, they often cited individuals like Steve Jobs and made references to the media’s representation of entrepreneurship (e.g., Shark Tank) to describe how they understand entrepreneurship and qualify the characteristics of entrepreneurs. In these moments, it became very clear that grand narratives about white, cisgender, heterosexual, Silicon Valley models of entrepreneurship were the foundation from which my participants based their understanding of entrepreneurship — which excludes them, and people like them, from that narrative altogether.

This realization opened up new questions. What does entrepreneurship look like when financial gain and wealth generation is not the central focus? Does entrepreneurship exist when access to technology is limited? How do marginalized entrepreneurs orient their behavior and fashion their identities in response to systemic issues far beyond their own control? Scholars have already

begun doing this work (Honig, 2015; Welter et al., 2017; Bates, 2012). However, “even as previously marginalized work becomes mainstream, there is still a lot of ‘old’ ground to cover [...] each new form of entrepreneurship embraced raises opportunities and challenges for theory development” (Welter et al. 2019, p. 327). Grand narratives of entrepreneurship have influenced canonical understandings of how to design entrepreneurship research, who is considered entrepreneurial, and how systemic biases have created challenges for disempowered individuals as evidenced by the fact that very little research explores what it means to perform and embody entrepreneurship beyond profits and venture creation, especially as someone with a marginalized identity. That is to say, “placing such a tight focus on a particular set of contextual factors — who (men), where (industrialized countries), how (through technological innovations), and why (to generate profits and wealth)” has caused the context of most entrepreneurship research to be “narrow, stable, and largely taken for granted,” Welter et al., (2019) explain.

Furthered work on the intersections between gender, race and ethnicity affirms that contextualizing entrepreneurship in and across different frameworks opens up the opportunity for continued developments that “acknowledge and account for variations and differences in entrepreneurship” in addition to “pointing us towards typically hidden variation, [while] also shedding new light onto seemingly well-known phenomena” (Gartner, 2008; Welter et al., 2019). Not to mention, the existing work in these areas exposes the negative consequences of institutionalized power hierarchies, class structures, inequities, and ingenuity by necessity but more can and should be done to move beyond just acknowledging these obstacles. The third wave of entrepreneurship research has begun this work, however, moving beyond these obstacles requires inquiry towards the many ways entrepreneurs negotiate these challenges. Put another way, extending the domain of entrepreneurship research necessarily includes a more active, dynamic sense of context; a shift of this magnitude entails various perspectives on the embedded reciprocity that is offered by the actions of everyday-entrepreneurs and their processes of making that historically impact the social construction of communities across contexts.

### **Transdisciplinary Approaches Center Entrepreneurship as Liberal Art**

Many scholars have already moved in the direction of embracing transdisciplinary approaches for studying entrepreneurship, but the field as a whole has not yet acknowledged the benefits this

practice offers (Mair and Marti, 2006; Peredo and McLean 2006). As such, in order to continue this momentum, I argue that transdisciplinary approaches for studying and producing entrepreneurship research offers the discipline significant advantages in addition to offering marginalized individuals a chance to share their own entrepreneurial narratives. A transdisciplinary perspective on the connections and overlap between entrepreneurship and other academic fields opens up the possibility of further diversifying scholarship because it necessarily widens the constraints on who and what constitute entrepreneurship; not to mention, this vantage point also favorably recognizes the way different disciplines and academic fields are entangled and how those intra-relational actions overlap producing highly specialized meaning(s) (Barad, 2007).

### **Deliberate Diffraction**

Laura Gonzales et al. (2020) summarizes Karen Barad's (2007) proposition of intra-action as "a challenge to the idea that things, objects, and apparatuses interact with one another, as if they precede and pre-exist one another and remain separate even as they participate in interaction" (p. 434). Calling on the connections between composition studies and technical and professional communication, Gonzales illustrates that transdisciplinarity better illuminates how scholars might consider "multiple fluid areas of study and practice that continuously inform and reshape the work of writing, research, practice, and pedagogy" (p. 441). Riffing off the work of Donna Haraway, Barad takes up diffraction as a metaphor for illuminating differences in order to better understand the affective dimensions of entanglements between and among objects of study. Diffraction is the bending of light waves around the boundaries or corners of an obstacle; Barad articulates that diffraction requires an attending to the details of physics while also seriously considering the insights of philosophy and other fields. She goes on to add that in contrast to reflection and/or reflective approaches which only mirror established truths (i.e., those that create echo chambers), "diffraction helps produce a new way of thinking about the nature of difference, and of space, time, matter, causality, and agency, among other important variables" (p. 73). Similarly—Welter, Baker, and Wirsching (2019) argue that "entrepreneurship demands contextualization more than many other fields, because not only is entrepreneurship broad and diverse in its scope but it is also frequently about the creation of differences" (p. 320). Where

entrepreneurship research is concerned, then, diffraction is especially helpful and quite useful in the diversification of new and existing scholarship.

In order to better understand the way the social sphere is actively entangled in the coproduction and construction of material realities, Karen Barad's (2007) analysis of the Stern-Gerlach experiment provides a key illustrative example that entrepreneurship scholars might benefit from as they seek to continue to diversify the field. In the early stages of quantum experimentation, Otto Stern conceptualized a study in 1921, that experiment called for a beam of silver atoms to travel through a magnetic field demonstrating how the spatial orientation of angular momentum can be quantized. When the initial experiment did not render accurate results and answers to Stern's original hypothesis, he enlisted the help of Walther Gerlach. What Stern didn't realize is that his anticipated results, which Gerlach held, were close but no cigar! It wasn't until Stern held the apparatus himself that traces of silver sulfide emerged in reaction to the cheap cigars he smoked, which had a lot of sulfur in them. Barad explains:

As the example of Otto Stern's cheap cigar makes quite poignant [...] apparatuses are a dynamic set of open-ended practices, iteratively refined and reconfigured. [In this experiment] a cigar is among the significant materials that are relevant to the operation and success. The cigar is [...]— 'nodal point,' as it were - of the workings of other apparatuses, including class nationalism, economics, and gender, all of which are part of this Stern-Gerlach apparatus. Which is not to say that all relevant factors figure in the same way or with the same weight. The precise nature of this configuration (i.e., the specific practices) matters. The point is, rather, that in this case, material practices that contributed to the material production of gendered individuals also contributed to the materialization of this particular scientific result: 'objects' and 'subjects' are coproduced through specific kinds of material discursive practices. (p. 167)

In much the same way that Otto Stern had to widen the active domain of relevant variables to consider items that aren't typically included in the list of materials for scientific experiments, so too must entrepreneurship research acknowledge the active and entangled nature of contexts that co-construct and co-produce the material discursive practices of everyday-entrepreneurship. Analysis of what caused the silver sulfide traces to appear necessarily required a diffractive view of the situation to develop a better understanding of the way the apparatus and the domain were entangled in this scientific experiment; transdisciplinary, diffractive approaches make this

possible because multiple perspectives facilitation intra-action and focused inquiry on any given topic.

Scholars attuned to these issues have begun this transdisciplinary work arguing for the need to continue developing comprehensive understandings of entrepreneurship beyond traditional models, which have been heavily influenced by Silicon Valley Models (SVM) that reify exclusionary grand narratives. Baker and Powell (2019), for example, argue that “the study of entrepreneurship as a new liberal art can be an important source of individual and group emancipation and a fundamental means through which entrepreneurs can become who they want to be while creating the impact on the world they envision.” Indeed, critical overlaps between entrepreneurship and rhetoric are noted by scholars that have sought to highlight the performative, improvisational, and argumentative threads inherent to entrepreneurial ways of being (Spinuzzi, 2017; Brännback and Carsrud, 2016 ). This work agrees with and extends these arguments insofar as it gestures toward the convergence of entrepreneurship with rhetoric and adjacent fields (i.e., experience architecture and identity studies); more specifically, the case studies herein point out the ways the social sphere is embedded in diffraction-based relations that bear further consideration.

### **Social Entanglements**

In different ways, entrepreneurship, technical and professional communication, public rhetorics, and rhetoric and composition have each experienced a socio-cultural turn and intentioned responses have shifted scholarship in these realms towards an address of issues pertaining to inequities and perspectives of multiply-marginalized individuals. For entrepreneurship scholarship, this shift is most markedly noted by an exploration and justification of social and cultural entrepreneurship (Jennings et al., 2013; Thornton et al., 2011; Hervieux et al., 2010), however the narratives of people of color are limited and what is available continues to perpetuate central themes of venture creation and profit margins. Thus, a diffraction-based, transdisciplinary take on the social entanglements that exist between entrepreneurship and rhetoric creates space for scholarship to consider “multiple fluid areas of study and practice that continuously inform and reshape the work of writing, research, practice, and pedagogy” (Gonzales et al., 2020, p. 441).

A more focused examination of the social sphere provides a space to dig deeper into various issues/themes that aid the contextualization of entrepreneurship research especially as they pertain to the function of language for accomplishing entrepreneurial actions and the impact of language on the way entrepreneurship is understood. Closer focus on the function of communicative practices, for example, builds opportunities to consider metaphors and entrepreneurship (Lundmark et al., 2017; Drakopoulou Dodd et al., 2016; Maclean et al., 2015), visual rhetoric and pictorial images (Berglund and Wigren-Kristoferson, 2012; Clarke, 2011; Smith 2015a, b), and also extends into pedagogy in the teaching of entrepreneurial practices in the classroom (Blenker et al., 2012; Bay and Ruiz, 2020).

### **Transdisciplinary Benefits**

Transdisciplinary approaches offer three specific benefits (among many others) that aid the diversification of entrepreneurship research. First, building upon the context(s) and contextualization of entrepreneurial research creates a space to interrogate local networks and examine how they are situated within and among communities. Transdisciplinary perspectives also challenge previously anchored disciplinary boundaries via awareness of expertise across contexts. And, shifting the priorities of entrepreneurial research towards contemporary contexts, programs, communities and individuals opens up a space to build “transformative, coalitional relationships and networks to make knowledge and take action in socially just and inclusive ways” (Gonzales et al., 2020). Widening the scope of this research necessarily calls upon the humanities and social sciences in the recognition of the embedded nature of entrepreneurial practices in social settings and as the foundation for co-produced and co-constructed realities within and across context(s). Perspectives from community engagement scholars (Cushman, 2002; Sheridan et al., 2018; Grant, 2018) user experience researchers (Rose et al., 2018; Shalamova, 2019; Sturm et al., 2018), and work that situates entrepreneurship in the digital realm (Nambisan, 2017; Davidson and Vaast, 2010; Elia et al., 2020), for example, show how this work might move away from profit and new venture creation to a broader understanding of entrepreneurial practices.



Welter et al. (2017) and others have repeatedly called for an embrace of the heterogeneity of entrepreneurship across contexts. In response, Audretsch (2020) suggests that maybe the field has been so blinded by a narrow focus that has driven scholars to ask the wrong questions; he explains, “the [resulting scholarship has] revolved around increasing more of a particular manifestation of entrepreneurship that maps on to a specific context. Unfortunately, this has sublimated even more important questions into the background, such as whether and how entrepreneurship in its many forms and manifestation differs across different contexts” (p. 2). Examining various forms of entrepreneurship, especially as it is embedded in the social sphere and in recognition of transdisciplinary intra-actions that subsequently affect how it is broadly conceived, performed, and researched, exposes a whole host of relevant issues that have not yet been thoroughly analyzed (e.g., algorithmic injustices, manipulative user experience practices, and the continued exclusion of people of color).

### **Everyday-Entrepreneurship**

Recent moves to continue expanding entrepreneurship research have focused on better representing the way individuals operate within and among their communities. Table 2 indicates various references to forms of entrepreneurship that are arguably more socially aware.

**Table 2** *Expanded Models of Entrepreneurship*

Form/Type	Definition	Reference
Social Entrepreneurship	Combines the passion of a social mission with an image of business-like discipline, innovation, and determination commonly associated with the high-tech pioneers of Silicon Valley.	Dees (1998); De Bruin and Lewis (2015)
Cultural Entrepreneurship	Problem solving leaders with passion and vision, alertness and energy, imagination, commitment and ‘market savvy’; cultural enterprise entrepreneurs are cultural change agents and resourceful visionaries who generate revenue from a cultural activity — they include for profit and nonprofit organizations.	Blaug and Towse (2020); Ageson & Loy (2010)
Mundane Entrepreneurship	An entrepreneurship whose opposite is not a day-job but dearth or even famine (R & T, p. 241). A science of singularity; that is to say, a science of the relationship that links everyday pursuits to particular circumstances (de Certeau, ix).	Rehn and Taalas (2004); de Certeau (1984)
Mainstreet Entrepreneurship	Deeply embedded in local communities; mainstreet model is all about the intangibles — purpose, passion, perseverance, teamwork, exceptional service, creating values, pivoting to opportunities, and giving back to the community.	Audretsch and Lehmann (2016); Glauser (2016)
Ordinary Entrepreneurship	Acknowledges the entrepreneurial potential in ordinary people; argues for education for all people, some of whom will start new ventures and others who will self-select as stakeholders into the entrepreneurial process (p. 235).	Sarasvathy et al. (2015)
Everyday-Entrepreneurship	Heroes of many kinds: of their own lives, families, communities, and myriad other contexts; against theoretically privileging any one narrow special case of entrepreneurship as the distinctive domain of entrepreneurship scholarship (p. 317)	Welter et al. (2017)

However, all but one of these forms/types of entrepreneurship continue to perpetuate definitions that are hinged on the creation of new ventures and economic gains. Consequently, scholars and practitioners are and have continued to think about businesses and entrepreneurship as something that prioritizes profit, but they are actually a series of practices that may generate profit but also have other social effects. As Audretsch (2020) points out, “the diversity of entrepreneurship can manifest itself in a variety of forms, which aligns to disparate geographical locations, dynamic sequences, main actors, sources of financing, social capital, and so on” (p. 2). Thus, each form/type of entrepreneurship listed above offers positive components and priorities of entrepreneurship that are socially attuned, albeit some more so than others. All the same, the patchwork of scholarship noted here continues to point to the gaps worth exploring in order to continue the work of diversifying entrepreneurial scholarship.

Everyday-entrepreneurs, the “heroes of many kinds”, inhabit an identity that is driven by a personal mission to “contribute to reconfiguring the practices of their society” and “bring about social change by modifying the style of particular subworlds or the style of the society in general” (Spinosa et al., 1997). As I have argued elsewhere, everyday-entrepreneurs are worth studying because they make deliberate choices to create more inclusive experiences for themselves and others by capitalizing on the affordances of technology, drawing inspiration and support from their communities of practice, deploying tools and strategies, as well as recognizing the impact of identity politics (Bay and Ruiz, 2020). However, given that everyday-entrepreneurs do not “fit the mold” for what and who is commonly defined as entrepreneur/ship — the field faces a dilemma that must consider whether this state of being is bonafide despite being a precisely unique combination of both art and skill.

### **Rhetoric: Art or Knack? — A Diffractive Debate**

In a similar way that entrepreneurship has suffered from a lack of definitional consensus, ancient debates situated rhetoric in a similar debate. Plato’s famous distaste for rhetoric makes an appearance in two classical texts, situating rhetoric in a debate that questions whether rhetoric is an art or skill. In the *Gorgias*, Plato likens rhetoric to cookery arguing that both are forms of flattery, its aim is therefore to give pleasure; Gordon (2002) explains that, from this point of view, rather than aiding in the conduct of “affairs of state in a legitimate, healthy way [...]

rhetoric is, at best, a distraction from this purpose and, at worst, a foil to it” (p. 152). In fact, Socrates claims rhetoric isn’t an art (*techné* — a learned kind of expertise) but rather a routine or knack learned from experience and habit. In the *Phaedrus*, on the other hand, Plato does not deny that there is a real possibility that rhetoric requires a certain *techné* because the proper goal of any rhetor should be to “cultivate the soul of the audience by directing it toward truth and justice. “Plato’s view, in other words,” Gordon explains, “is that the only way to become a genuine rhetorician is to become a philosopher first (see *Phaedrus* 259E-262C)” (p.153). Indeed, Aristotle also takes up the art or knack issue early in the *Metaphysics*; he states, “knowledge and understanding belong to art rather than to experience because artists (*technitai*) know the cause, and men of experience do not. As a result artists are more honorable and know in a truer sense and are wiser than manual workers” (*Metaphysics* 981a24-981b2).

Entrepreneurship research faces a related split in that a diversification of context(s) widens the domain of scholarship. Stretching discourse in this way has created tension against pre-conceived disciplinary boundaries that have long-defined entrepreneurship as a set of practices hinged on the establishment of new organizations and increase of wealth/profit. New models of entrepreneurship have emerged that no longer place such a high priority on these capitalist agendas — namely everyday-entrepreneurship. Pushing past profit-driven grand narratives to a widened understanding of what it means to be an entrepreneur and inhabit an entrepreneurial identity begs the same question — is entrepreneurship an art or a knack?

Very few scholars take up conversations about entrepreneurial identity as an embodied form of becoming that is situated in ever-evolving spaces of invention which are embedded in social contexts. Taking up a transdisciplinary, diffractive perspective towards the examination of identity situated against the backdrop of entrepreneurship illuminates the rhetorical ways entrepreneurs cultivate and innovate processes of making as art/*techné*, especially in terms of the material cultures that it sprung from and operates within. The artful narratives of the multiply-marginalized women in this study delve into connections between identity, technology, and workplace environments illustrating how entrepreneurship can be seen as a kind of *techné*, which helps readers better understand identity in relation to material objects and culture — including the biases at work there.

## 4. METHODS

In chapter three, I presented a case for the critical need for current and future scholarship to continue moving in a direction that diversifies the available discourse on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial identity. This study presents one way that work is done and this chapter provides a discussion of the rationale for the methods I relied on to carry out this research. As I discuss in greater detail throughout, an investigation of everyday-entrepreneurship necessarily depends on a methodology with clearly outlined priorities and flexible methods.

One of the central goals of this project is to reframe entrepreneurship to broadly encompass everyday-entrepreneurial identities, and rhetoric is particularly poised for this challenge since the discipline values the reflexive task of questioning, critiquing, and understanding discourse without being censured (Phelps, 1986). I argue that current discourse on entrepreneurship is exclusionary. The term must be reframed to acknowledge everyday-entrepreneurs — individuals that are guided by a disposition that seeks to create equitable solutions to social disharmonies; indeed, everyday-entrepreneurship operates in a space beyond profit-driven agendas that self-referentially inquires about the ways in which identity, experiences, skills, strategies, communities, and technologies organize rhetorical ways of being. In order to explore this phenomena and engage in my proposed undertaking, it seemed only right that I utilize a feminist methodology in order to embrace diversity and justify the specific methods and heuristics used across each phase of this study. Not to mention, implementing a research methodology informed by feminist perspectives facilitated a tracing of case studies that demonstrate everyday-entrepreneurship at work thereby exposing a necessary acknowledgement of the effects of interlocking forms of oppression operating within the obscure, shadowed margins of familiar spaces.

This chapter presents a rationale for the ways I sought to capture and preserve how participants describe, embody, and perform their own entrepreneurial identities. As I present, inhabiting spaces of identity (entrepreneurial or otherwise) is a process that is constantly in flux as it is perpetually fluid and becoming; these factors brought unique methodological challenges to the foreground of this investigation. Throughout the process, I found myself grappling with

questions that characterize a “meta-layer” of this work; from a researcher’s perspective, I asked — How might I represent the fluidity of identity in the static, print dissertation medium? What demographic or population is the best fit for the project goals and methodology? As an inherently privileged researcher, what actions can I take to minimize power dynamics with participants to create a safe space where they feel comfortable sharing vulnerable details about their lives? Which methods at my disposal best tap into the participants’ tacit knowledge of organized behavior(s)? These questions work in tandem with the original research questions I posed for my study and together, both influenced the design and execution I carried out across each phase. Therefore, I relied heavily on the malleability of rhetoric’s dappled identity as I performed the work for this study and engaged with the participants and the data they provided (Lauer, 1984); additionally, I drew creative inspiration from Noë’s (2015) artistic framework — which digs deep into the ways strange tools helps us study and understand ourselves — to explore responses to these questions as well as justify methods, data collection, and analysis.

### **The Case for a Mixed Methods Approach**

An examination of entrepreneurial identity very easily lends itself to the development of a quantitative study. Although a researcher could collect self-reported data from participants through surveys, employment demographic data, and other participant assessment metrics, these methods fail to capture the artful narratives that relay the intersectional experiences of women of color and everyday-entrepreneurs at large. As the case study vignettes in Chapter 6 will show, the participants’ interpersonal narratives expose socio-cultural expectations, organizational power hierarchies, and institutionalized systems of oppression that dictate who and what gets to be considered entrepreneurial. Consequently individuals with marginalized identities that do not fit the dominant white, male, cisgender, heteronormative narrative of entrepreneurship are excluded from mainstream definitions of entrepreneurship.

In effect, quantitative data alone cannot capture the rich picture that illustrates the lived realities of everyday-entrepreneurs. For these reasons, the data this dissertation seeks to collect is best rendered through mixed-methods with an emphasis on qualitative research; Sullivan and Spilka (1992) posit that “qualitative studies can address specific research needs, including interpreting a situation, exploring a situation, developing a unique research perspective, and discovering a

better way to communicate with users about research projects or products” (qtd in Conklin and Hayhoe, 2010, p. 9). Of course, study design plays a significant role in the type of data collected as well as the various conclusions drawn as a result. The heuristics and mapping artifacts, explored in greater detail herein, greatly supported the participants’ narratives and the findings of this study.

### **Participant Selection & Study Design**

Participant selection and study design played a crucial role in the success of this work. Participants were selected on the basis of ethnicity, age, and shared connections with the researcher (e.g., linguistic, geographic, and organizational ties) so as to center, legitimize, and prioritize narratives of women with intersectional identities. Their individual identity markers are unique, representing a wide range of ages, socioeconomic backgrounds, education levels, and careers. Moreover, participant selection was reinforced by a feminist methodology that embraces turning to the stories of people with marginalized identities as a way of uncovering what it means to be entrepreneurial in mundane contexts and demonstrating the value of alternative models of entrepreneurship that ultimately diversify the available scholarship. Therefore, a focus on local community members who embody an entrepreneurial spirit not only further extends definitions of what it means to be an entrepreneur, but also demonstrates how prioritizing Silicon Valley models of entrepreneurship limits the potential growth of scholarship on the topic (Welter et al., 2017).

Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel, each of whom I introduce in greater detail in Chapter 6, graciously participated in this study from inception to completion. The overall design of the study is broken down into three phases of semi-structured interviews. Phase one was all about setting up the participants’ profiles and getting to know them on a personal level. The goal for this portion was to learn about how they understand entrepreneurship in the twenty-first century and what that means for them personally. Phase two consisted of a semi structured interview that worked in tandem with a cube heuristic that I developed for this study. In this phase, participants were encouraged to share tacit incites about how they perceive their own identities and share how they perform everyday-entrepreneurship in a variety of different contexts. The final phase also employed an additional tool in order to accomplish the intended goal and corresponding

research tasks. In this meeting with the participants, we engaged in a mapping activity that complimented a semi-structured interview. These maps serve as a visual representation of the information shared throughout this study. Table 3 shows a summary of this study design. Ultimately, each phase allowed me to collect data that was scaffolded on to the next round and participants were receptive to continued conversations about their work and entrepreneurship at large. Framing data collection in this way helped to establish rapport with Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel; not to mention, it also provided them with agency to follow thematic threads they found interesting while staying within the pre-planned boundaries of each phase.

In the sections that follow, a case is made for the mixed-methods approach used for this study. I address the impact of organizing structures on participant behavior and call on the surrounding literature that validates the methods I selected to subvert participants' expectations for what their engagement with the research process should look like. I also offer additional commentary on some of the unexpected obstacles and challenges this work encountered, as well as more detail about how the overarching methodology offered support along the way.

**Table 3** *Study Design Overview*

<b>Phase 1</b>	
<i>Method</i>	Semi Structured Interview
<i>Goal</i>	Gain a better understanding of the participants' background and learn about what entrepreneurship means to them
<i>Research Task</i>	Set up Participant Profile
<b>Phase 2</b>	
<i>Method</i>	Semi Structured Interview aided by 3-Dimensional Cube Heuristic
<i>Goal</i>	Encourage participants to share tacit insights on how they perceive their own identity in relationship to entrepreneurship in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century
<i>Research Task</i>	Prompt participants with questions pertaining to specific themes surrounding everyday-entrepreneurship
<b>Phase 3</b>	
<i>Method</i>	Semi Structured Interview and Mapping Exercises
<i>Goal</i>	Invite participants to compose identity maps that serve as a visual representation of the information they shared in Phases 1 and 2
<i>Research Task</i>	Guide participants through the brainstorming and composition of each map; discuss themes with them according to explicit and implicit patterns in the scaffolded data



## **Working within Organizing Structures**

Noë (2015) argues that organizing structures organically influence people's actions and habituated behaviors in different settings. Going into each of these interviews, I was aware that the participants had preconceived ideas about what it means to be interviewed — thoughts on how they should behave and what they believed I was “looking for”— that would filter their interaction with me as a researcher and the data they offered. Noë explains that organizing structures exist across a wide array of contexts that affect actions as small and granular as conversation and as comprehensive as relationship building and problem solving. To a certain extent, because manners of being within organizing structures are so routinized, we operate within these organized contexts with varying levels of awareness osmotically fluctuating between conscious and subconscious recognition of the affordances and drawbacks the structures offer. Job interview etiquette is a great example. Within this structure candidates expect a professional give-and-take dialogue about qualifications, expectations, and expertise about the available position. Applicants anticipate specific questions about background knowledge and qualification criteria, but not how to solve a random complex math problem — for example; in this scenario, interviewers are aware of the organizing structure in place and purposefully subvert those expectations by introducing an unplanned element (i.e., the math problem) to access tacit and routinized knowledge and behaviors that the applicant may present, like how to solve intricate problems under pressure.

As the interview example shows, we're generally thrown into consciousness only when there is a productive disruption that interrupts the routine flow/function of the organizing structure. Noë elaborates on the matter offering an anecdotal conversation he had with an artist in graduate school; their exchange speaks to opposing ways of thinking akin to the “glass half full” vs “half empty” debate — in this case, about visual experiences. He explains that a scientific view is an organizing structure concerned “explicitly with the production of knowledge and understanding,” while the contrasting artistic view seeks to capitalize on structuring “opportunities to catch ourselves in the act of achieving our conscious lives, of bringing the world into focus for perceptual (and other forms of) consciousness” (Noë, p. 8). Scientific understandings of the biomechanics that facilitate vision, for example, question how the human body is able to see so much on the basis of so little since the human eye takes in tiny, distorted images upside-down.

On the flip side, artistic approaches question why we see so little when there is so much to see. As such, Noë's exchange with the artist demonstrates the dangerous effects of remaining statically anchored in familiar ways of thinking/being; the example also reveals how ways of thinking/being are positively altered when we're confronted with and open to new artistic frameworks, which set the stage for better understanding who we are and what we can do.

My dissertation relies heavily on methods aimed at shifting power dynamics and introducing elements of chance that embrace messiness and disorder because I recognize the negative consequences imposed by the affective nature of organizing structures. Not to mention, "qualitative research confronts us with the messy and chaotic realities of specific social situations, and recognizes that different groups of people...experience the same social phenomena and technologies in different ways" (Conklin & Hayhoe, 2010, p. ix). We begin to encounter challenges with qualitative research in that habituated journeying and thinking is necessarily built into language (Spinoza et al., 1997; Noë 2015); so, researchers like myself face an interesting dilemma insofar as language is the primary mechanism driving the reciprocity that's built into establishing rapport with participants, as well as data collection that is necessarily influenced by the material realities and situated perspectives of communicators.

Control — the power to influence or direct people's behavior or the course of events — is a socially evolving priority that functions as another organizing structure that is directly and indirectly visible in the presentation of this study. Progressing through each phase of the dissertation, alongside the complications offered by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter Movement, I was able to pull the curtain back on varying degrees of messiness that Conklin and Hayhoe mention. Tethered to this understanding is the recognition that rarely, if ever, is anyone in complete control; Harford (2017) reminds that all we have is "a comforting illusion of control instead" (p. 78). For this reason, it became clear very early on that at least one of the methodological principles in this study should embrace the symptoms of the human condition... the messiness, disorganization, and ambiguity that life offers. Accordingly, it is necessary to acknowledge that this methodology has become — in and of itself — a data point, something I have learned a bit more about throughout each step of this process. And, while the data may be polished, it is and always will be perpetually incomplete. Not to mention, the appeal

of and for traditions of storytelling in neat, simple, and tidy linear progression casts myths about identity and lived realities that must be debunked.

My approach to refining the methods of this project developed in tandem with my data collection. IRB necessarily required an articulation of methods and study procedures prior to engagement with participants, but each phase of the study was fine-tuned prior to their execution. Sullivan and Porter (1997) similarly advise researchers to view methodology as invention. They mention it is “the construction of a rhetorical design that contributes to an understanding but that also effects some kind of positive action through a rhetorical practice. Methodology is not merely a means to something else, it is itself an intervening social action and a participation in human events” (p. 13). While many empirical scholars might view this level of flexibility as problematic and a limitation, qualitative researchers debate that rigid, preconceived methods limit and filter the rich data presented by sites, populations, and discourses. Blyler (1998) and Moore (2012) warn that the rigidity of strict methodological approaches might actually backfire, resulting in undiscerning findings rather than self-conscious and reflective research practices.

While there were some obstacles and disruptions that I was able to effectively plan for during the initial stages of this study, others emerged during the data collection process that required constant revision, realignment, and refocusing. Defending the power of disorder to transform our lives, Harford (2017) speaks to this point stressing “sometimes the mess produces something worth having — even, or especially, if it wasn’t what you were aiming for” (p. 77).

Unsurprisingly, Harford’s sentiment is traceable in the wrinkles of this dissertation, and during this process I was constantly reminded that even careful preparation cannot remove risks entirely. Risks and disruption showed up in different ways for both me and my participants. Distance, for example, was always going to pose a challenge for two of the three participants — but what I was unable to predict and prepare for participants needing to break up interview sessions into segments to accommodate for other life events like tele-health appointments and child care necessities. Along the way, there were also internet connection issues, and mobile device interruptions that derailed participants’ (and my own) train of thought that required refocusing and reframing conversations. Other times, I found myself straying from my pre-prepared conversation guides to delve into relevant topics that unfurled conversations about

vocabulary and/or issues that the participants are particularly passionate about. Even though there were times during the interview process when we were both exposed and vulnerable to the tensions imposed by awkward silences, I learned to lean in and embrace these moments; they created “freedom and space to hear things” as well as highlighted the value of improvisational techniques that contribute to the affective dimensions of entrepreneurial identity (Davis qtd in Harford, 2017, p. 83). As such, a project that is focused on uncovering how entrepreneurial identity is enacted in the 21st century necessarily requires methods that flex and adapt to the fluid, dynamic, and unstable nature of the identity that it seeks to best capture and represent.

### **Methods for Subverting Expectations & Reconstructing Organizing Structures**

I chose to deploy the 3-dimensional cube and mapping exercises in the middle and final stage of this study; each of these methods presents participants with disruptive opportunities to potentially tap different forms of tacit knowledge because they cracked, broke, and reconstructed the organizing structures built into the participants’ preconceived norms of how the research study was supposed to unfold. Interestingly enough, these heuristics were effective not just for honing participants’ thinking and responses, but my own thinking and approach towards the project as well. Simply put, pairing heuristics with semi-structured interviews presented an unconventional methodology that evoked elements of play, creativity, curiosity, and improvisation in unique ways — which ultimately disclosed otherwise untapped conversations about identity and entrepreneurship. The exchanges I shared with my participants were genuine and I believe that was deeply felt on either end of our Zoom calls. Rolling the cube and compiling the mapping exercises provided the participants with a certain level of agency that empowered them to dismantle their perceived need to perform according to the social expectations of professionalism; these strategic moves also rebuilt our rapport in mutually supportive ways, which was demonstrated in the participants’ vulnerability during each interview. Manipulating the existing organizing structures in terms of the participants’ preconceived perceptions of how they might engage with me during the interview process, therefore, offset what would have otherwise been transactional approaches to research and data collection.

## Heuristics in Other Contexts

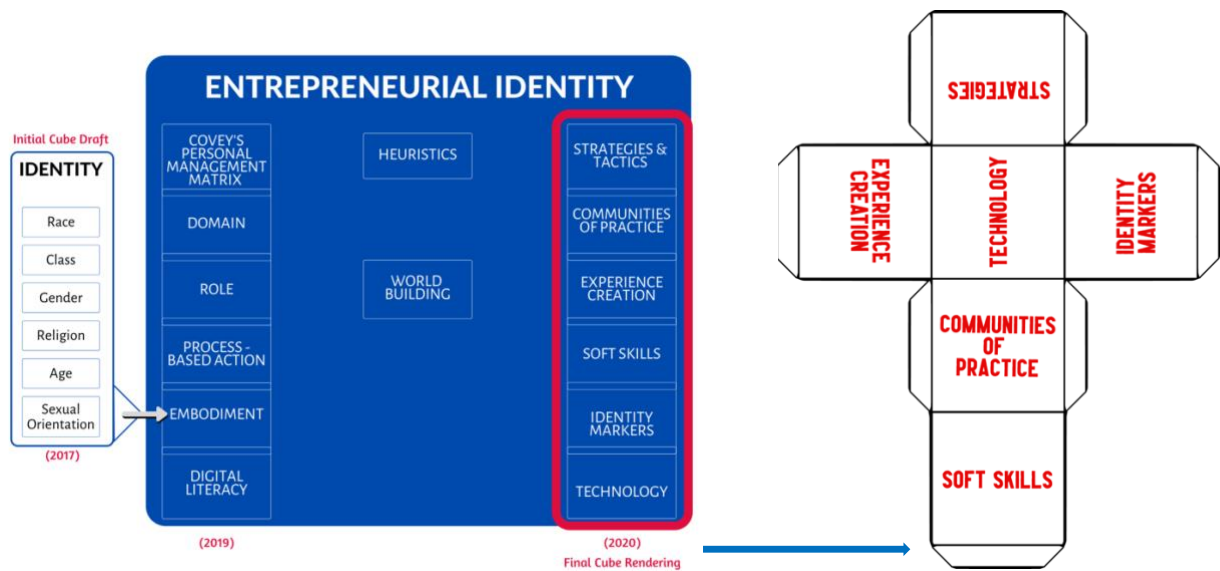
Heuristics have a long history that originated in Greek traditions from the word *heuresis*, which we understand as discovery and/or invention (Writing Commons). In rhetoric and composition studies, heuristics serve the function of helping writers develop points of departure, spur ideas, and think through complex topics. Lauer (1970) explains that heuristics are used across the disciplines and psychology, unsurprisingly, has demonstrated a specific interest in developing a metatheoretical explanation for their function. Recounting the historic use of heuristics across disciplines, Lauer draws specifically from Polya's assertion on the learning tool's function stating "the aim of heuristics is to study the methods and rules of discovery and invention...Heuristic reasoning is [therefore] reasoning not regarded as final and strict but as provisional and plausible only, whose purpose is to discover the solution of the present problem" (qtd in Lauer, p. 396). Some of the more commonly used heuristics in rhetoric and composition studies include but are not limited to: Burke's pentad, the use of journalistic questions, modeling/mapping, topoi, and tagmemic questions (Writing Commons). Over the years, the explicit use of heuristics as a tool for invention and discovery has ridden waves of interest and disregard among scholars. Not to mention, in the 1980s and 90s scholars positioned hermeneutics in opposition to semiotics in debates about heuristics (Young and Liu, 1994; Liu, 2002; Lyon, 2002). Worsham (1987) provides a particularly situated critique towards the use of heuristics wherein she articulates a reflective understanding of writing that opens lines of questioning about the process of how this work is done. Curating her argument through a Heideggerian lens, Worsham states that the interaction between being and language is one that is definitively rooted in an individual's experience — and the lack of control on behalf of the individual regarding entering, submitting, yielding to, and being owned by the experience itself. In order for us to reach involvement, she explains, we must begin asking "radical and creative" questions "of social practices and their effect on our lives" (p. 236). Ultimately, scholars conclude and agree that invention should not be about finding answers but about asking the right questions that facilitate thinking beyond the obvious.

One widely recognized example of a heuristic that achieves similar results to the ones I used in my own study is offered by Brian Eno's *Oblique Strategies*. As Eno describes, the initial function of the *Oblique Strategies* was "to serve as a series of prompts which said, 'Don't forget

that you could adopt \*this/that\* attitude” (Taylor, 1997). Over the course of his career as a musician, Eno found himself in many different working situations where the panic of the situation clouded his ability to recognize and remember that there were other, arguably more productive albeit tangential, ways of attacking problems instead of the familiar head-on approach. “If you're in a panic,” Eno explains, “you tend to take the head-on approach because it seems to be the one that's going to yield the best results. Of course, that often isn't the case - it's just the most obvious and - apparently - reliable method” (Taylor, 1997). Harford (2017) and others describe Eno’s use of Oblique Strategies with bands and their resistance to go along with the prompts listed in the card deck. “The cards force us into a random leap to an unfamiliar location, and we need to be alert to figure out where we are and where we go from here,” Eno explains, “the thrill of them is that they put us in a messier situation” (qtd in Harford, 2017). The three-dimensional cube heuristic, as I describe in the next section, created new and uncharted interview experiences that forced participants and I to be alert and receptive to the creative work being done in those moments.

### **The 3-Dimensional Cube**

I developed the 3-Dimensional Cube between 2017-2020, drawing inspiration from courses on intersectional methods, advanced professional writing, methodological praxis, and empirical methods. Along the way it saw many iterations before being finalized for this study — at each point, the vocabulary was honed to better present the themes of everyday-entrepreneurship in accessible language. Figure 3 shows the iterative progression of the cube’s labels over time. Initially the cube was tagged with different identity markers — race, class, gender, religion, etc. As my research progressed, and interest on the topic of entrepreneurial identity continued to develop, the first round of labels was collapsed into a singular marker — embodiment. In 2019, I coupled embodiment with other variables that I felt were representative of entrepreneurial identity — domain, role, digital literacy, etc. Smaller projects on the topic revealed that these characterizations were still wildly ambiguous to anyone but me. As we move from left to right chronologically within the figure, the red box on the far right indicates the final cube rendering that I used with participants in phase 2. While many scholars have taken up identity as their focus of study none, to my knowledge, have prototyped a heuristic in the vein of entrepreneurship like the one I developed for this study.



**Figure 3** *Progression of Cube Heuristic — Revisions Over Time*

### ***Application of the Cube During Interviews***

The 3-dimensional cube heuristic draws inspiration from dice based games and it was used in the second phase of this study. Participants engaged with the cube by rolling it to facilitate discussion of thematic vocabulary, tacit and habituated knowledge, and behaviors pertaining to their own entrepreneurial identity. The purpose of the cube was two-fold: A) to provide participants a visual representation of some of the most important/observable entrepreneurial identity markers, and B) to introduce a playful, lighthearted element (that naturally invites chance into the equation) so that participants can uncover tacit thoughts pertaining to their own entrepreneurial identity that would otherwise not be accessible via typical forms of interviewing.

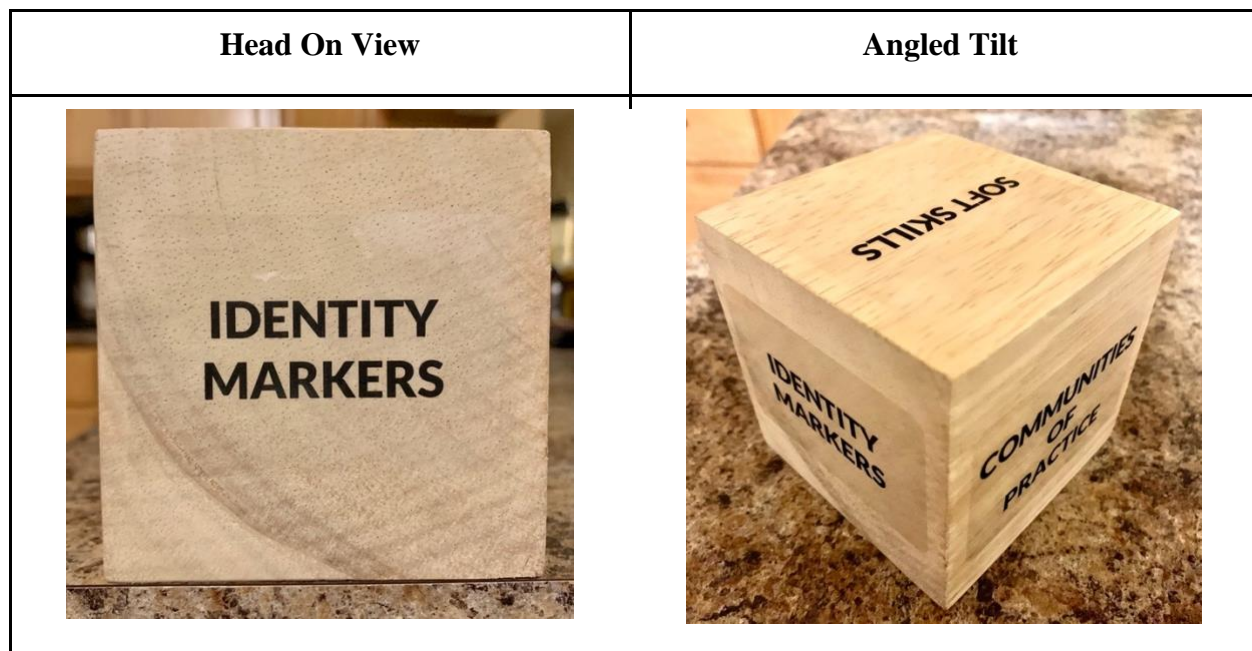
I set up specific “rules” to prompt participants’ commentary on each of the cube’s labels and guide their interaction with the heuristic through the interview in Phase 2. The first iteration of rolls was focused on gathering definitions; participants were instructed to roll the cube and provide a definition for the label that landed face up. If they rolled duplicate categories, they were instructed to keep rolling until each of the six sides had been addressed individually. On the second iteration of rolls, repetition of categories was permissible. This was really where the element of chance was invited into this portion of the study. Some participants rolled an even distribution of categories while others focused heavily on one or two. In this second round of

rolls I had semi-structured prompt questions prepared for each category. At this point I posed questions as an entry point for better understanding how participants perceive and understand their own identity in relation to identity markers, experience creation, communities of practice, soft skills, strategies, and technology. Once the participants had rolled each category at least once, I focused the third iteration of rolls on probing what the participants prioritize and value among each of the categories. Using questions like “What feels most important to you about X?” — opened up a space to dig even deeper; additionally, I observed that in this round of rolls, in particular, the participants relied on examples that pulled from multiple categories at once. On the fourth iteration of rolls, I challenged the participants to roll the cube and provide anecdotal evidence of a time when categories came in conflict. For instance, if “soft skills” landed face up — it was up to the participant to elaborate on a time when they experienced conflict between soft skills and other categories of the cube. Interestingly enough, two participants inherently gravitated to examples where conflict was presented negatively, but the third participant made a case for productive conflict; this was a powerful reminder about the impact of language on framing narratives.

### ***Benefits of the Cube***

Using a cube as a tangible representation of identity dictates that what can be observed, from any situation, is only that information which pertains to the panel that is forward-facing, depending on the angle. A head on view, for example, would only show a singular, front panel; an angled view with a downward tilt, though, would expose two side panels and the top. See Figure 4 for an example.





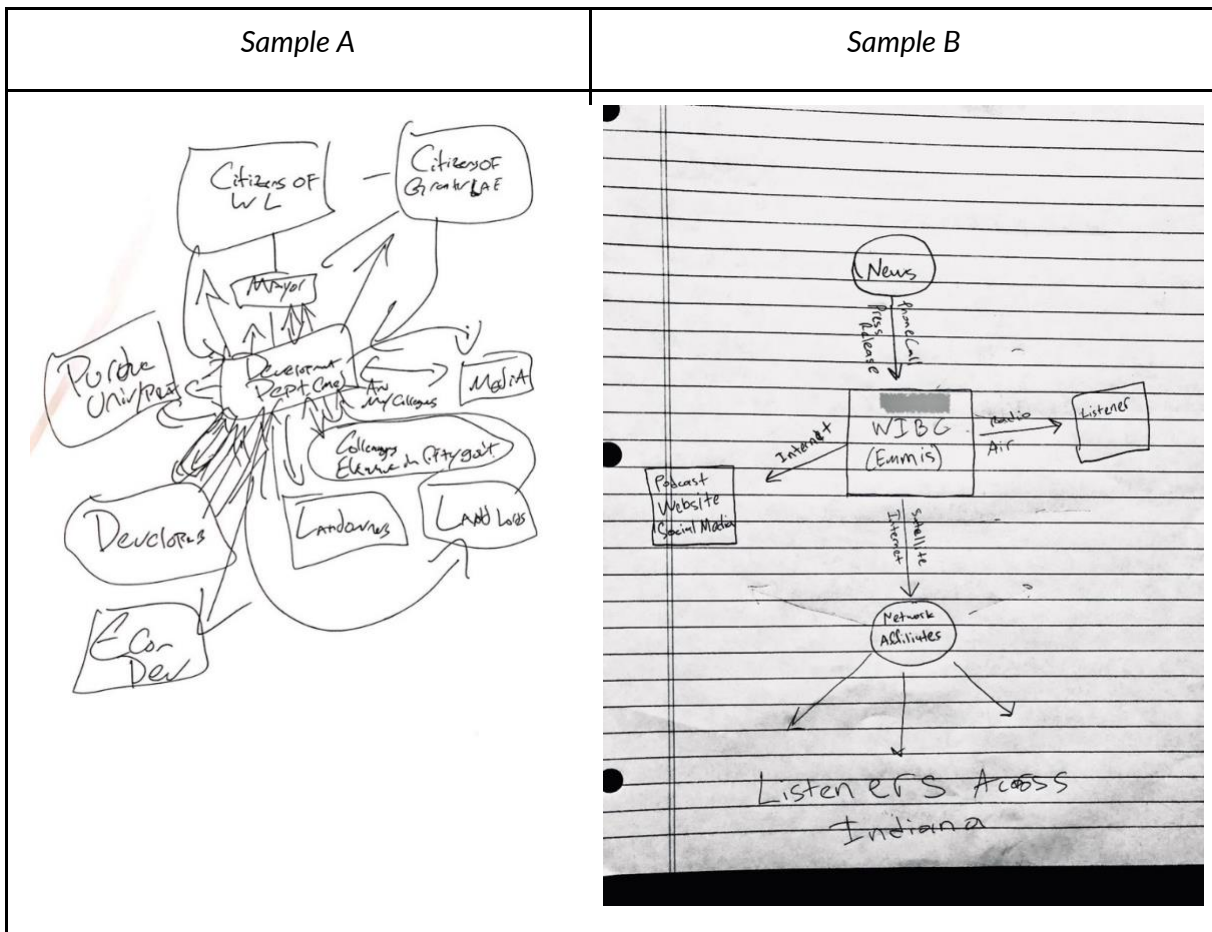
**Figure 4** *Cube Heuristic Exposes Hidden Variables*

Having something physical that they could handle and interact with, the participants were more encouraged to discuss themes in relation to one another, as opposed to individually (as the head on view dictates). The benefit of this heuristic, then, is that it shows how impactful it is to expose different themes that institutionalized power hierarchies have the ability to conceal. Overturning this power dynamic, by placing the participants in control of their own narratives, revealed conflicts and tensions between themes on the cube as they pertained to the participants' unique experiences. As such, the cube facilitated conversations that exposed anecdotal evidence of how systematic biases render everyday-entrepreneurs invisible. The greatest strength of this heuristic is that it places attention on the inherent power dynamics at play that foreground certain facets of entrepreneurial identities in context while hiding others. This approach to revealing hidden facets of entrepreneurial identity is particularly suited for people of color, or those with intersectional identities, who necessarily have to perform according to specific context(s) while also negotiating their sense of belongings across communities because they do not mirror or conform to definitions of entrepreneurship at large.

## Mapping Exercises

Maps are another heuristic that I relied on as a tool and method for this study. The incentive to map concepts and use mapping as a postmodern methodology has become increasingly more popular in the field of rhetoric in composition. Notable examples of highly cited maps include Bourdieu's (1988) work in *Homo Academicus* and Soja's (1989) *Postmodern Geographies*. Additionally, scholars have extended the applicability of this method on to curriculum development (Smith, 2020, Brown et al. 2005), pedagogical tools (Scott and Pinkert, 2020; Lauren and Hart-Davidson, 2020), and chronological reconfigurations of the history of the field (Glenn, 1997; Prior et al., 2007; Porter and Sullivan, 2007 ) among other applications. Indeed, the use of maps as method has also found prolific use in the professional and technical writing landscapes (Peeples and Hart-Davidson, 2012; Sheridan, Rodolfo, and Michel, 2012) . Though there is a significant amount of work with mapping that has been done, two key examples stand out in relation to narrative and identity; these exemplars are found in the mapping of narratives within institutionalized power hierarchies as they pertain to marginalized groups and access to health care (Kitzie, Vera, and Wagner, 2021), as well as offering visual representation(s) of national identity (Hess, 2021). Indeed, Sullivan and Porter (1997) remind that maps are sites of rhetorical invention, which was seen and felt here in the exploration of entrepreneurship; as a method these maps open up space for praxis in this study. As the case study vignettes will show in Chapter 6 later on, the maps produced by participants in phase three of this study open up space to observe techné at work.

Phase three was designed with inspiration drawn from the aforementioned utility of mapping across the fields of rhetoric and technical writing. I first tested the application of mapping in a pilot study conducted in (2018); during data collection for that project I had not yet honed a clear articulation for how and why identity in everyday-contexts was related to entrepreneurship. Consequently the maps I collected were messy and almost illegible; without much forethought, I simply asked the participants to produce identity maps (see Figure 5).



**Note:** Identifying information has been redacted to maintain privacy for pilot participants.

**Figure 5** Pilot Study Identity Maps

As we can see, samples A & B pose significant challenges for analysis; because the two maps follow different trains of thought, careers, and trace wildly different interactions — there is minimal unity between the two pieces. The information provided, as well as the lack thereof, offered data points worth thinking about as I continued to develop my research ideas and prepare for this dissertation study. Maps offer qualitative research a level of versatility that numbers and empirical data cannot provide on its own. Combining mapping exercises with the pre-planned semi-structured interview in the final phase of this study allowed me to tap a creative framework for data collection that opened up the space for me to note potential patterns and deviations in the data collected in each of the two preceding phases. Calling back to Noë (2015), this artistic framework embraces the messiness of invention while simultaneously tapping into the concept of art as a familiar, tangible metaphor.

### *Explanation of Mapping Exercises*

When I planned the mapping exercises for this study, it was important to me to call on some of the existing industry work that utilizes maps for user experience (UX) research — especially given the situated nature of UX in this work. Sullivan and Porter's (1997) commentary on mapping also influenced my decision to compose multiple maps to aid triangulation and data collection. Ultimately, I developed a series of three maps and these became the central focus of phase three. I decided to use Miro, a virtual white board/team-based brainstorming tool, to facilitate data collection; Miro works similar to other collaborative composition spaces (e.g., Google Docs), so I didn't anticipate any major software impediments. All the same, I took the time to find an informative video and other documentation that I sent to the participants prior to our interview. The first five minutes of our meeting time was spent explaining the expected procedure and answering any lingering questions participants may have had about this or any of the other portions of the study. Despite having the same template, it was interesting to watch how the participants engaged with this exercise. Not to mention, the data shows just how critical the collection of mapping artifacts was for validating the data derived from each of the preceding phases. Here I present each of these maps and offer a brief explanation for each template. The first map that the participants composed mirrors what's called a UX Strategy Canvas. Many industry organizations set up these maps to explore different ways of improving existing products, or building out new ones, in ways that best serve an intended consumer market. Since this scenario does not exactly mirror the context for this study, I altered my map to serve as a quasi-user persona profile. As Figure 6 shows, the intended function of this map was to capture a summary of the participant, with specific emphasis on showing how the participant perceives their own identity and the language they use to talk about themselves with other

# PARTICIPANT PROFILE

## [NAME HERE]

### Identity Markers

What are some of your visible and invisible identity markers?

Race

Socio-economic Status

Gender

Religious Affiliation

### Mission/Objective

Think of this as your main purpose in life; the goals you have that motivate everything you do.

"A deep-seated purpose, cause or belief that is the source of passion and inspiration."  
(Mead, Docker, Sinek, 2017, p. 6)

### Job(s)/Role(s)

What are some of the identities that encompass who you are?

Teacher

Father

Husband

Researcher

Ally

### Technology

What are some of the software and hardware that you rely on daily?

Instagram

Zoom

Video Editing Software

### Skills

Which are the skills you are most proud of? – Ones you feel you excel at?

Tech. Literate

Listener

Critical Thinker

Patient

### Challenges / Obstacles

What challenges and obstacles do you or have you confront(ed) that get in the way of your mission?

COVID

Distance

Accessibility

### Success Metrics

How do you measure/assess your own actions?

Yearly Evaluations

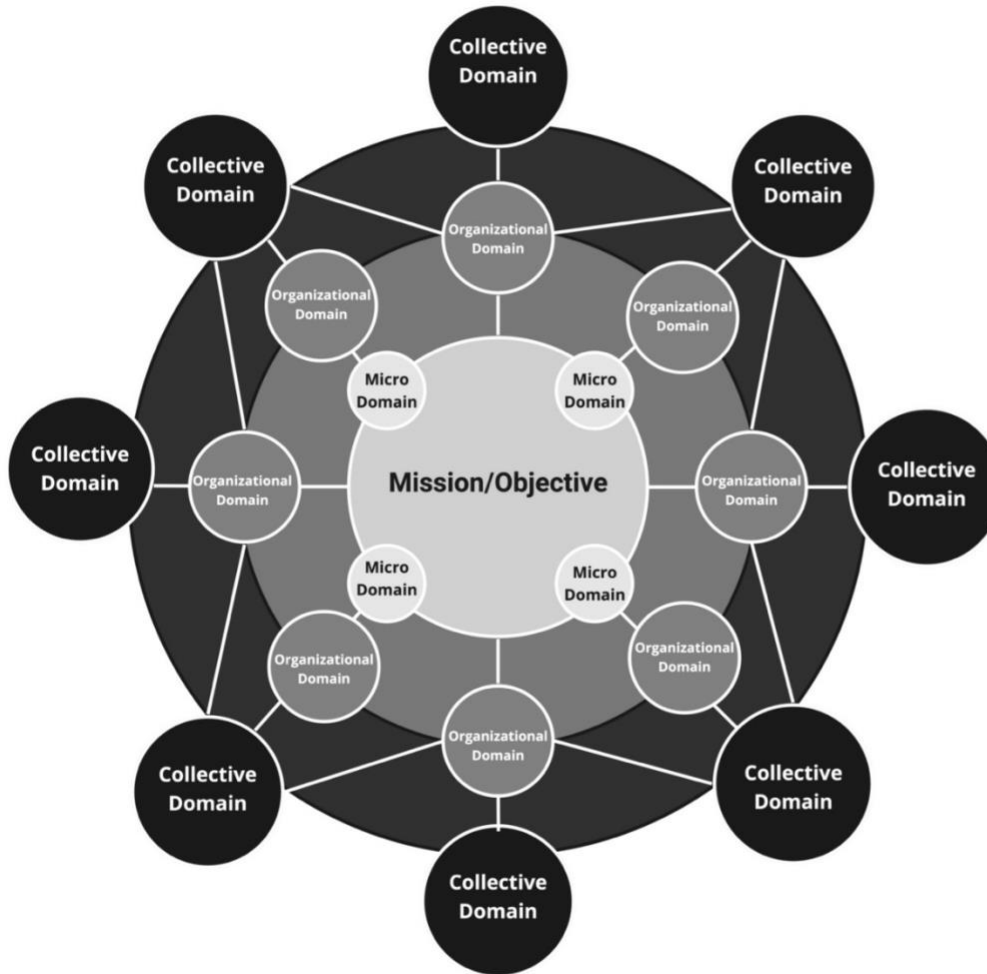
Profit Margins

Quota(s)

**Figure 6** *Template Participant Profile Map*

Moving on, the participants then hopped over to the next map. The second map (Figure 7) in the series is meant to provide a snapshot of the various communities that participants belong to and actively engage with. The expanding concentric circles represent micro-, organizational-, and collective- entrepreneurial identity domains. I argue that entrepreneurial identity is a dynamic function that individuals choose to perform; it is best understood as existing across a spectrum that operates in iterative domains creating feedback loops which encapsulate entrepreneurial behavior and belonging. The individual entrepreneurial identity spectrum begins with the micro-entrepreneurial domain, the smallest and most narrow scope, wherein networking and 1-1 interactions are prioritized. Moving on, the organizational-entrepreneurial domain serves as an intermediate domain that takes on the priorities of the micro- entrepreneurial domain in addition to considerations of the constant interactions among folks in work spaces, places, and organizations. The collective-entrepreneurial domain is the largest and most expansive; in this context, the priorities of previous iterative domains are taken up and mobilized among large groups of individuals interconnected across global communities. Furthermore, this map was the most challenging for participants to complete; due to the limitations of the software it was difficult for participants to elaborate on the way certain portions of their communities overlapped across domains.

## COMMUNITIES + DOMAINS



### COLLECTIVE -

The largest, most expansive domain wherein the priorities of the other domains are taken up and mobilized among large groups of individuals interconnected across global communities.

### ORGANIZATIONAL -

Intermediate domain that takes on the priorities of the micro-entrepreneurial domain in addition to constant interactions among folks in work spaces, places, and organizations.

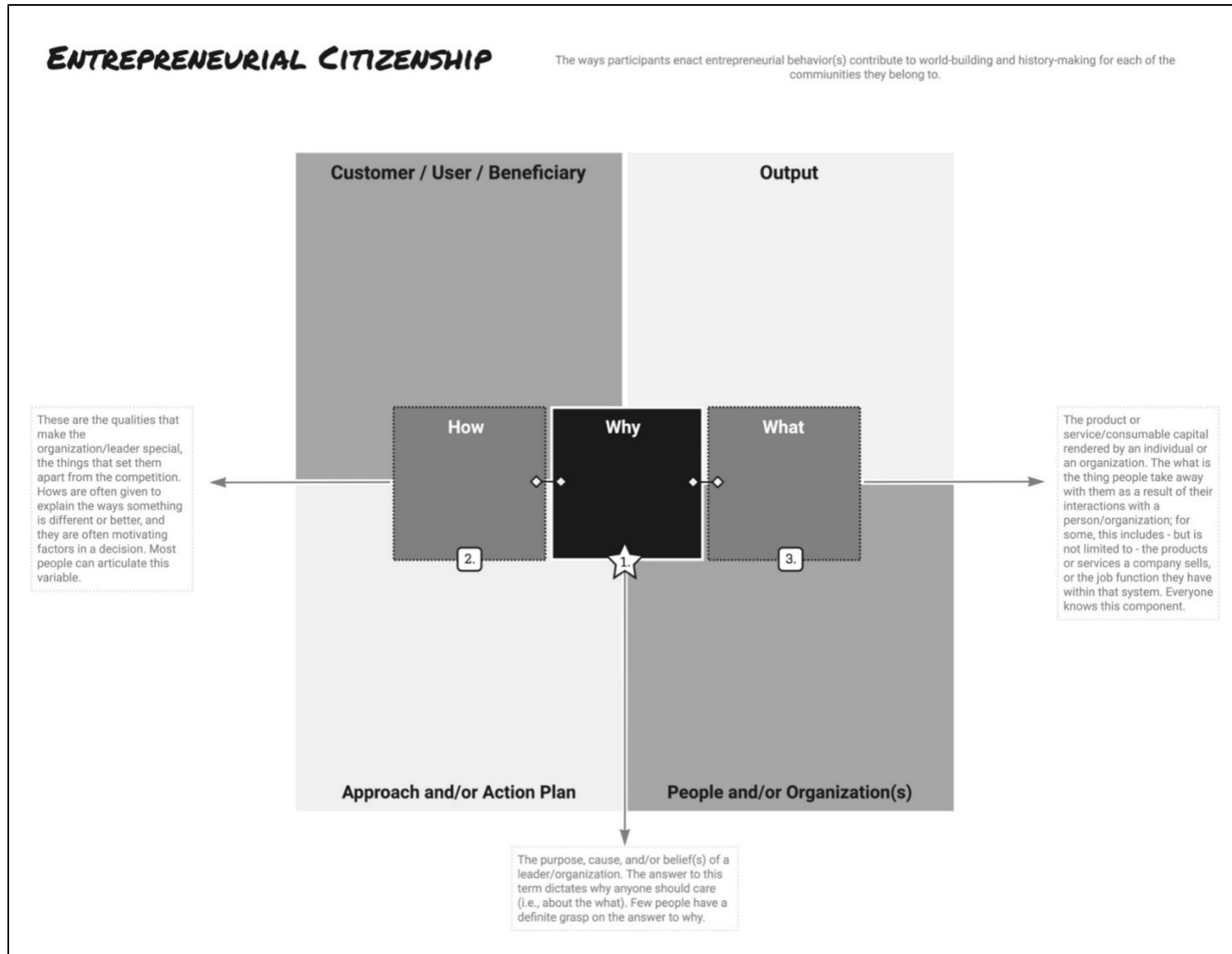
### MICRO -

The smallest, most narrow scope wherein networking and 1-1 interactions are prioritized.

Figure 7 Template Communities & Domains Map

The final map in the sequence was inspired by the work of Covey (1989) and Sinek (2009) — highly lauded materials in the business world that focus on habits and communication. My hypothesis for this map questions whether these texts (and others like it) help laypeople articulate their entrepreneurial citizenship within and across their respective communities and domains. In order to test this question, I borrowed and adapted Covey’s personal time management matrix system which invites people to categorize tasks, responsibilities, and various facets of life across quadrants that measure urgency and importance. My map deviates from Covey’s insofar as it implies that —to varying degrees— everything is urgent and important. Instead of measuring urgency and importance across time, my quadrants focus on some of the different components that contribute to the performance of entrepreneurial citizenship — beneficiaries, strategies, organizations, and outputs. Each of these quadrants are motivated by Sinek’s golden circle. Sinek organizes the terms how, what, and why in a target. He explains that when most organizations/people think, act, or communicate — they do so by moving from the clearest thing, what, to the most indistinct idea, why. Rather than work from the outside in, though, great leaders/organization communicate from the inside out; when they communicate, they sell people on their why first, followed by the how, and finally the what. As Figure 8 shows the beneficiary and approach are linked to the how, the organization and output are linked to the what, and the why is at the core. In further iterations of this study, it would be interesting to layer an additional way to reintroduce urgency and importance across these quadrants.





**Figure 8** *Template Entrepreneurial Citizenship Map*

### ***Benefits of Mapping***

Together, the maps completed during this stage of the study served a tri-part function: 1) they facilitated observation of the participants' experiential expertise; 2) the maps communicated a vocabulary that articulates the relationship between the participants' core objectives, use of technology, the interpersonal interactions they engage within communities, and a rationale for the strategic actions executed across domains; additionally, 3) the maps provided a physical representation of identities in flux, exposing their unique fragmented compositions, crystalizing a brief moment in time. As the presentation of the data will show in Chapters 5 and 6, these maps ultimately validated the overarching feminist methodology selected for this study in that this method invited participants in to co-construct the arguments for everyday-entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial citizenship from otherwise marginalized vantage points. Above all else, these maps helped me understand how subjects, objects, and realities are structured in relation to the perceptions that filter any one individual's outlook on life as they pertain to entrepreneurship in mundane contexts.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The data analysis procedures for this study followed a series of iterative steps in support of a grounded theory schema. The coding process was cyclical and the procedures described in this section were repeated twice in an effort to avoid confirmation bias. One of the most notable distinctions about the data are the qualitative and quantitative characteristics; during this process, it became apparent just how much the different dimensions of the data correlate with one another to strengthen my argument in support of everyday-entrepreneurship. Of significant note, here, is the way paradigmatic corroboration is revealed via the analysis; Saldaña (2015) explains this occurrence as moments where "the quantitative results of a data set do not simply harmonize or complement the qualitative analysis but corroborate it" (p. 26). The corroboration between qualitative and quantitative data is best demonstrated in phase three of the study.

### **Coding Interview Data**

In order to get the data ready for analysis, preparation included pre-coding in combination with other coding methods; each of these coding methods were completed on a phase-by-phase basis

until all of the data was collected and coded prior to further review. Saldaña (2015) writes that “preparing data for coding gives [researchers] a bit more familiarity with the contents and initiates a few basic analytic procedures. It is comparable to “warming up” before more detailed work begins” (p. 18). The pre-coding activities for this study started with my combing through the data by listening to the recordings of each of the interviews. At this point, I was not looking for anything in the data; I just wanted to refamiliarize myself with conversations I had had with each of the participants. Transcription was up next.

During each phase of this study, I used Otter.ai — a software that generates live transcripts for recordings. After all three phases, I had a little over eighteen hours of interview data saved and this software was a huge help in expediting the transcription process. One thing I was not prepared for, however, was just how tedious it would be to clean up each transcript in preparation for coding and analysis. Although Otter claims to support a wide variety of accents, I found that it was not well equipped to support my participants; for example I had to manually edit almost all instances where participants would code-switch and code-mesh their responses. Once the transcripts were cleaned up, I used Otter to export them into Word files to prepare for coding. All initial coding described in the section below was completed in these Word files and then later transferred to Excel for further analysis.

### ***Open and Descriptive Coding***

During the first cycle coding, I relied heavily on ‘open coding’ - a method Saldaña (2015) describes as a “starting point to provide the researcher analytic leads for further exploration” (p. 115). This process tasked me with being an active rhetorical listener; as I read through the transcripts, I made marginal notes about topics I wanted to analyze closer, observations I found striking, and moments where I realized I had more questions for each of the participants. My intention for this first cycle coding was to simply let the data speak; I was more so interested in what would emerge from the data as opposed to coming with specific things to look for.

On the second pass, I shifted towards descriptive coding. Wolcott (1994) suggests that this form of coding seeks to identify and link comparable content within the data. Here, my goal was to summarize, in a word, what some of the different passages offered; a list of topics emerged that

formed the main contents of the code-book for this study. Despite being tedious, this exercise was critical for uncovering the broad generalizable terms applicable across all participants. Not to mention, the codes from this first cycle were also scaffolded over into the coding procedures in place for the second cycle coding.

### ***Holistic And Focused Coding***

Second cycle coding methods for this study were guided by the cube heuristic utilized in phase two. Saldaña (2015) describes holistic coding as “macro-level coding.” Dey (1993) explains holistic coding is an “attempt to grasp basic themes or issues in the data by absorbing them as a whole rather than analyzing them line by line” (p. 104). In practice, the labels on each side of the cube offered a list of codes to choose from that would later inform a more focused pass through the data. This move also strategically organized the data in alignment with the research question that probes whether the cube heuristic effectively aids participants’ articulation of their own identities. In tandem with focused coding I was able to “identify the most frequent or significant codes to develop the most salient categories in the data corpus” (Saldaña 2015, p. 240). As previously mentioned, one of the important conditions for the methods in this second cycle coding procedure was the scaffolding of codes derived from the phase one data. The layering of data in this way more clearly articulated patterns worth exploring in the analysis that followed.

### ***Study Code Book***

After completing open and descriptive coding, as well as holistic and focused coding for each phase of the study, I compiled a code book that outlines the prominent code categories identified throughout the process. It should be noted, also, that all codes were derived from my own interpretation as opposed to searching for instances of the word or phrase in the interview data that I analyzed. See Table 4.

**Table 4** *Study Code Book*

Code	Definition	Example
<i>Community</i>	References to people or person that shares close proximity with the participant .	“I will do as much as I can to make every single person feel included all the time, which I'm sure helps with my whole strategy and things like that... but that's me as a person. I want communities to do that. That's what I think community should do. I think every community I'm part of is like that. I think orange theory is unique because we make everyone feel included hardcore from old to young, from fat to skinny, like we make you feel included. And that's something like actively that I personally work in the Jewish community about” — Rachel
<i>Boundary Crossing</i>	Identifiable instances where participants transition, interact, and call on prior experiences to affect change across different sites and/or entrepreneurial domains.	“My experiences growing up in the flower business, my experiences in the arts, my experiences in education — being able to relate those things together gives me that broader perspective that helps me continue to create things in my professional career, and in my personal career. I've done a lot of community service work, we recreated lots of different things for raising money for X Y or Z — all of those things, I think come from being able to balance our experiences in all of our other lives, because as human beings we have a bunch of lives” — Dr. Ramirez
<i>Experience Architecture (XA)</i>	“Reciprocal processes of analyzing and constructing social experiences in a variety of networked digital environments as well as a number of physical spaces” - Potts & Salvo (2017, p. 3).	“In the world that I work in, we're building human capital... So, one of the things that we struggle with everyday, not just from an academic standpoint but from what I consider a co-curricular standpoint [is this:] students' experience of the classroom is one thing, their experience outside the classroom is another; somewhere [administrators and instructors] expect that they shall meet, but if they don't the experience inside the classroom still has to help prepare them for the future” — Dr. Ramirez
<i>Soft Skills</i>	Interpersonal (and often improvisational) skills that compliment technical competencies (e.g., rhetorical listening).	“They are skills that are not necessarily seen. Right? They're not tangible skills. They are skills that deal with emotional intelligence, skills that allow you to work and communicate with others. On a resume or a CV you really might not see soft skills appear on there as you would other skills. For me, when I think about who I'm going to hire, I want them to have soft skills because I can always teach [the technical stuff]. I can teach you how to use a program. I can teach you those things, but I can't teach you how to read people very well. You know?” — Carina
<i>Relationships</i>	Used in study as a “catch-all” term that identifies personal connections with people, as well as strategic networks and alliances that participants have built.	“One thing that is at the core of all relationships is communication. I love connecting with people. These connections make space for me to do what I love — lead songs and spread joy” — Rachel
<i>Mission/Objective</i>	References to specific tasks or undertakings that contribute to an overarching goal that guides/informs the participants life-path.	“My mission has always been to educate others to give opportunities to folks who don't have the opportunity... that have capacity, that have potential, that could have opportunity if they just knew it. I think I've always been able to see in people, more in them than they see in themselves” — Dr. Ramirez

In sum, these methods sought to aid a grounded theory approach, which best accommodates the nature of this study. This exploration of entrepreneurial identity was designed in a way that conscientiously incorporates innovative heuristics that disrupt the social norms and organizing structures that make it difficult for participants to articulate what has become tacit knowledge of everyday-entrepreneurship and the way those behaviors co-construct their identity. Additionally, inviting the participants to engage with the cube heuristic and mapping exercises offered them a level of autonomy that would have otherwise been suppressed by stereotypes of how participants should act during research interviews. As the next chapter will show, these strange tools — as Noë describes them — do indeed help us study and understand ourselves; the qualitative data helps me better understand this specific group of participants, and it offers a window into thinking about how data and narratives support a more nuanced interpretation of everyday-entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial identity.

## 5. QUANTIFYING THE QUALITATIVE DATA

Chapter four presented a case for the methodology and methods used to conduct this study. Unsurprisingly, the project produced data that can be divided and analyzed in a number of different ways. In this chapter, I present the empirical findings of this study. I begin with a revisiting of the original research questions that motivated the project, and then move on to a discussion of the procedures used to analyze the data. The most striking distinction about the information gathered for this project reveals strong correlations between the qualitative and quantitative evidence offered by the participants. Considering the fact that this study is one of the first of its kind, the quantitative data rendered is crucial; though the sample size was small ( $n=3$ ), the data described herein offers significant findings for this population, which allows us to hypothesize about future studies with larger groups.

As a reminder, there are two broad guiding questions that structure the work of this dissertation. In terms of study design, this examination was originally productively complicated by sub questions that seek to explore ways folks who embody entrepreneurial identity perceive themselves, how that work is done, and whether a heuristic for understanding entrepreneurial identity address vital themes that run in the undercurrent of the sociocultural context framing the phenomena. At the onset of this work, I asked:

- 1. How are entrepreneurial identity and citizenship typically defined?**
  - a. What challenges do those definitions face to grow their concepts?
- 2. In what ways is entrepreneurial citizenship embodied and performed?**
  - a. How do entrepreneurial individuals understand the driving forces behind how particular identities are achieved and negotiated?
  - b. How do entrepreneurial identities capitalize on the transfer and application of literacies across discourse communities?
- 3. How might the cube heuristic effectively aid participants articulate the ways they embody and perform their identities?**
  - a. How does the cube heuristic speak to power dynamics and interlocking forms of oppression?

When I planned out the study design for this project, I used these questions to guide specific choices regarding the methods and execution for the different phases. For example, question

number three grafts well onto phases two and three of the study where I had participants interact with the cube and produce mapping artifacts. In this chapter, the findings reveal only partial answers to these questions. These questions, unsurprisingly, opened the door to more research questions. This is not to suggest, in any way, that the work produced here was a bust though; on the contrary, the journey towards answering these research questions revealed results worth exploring further.

### **Quantitative Findings**

The quantitative findings produced by this study brought my attention to a few generalizable themes relevant to all participants despite their individual differences and the data also shows relationships between these themes and other codes. Overall, the numbers were consistent across the board; the various angles of analysis demonstrate the patterns and trends described in these sections.

### **Empirical Analysis**

In the support of the grounded theory approach for this project, I utilized three significant analytical moves to sort through the coded data (depicted across the figures included herein) resulting in empirical findings. In the first step toward analyzing the data, I ran a summative count for the number of times each code appeared in the data set (see Table 5). From here, it was apparent that the top six codes were relationships, experience architecture (XA), mission/objective, soft skills, and community. After looking at this list, I wondered what sorts of relationships might exist between and among the codes.

In order to better examine these relationships, I created pivot tables that filtered the data in unique ways. Using the larger, more frequent codes as a base, I cross compared the codes. Table 6\* provides an example. Here, we have a more clear picture of how the less frequent codes (i.e., LGBTQ, COVID, mental health, gender, etc.) correlate to the larger coded categories identified towards the bottom of Table 5. Tables like the one shown in Table 6 were created for each of the six code categories — relationships, experience architecture, mission/objective, soft skills, and community.



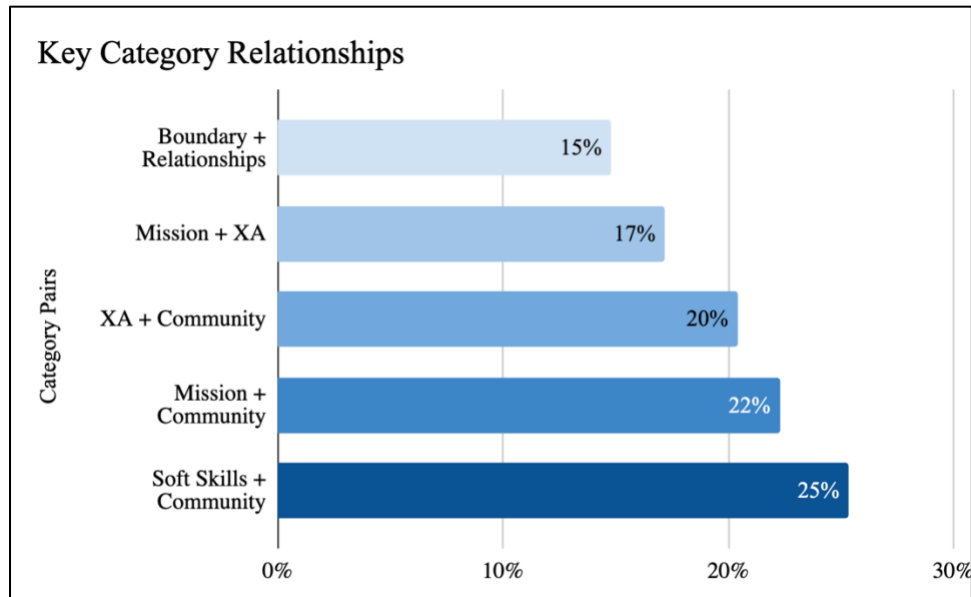
Another noteworthy analytical comparison was drawn between the six larger code categories to determine a hierarchical relationship showing the frequency in which they show up together within the data set. Using the same method of cross comparison from Table 6, Figure 9 shows the code category pairs drawing specific attention to how often the codes were identified together. Soft skills and community, for instance, are present as a pair twenty-five percent of the time across the whole data set. As I explore further, these numbers point to important empirical discoveries that highlight particular characteristics of everyday-entrepreneurship.

**Table 5** *Summative Code Count*

<b>All Codes</b>			
LGBTQ	0.25%	Narrative(s)	2.66%
Education	0.31%	Self-Reflection	2.79%
Humility	0.50%	Work-Life Balance	2.97%
Passing	0.74%	Culture	3.53%
Mental Health	0.93%	Leadership	3.72%
COVID	1.30%	Collaboration	3.78%
Mentorship	1.73%	Technology	4.65%
Gender	1.80%	Relationships	7.56%
Micro-Aggression	1.80%	Boundary Crossing	8.18%
Family	2.29%	Experience Architecture (XA)	8.74%
Role Model	2.29%	Mission/Objective	8.86%
Definition	2.29%	Soft Skills	11.52%
Social Justice	2.42%	Community	12.39%

**Table 6** Key Code Category Cross-Comparison Example

Community			Mission/Objective		
<i>Code</i>	<i>Total # of Instances</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Total # of Instances</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
LGBTQ	4	0.80%	LGBTQ	2	0.53%
Education	2	0.40%	Education	2	0.53%
Humility	5	0.99%	Mental Health	3	0.80%
Passing	7	1.39%	Passing	4	1.07%
Mental Health	9	1.79%	Humility	6	1.60%
COVID	11	2.19%	COVID	7	1.87%
Mentorship	14	2.78%	Definition	10	2.67%
Gender	18	3.58%	Gender	11	2.93%
Micro-Aggression	20	3.98%	Family	12	3.20%
Family	24	4.77%	Micro-Aggression	14	3.73%
Role Model	26	5.17%	Mentorship	15	4.00%
Definition	27	5.37%	Self-Reflection	15	4.00%
Social Justice	29	5.77%	Role Model	18	4.80%
Narrative(s)	30	5.96%	Culture	22	5.87%
Self-Reflection	34	6.76%	Work-Life Balance	28	7.47%
Work-Life Balance	38	7.55%	Narrative(s)	30	8.00%
Culture	47	9.34%	Social Justice	31	8.27%
Leadership	50	9.94%	Technology	47	12.53%
Collaboration	51	10.14%	Collaboration	48	12.80%
Technology	57	11.33%	Leadership	50	13.33%

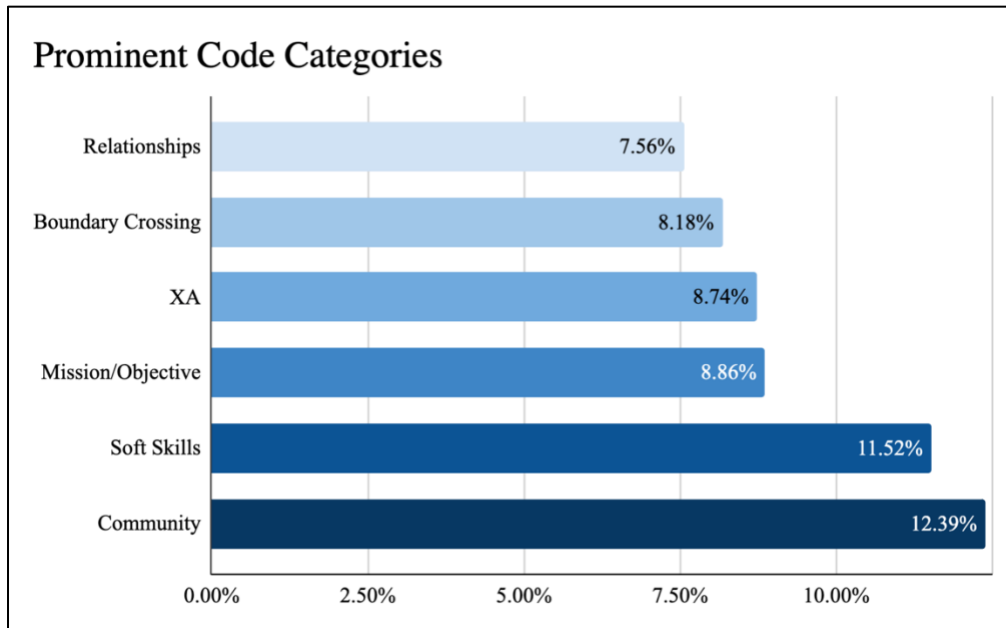


**Note:** Gradient represents increasing percentage.

**Figure 9** *Key Code Category Relationships*

### Key Code Categories

After running a summative count for the total number of occurrences of each code, I realized six prominent code categories took precedence over others. Community, soft skills, experience architecture, mission/objective, boundary crossing, and relationships account for anywhere between 7.5 to 12.3% of the total number of codes across both of the first two phases of the study (see Figure 10). As the data shows, these are the most applicable terms relevant to everyday-entrepreneurship that my participants identified with throughout this study. Realizing how impactful these terms are, I was drawn to question how the other codes collapse and expand into each of these prominent code categories.



**Note:** Gradient represents increasing percentage.

**Figure 10** *Prominent Code Categories*

In relation to one another, these codes present a hierarchical relationship that could potentially be explored further in future iterations of this study. Separate queries in Excel show the number of instances where these larger code categories are present together across the study; the following category pairs were revealed: *boundary crossing* + *relationships*; *mission/objective* + *experience architecture*; *experience architecture* + *community*; *mission/objective* + *community*; *soft skills* + *community*. Figure 9 in the preceding section demonstrates this distribution; the visual shows that, among these pairs — *community* makes an appearance three times more than *soft skills* and *boundary crossing*, whereas *mission/objective* and *experience architecture* fall somewhere in the middle. This finding touches back on the embedded nature of entrepreneurship in social spheres and calls back to a central tenet in Carnegie’s work; everyday-entrepreneurship is, in large part, a set of actions and behaviors aimed at “dealing with people.”

### **Relationship Between Key Code Categories & Other Codes**

Pivot tables that cross analyze these key categories with the other minor codes show consistent correlation with *technology*, *collaboration*, and *leadership* — hallmark factors of entrepreneurship as it is widely understood. At the onset of this analysis I hypothesized that these

minor codes would be particularly relevant for the key categories, like *soft skills* for example, but I was surprised to find that *technology*, *collaboration*, and *leadership* were in the top three ranked positions for five of the six categories. The category *Boundary crossing* was the only outlier; in that category, *culture* and *work-life balance* covered a 2.98% marginal spread (see Tables 7 and 8).

**Table 7** *Marginal Spread of Minor Codes Across Prominent Code Categories*

	Community	Mission/Objective	XA	Soft Skills
Technology	11.33 %	12.53 %	13.65 %	13.77 %
Collaboration	10.14 %	12.80 %	11.29 %	10.81 %
Leadership	9.94 %	13.33%	12.07 %	11.23 %

**Note:** Gradient used to identify the way codes show up (high to low) for each category; notice that the code list order does not correspond to percentage frequency from high to low. Therefore, darkest cells have the highest percentages and so on.

**Table 8** *Boundary Crossing — A Marginal Outlier*

	Boundary Crossing
Technology	11.92 %
Collaboration	11.11 %
Work-Life Balance	10.84 %
Culture	8.13 %
Leadership	7.86 %

**Note:** Gradient used to identify the way codes show up (high to low).

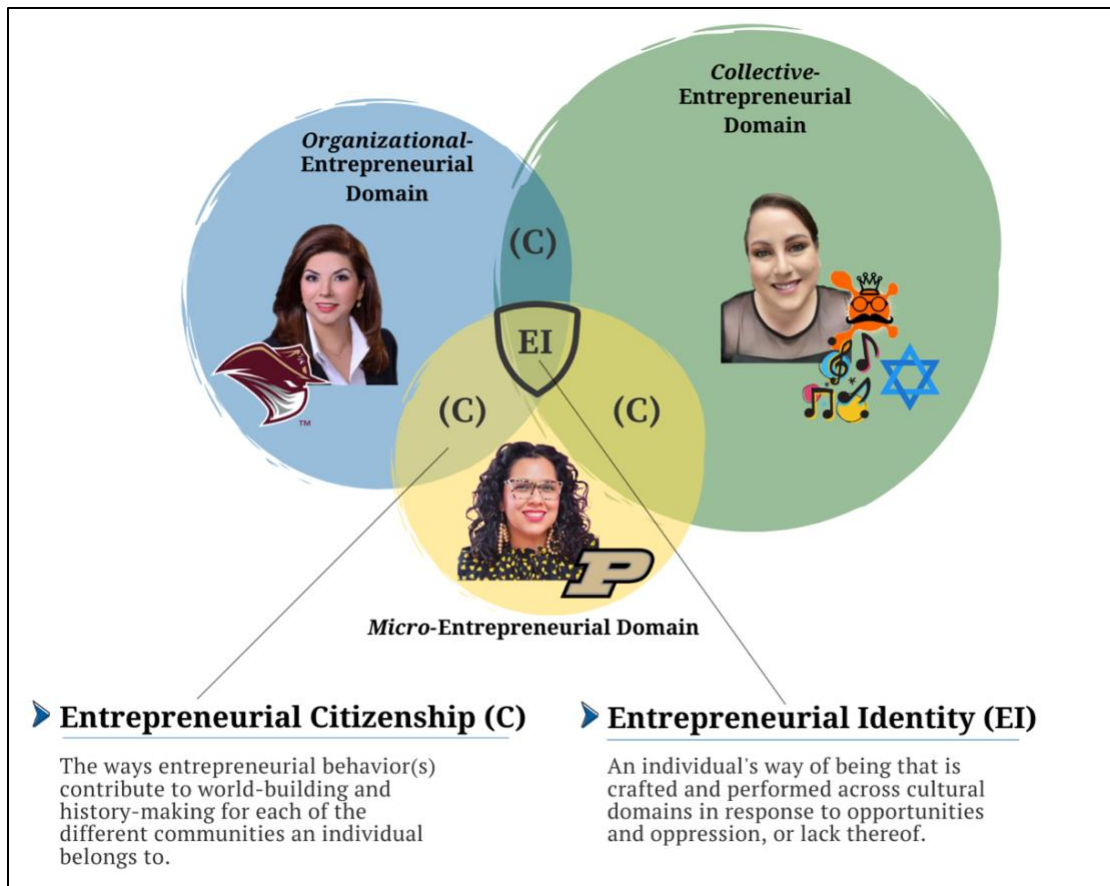
This finding deviates slightly from what is displayed on Table 5 in the preceding section; that table shows how all the codes rank in relation to their prominence (i.e., the number of occurrences for each code). On that list *technology*, *collaboration*, and *leadership* are the three second-largest codes for this study — which would mean that something (unique to these participants, or otherwise) caused leadership to be an outlier. Should this study be carried out further with a larger sample size, I envision that it would be extremely helpful to build on Table 5 to include more information. Adding a column for expected frequency, for example, would enable a cross-comparison with the pivot tables that I put together to analyze the relationships between the prominent code categories and the other minor codes. Digging deeper into the data

in this way potentially opens up a space for future research to determine tangible examples of external stimuli that affect the relationships between the larger code categories and the minor codes, which ultimately speak on behalf of the quantitative narrative of everyday-entrepreneurship.

## **6. THE PRACTICE OF EVERYDAY-ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

The empirical findings for this study are corroborated with the qualitative data offered by participants. Indeed, Dr. Ramirez, Carina, and Rachel's narratives were prioritized for the purpose of this study because these women are often not acknowledged as being entrepreneurial despite being professional practitioners that make use of entrepreneurial practices and behaviors on a daily basis. The empirical findings in the preceding chapter point to some of the prominent themes that run parallel to mainstream conceptions of entrepreneurship; the minor codes that came out of the data analysis also offer scholars the start of a lexicon (which can and should be built out even further over time) that articulates the challenges that everyday-entrepreneurs confront in order to validate their work.

In this chapter, I resolutely rely on case study vignettes to show how impactful the work of everyday-entrepreneurs is for local, regional, and global communities. These examples present and analyze different contexts that encourage and facilitate the performance of entrepreneurial identity. The case study vignettes also explore the ways everyday-entrepreneurs like Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel negotiate belonging to and with communities — which few studies have presently done. More specifically — Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel's narratives show how entrepreneurial identity is a dynamic habitus that exists across a spectrum, which operates in iterative domains; these overlapping domains create reciprocal loops that capture entrepreneurial behavior and negotiations of belonging, as depicted in Figure 11.



**Figure 11** *Individual Entrepreneurial Identity Spectrum*

As previously mentioned, the individual entrepreneurial identity spectrum heavily influenced the way I composed map templates for participants in phase two of this study. It begins with the *micro-entrepreneurial domain*, the smallest and most narrow scope. This realm of entrepreneurship is focused on networking and 1-1 interactions. The intermediate, *organizational-entrepreneurial*, domain expands out of the first domain to also include considerations pertinent to the constant interactions among folks in work spaces, places, and organizations. The largest and most expansive arena of entrepreneurship is found in the *collective*; in this context, the priorities of previous iterative domains are taken up and mobilized among large groups of individuals interconnected across global communities with a significant social impact. Finally, this rendering of the entrepreneurial identity spectrum also exposes the different spaces where entrepreneurial citizenship is mapped within and across contexts.



## Participant Profiles

In this section, I introduce the participants of this study — the everyday-entrepreneurs whose work teaches us about the innovative approaches marginalized individuals take to negotiate belonging within and across communities as they create equitable solutions to social disharmonies. Their individual participant profiles present a narrative sketch that details their origin stories, outlines some fortuitous encounters and formative challenges they have had, and articulates a mission/objective that informs everything they do. These profiles attest to the diversity of and among everyday-entrepreneurs, and they provide context for the lived experiences of women with marginalized identities. As the forthcoming case study vignettes will show, examining the ways these women harness and leverage the available means at their disposal demonstrates that conceptions of everyday-entrepreneurship has to include attention to *techné*; their execution of language and technology/ies are instrumental to the work they do because these tools not only facilitate the work Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel do on a daily basis, but also the way they are able to create lasting changes that promote social equity in each of their communities.

### Carina Olaru | Director of the Latino Cultural Center, Purdue University



**Figure 12** Micro-Entrepreneurial Representative — Carina Olaru

Carina Olaru currently serves as the Director of the Latino Cultural Center (LCC) at Purdue University. As this study was being conducted, she was also appointed as the Director of Student Advocacy and Education for the Division of Diversity and Inclusion. Within the scope of this project, Carina best represents the *micro*-entrepreneurial domain insofar as her work, while very

much focused on the LCC, is independently motivated. Put another way, Carina values one-on-one interactions, she prioritizes the cultivation of her personal networks, and she leverages local resources in support of building equitable experiences for herself and others

### ***Early Life and Education***

Carina is someone who has, for the great majority of her life, always been immersed in multicultural and diverse communities. Born of Mexican immigrant parents and growing up on the southside of Chicago deeply influenced how her identity was shaped from a young age. “When I think about who I am, it always comes back to Chicago. The southside of Chicago very strongly impacted my sense of being,” Carina explained. Her neighborhood was filled with many people from Eastern European communities and for a while hers were the only Latinx family on the block. Many of her memories for her early childhood are filled with people of color and the extent to which that impacted her identity formation would not become blatantly apparent until around the time she was in high school.

Carina’s early language acquisition also played an integral role in her identity formation. By the time Carina was born, her family had become bilingual; her two older siblings learned English via their enrollment in the Chicago public school system. Her brother and sister, each of whom are six and seven years older than her, spoke English amongst themselves and with her. At that point, her mom had also learned English because she had been working and that was her primary language of choice with the family. So, Carina’s only outlets for speaking Spanish were her father and her *abuelita*<sup>7</sup> who lived with the family from time to time. Consequently, by the time she was old enough for grade school, Carina was placed in English-only programs. “When we would speak Spanish they would tell us to stop. The teachers would tell us to stop speaking Spanish, even if it was just like ‘*ah - me das un lapiz?*’<sup>8</sup> or things like that,” Carina recounted. These experiences ultimately affected her fluency and confidence with the language. She didn’t speak the language as well as she could have, which blanketed her in shame when she’d make errors in conversations with adults and others. It wasn’t until she was a sophomore in college that she developed an awareness for what was actually happening and a vocabulary to articulate these

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<sup>7</sup> Translation: Grandmother

<sup>8</sup> Translation: ‘Ah – give me a pencil?’

experiences. “I realized,” Carina explained, “that it's not my fault that I [didn't] speak Spanish well, it's the system's fault. They stole my language from me. And, I was angry!” Carina fought back and reclaimed what was and is rightfully hers; today, she is proudly trilingual — fluent in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Carina's family moved to Burbank, a southside suburb, halfway through her high school career; this experience played a significant role in helping her realize how critical systems of support, access, and education are for social issues writ large. It also exposed her to direct racism and, though she did not have a vocabulary for naming what she felt at the time, the discrepancies between her two high school experiences opened her eyes to various inequities. For the first time, Carina struggled with being one of the few Latinos in that space. “I was used to being around a lot of white people — but this was like very, very white for me,” Carina told me. “Not even the people who were cleaning were Latinos — they were *all* white, everyone was white” she remembered. She didn't identify with the other Latinos because they were from a different suburb, and hers was still further South; she did not connect with them because they were the type of students that did speak Spanish really well and were deeply connected to Mexico. “They would call me a white girl,” Carina admitted. “It was because I would come in wearing my Doc Martens, I had purple hair, and I knew who the Beatles were and Led Zeppelin... and that's not to say that they didn't, but I was just different.”

Carina attended DePaul University, where she received her bachelor's degree in English and Latin American and Latino Studies. She minored in Spanish language. Carina worked as a student employee of the Center for Latino Research where she began networking with folks like Helena Maria Viramontes (American Fiction Writer), Vicente Fox (former president of Mexico), and Junot Diaz (Dominican-American Author). Carina also studied abroad in Mérida, México and later achieved the title of McNair Scholar. After graduating from DePaul, she continued on to a graduate program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. During her time there, she conducted research in Buenos Aires, Argentina with assistance from the Tinker Field Research Grant, and she was also a recipient of the Foreign Language Area Studies Fellowship which funded studies in Salvador de Bahia, Brazil. Carina ultimately earned her Master's in Hispanic Literatures with a minor in Gender and Women's Studies.

### ***Fortuitous Encounters and Formative Challenges***

An individual's identity consists of many variables including, and some would argue namely, the collective assemblage of their past experiences. Carina, and the other participants, did not set out on their career trajectories with the intention of becoming everyday-entrepreneurs. As a matter of fact, the social structures in place dictate a certain directionality that does not encourage or broadly accept Carina, and others like her, as fitting of the title entrepreneur. All the same, life has a funny way of disrupting socio-cultural norms to make way for other contingencies. Ahmed (2017) explains "Sometimes what happens is not simply a matter of conscious decision. Something unexpected happens that throws you" (p. 47). These unexpected encounters are a form of redirection that simultaneously unveil opportunities and challenges; for Carina, and the other women of this study, these fortuitous encounters and their complimentary challenges are formative to the shaping of their entrepreneurial identity; as the case study vignettes will demonstrate, these moments also influence and inform the actions that constitute entrepreneurial citizenship.

Carina has, on more than a few occasions, felt the harmful effects of racism and been the object of tokenization among certain groups. Looking back, her awareness of the function of racism began with being denied the opportunity to practice Spanish in school, which caused her to feel shame and inadequacy when mistakes were made or she was among fluent native speakers — though she did not know it as such at the time. As she got a little older, one of Carina's earliest memories of racism centers around an experience she had in a high school World Literature class when her teacher asked her what she and her family eat to celebrate Thanksgiving. When Carina's reply that her family would eat turkey and mashed potatoes wasn't enough, she began thinking about her mom who had essentially grown up around white women because she worked as a caretaker from a young age. "There was a moment where I realized," Carina explained, "*Oh, my teacher wants me to say tamales. Right? My teacher wants me to say something ethnic.* I told him, 'You want me to say tamales but we eat those at Christmas and at Thanksgiving we eat turkey. And, it's turkey prepared the way that your people might prepare it.'" These experiences continued as Carina progressed through school.

In college Carina learned about how deeply impactful it is to have representation among figures of authority. One example unfolded when she took a course titled *Multiculturalism in the U.S.* that sought to address what it means to “live life on the hyphen.” For the first time Carina experienced how deeply impactful it is to have representation among figures of authority. On the very first day of class her professor addressed several elephants in the room — including her white-passing privilege. This professor’s opening comments also faced students’ suspicions about her ethos and whether or not affirmative action had any bearing on her acceptance to the alma mater where she earned her credentials. “In that class,” Carina recounted with giddy excitement, “I saw myself represented in stories; prior to that, I was reading white stories. As a kid I was reading Judy Blume and Beverly Cleary. Not only was I reading fiction — I was also reading actual stuff like Gloria Anzalúda, Cherrie Moraga and Gustavo Perez Firmat.” Moments like this were, as Carina described them, life defining!

When asked who she admires the most, Carina was quick to reflect on a mentor she encountered through the McNair scholarship program. Though there have been many fantastic advisors along the way, Peet stands out as someone who has shaped Carina’s identity as a scholar, educator, and friend. Identifying with Peet on personal levels made it easy for Carina to build her professional relationship with Peet, but the fact that both women share similar belief systems and have encountered parallel struggles is what has carried their connection over through friendship across twenty plus years. Peet embodies many admirable qualities, but what Carina emphasized is her ability to hold balance — being *both* strong and vulnerable, empowered *and* empowers others. “I always really admired those qualities about her and tried to bring them into my way of being, my work, and my approach to students, to faculty, to staff — she listened. She’s shaped a lot of who I am,” Carina mentioned. Peet also became a mother in the early part of her relationship with Carina, and when Carina found herself at a point where she was also in that spot Peet’s model informed how she operated in that space. Indeed, feminist mentorship is a priority for Carina; the women she has encountered who helped her overcome challenges initiated a legacy that she now carries forward in her own communities.

### *Mission/Objective*

Everyday entrepreneurs perform various facets of their identity according to the contexts in which they find themselves, and always with the priority of creating positive and lasting change in mind (Bay and Ruiz, 2020). If we understand a person's identity to be the core of who they are, then it stands to reason that the different facets of their identity also contribute to their overarching belief systems, ways of seeing and understanding the world, as well as how they are to operate in that world with and among others. These participant profiles present the individualized mission/objectives of everyday-entrepreneurs who seek to address social disharmonies that prevent and negate equitable experiences for the members of their communities at large.

Carina's personal objective has always been to be a resource for others and to affect positive change in her communities. When asked, Carina explained that for her *Latinidad* is always present and that other factors of her identity emerge in different ways across contexts. She goes on to qualify this mission, stating:

Because I am the director of the Latino Cultural Center, that is an identity that stands out probably the most. I'm an educator... I would always say I'm an educator, a resource for students. I think it depends on who I'm talking to, but one of the constants in my life has always been [serving as] a resource. So whether it's faculty, staff, students, or a colleague — I'm always asking 'How can I help you? What tools do you need to do the work that you're doing? Any way, shape, or form — I'm *always* a Latina, an educator, and a resource.

Carina directly addresses these and other points on a daily basis, as they are integral to her work. In 2019 she presented on *Latinidad*, student success, and advocacy at the Hispanic Association for Colleges & Universities (HACU) — a national conference. That same year she was also awarded *Educator of the Year* by the Indiana Latino Expo.

Inhabiting this identity means that Carina must constantly be attuned to the complexities of various social situations. In her role as Director, Carina wears many hats and she has had to practice the art of code switching and moving between spaces when necessary. As the case study vignette will show in greater detail, Carina has had to confront specific challenges directed at her

identity in order to draw upon her local resources to leverage materials for the LCC. Carina's everyday-entrepreneurship shows us how Carnegie's text continues to graft onto renewed understandings of what it means to be entrepreneurial in the twenty-first century. Representing the *micro*-entrepreneurial domain, her work highlights *How to Win People to Your Way of Thinking* and the way she handles complex social issues reveals the rhetorical framework that undergirds opportunities for her work to make lasting changes within and across her communities.

**Dr. Minita Ramirez | Vice President of Student Success, Texas A&M International University**



**Figure 13** Organizational-Entrepreneurial Representative — Dr. Minita Ramirez

Dr. Minita Ramirez presently serves as the Vice President of the Division of Student Success at Texas A&M International University (TAMIU). Within the scope of this project, Dr. Ramirez best represents the *organizational*-entrepreneurial domain insofar as her work targets regional populations. In the twenty years that she has served TAMIU, Dr. Ramirez has collaborated with many internal and external constituents of the university, including a number of different departments which are now under her leadership. All in all — Dr. Ramirez is committed to enhancing the educational pursuits of folks in her communities and leaving the world a better place than she found it; for her this is accomplished by giving of her time, resources, and expertise.

### *Early Life and Education*

Dr. Ramirez was born and raised in Laredo, Texas; for the entirety of her life she has inhabited literal and metaphorical borderlands that have, without a doubt, shaped her identity. As Anzaldúa (1987) asserts, “living in the borderlands produces knowledge by being within a system while also retaining the knowledge of an outsider who comes from outside the system [... borderlands are always] in a constant state of transition” (p. 7, 25). This much is evident in that Dr. Ramirez is tasked with confronting and consulting the experiences and expertise that her accumulated life experiences offer; her early life and education helped shape, mold, and influence the educator and practitioner she is today.

Growing up, Dr. Ramirez’s parents instilled in her the importance of a strong work ethic which has since carried over into every aspect of her life. Her family is well known in the Laredo area for the flower shop that her parents opened in 1964 and continue to run today. Looking back, theirs was the first example of entrepreneurship in Dr. Ramirez’s life. In our interviews, Dr. Ramirez mentioned that after school there was always work to be done — sweeping the carport, changing the water for the plants, and/or looking after the store, for instance. She fondly recounts:

As we got older, our responsibilities changed. Through all that [the most important thing] I learned was the effects our actions have on people. When you deliver flowers to an elderly woman who lives alone, for example, her life is changed. I mean, at that very moment, the mere surprise and the impact of receiving something like that....It changed [me] as a human being, and it made [me] see the beauty in life — not just through the flowers, but in humanity.

Dr. Ramirez has forever cherished the many lessons she learned through the flower shop that sowed a yearning in her, which would later blossom in and through her actions in her professional career and the community service organizations she participates in. At a time when money was tight and there was only one other flower shop in town, her parents taught her that “there are times when one mind alone is not enough to tackle the issues and the problems that are out there,” and that in life sometimes you don’t know if and how things will work but there’s merit in being “willing to try and willing to fail.” In much the same way that her parents stressed the value of a strong work ethic, they also modeled the importance of education.



Education is an integral pillar, if not the very foundation, of Dr. Ramirez's identity. She is a product of the Laredo public school system — an institution that she now serves in her salaried position at TAMIU and through her volunteer position for which she was elected Laredo Independent School District (LISD) Board of Trustee. Prior to where she finds herself now, though, Dr. Ramirez graduated from J. W. Nixon High School and life after that was no longer clear cut and predetermined.

Ahmed (2017) reminds that “life is not always linear, [and] the lines we follow do not always lead us to the same place” (p. 46). Similar to Carina and Rachel, in this regard, Dr. Ramirez's career trajectory followed a path that she could have never envisioned; in her mind, she was going to be a dancer — her love of the arts, however, was realized in other ways. “My father told me — 'not just no, but hell no,'” Dr. Ramirez told me. It was so incredibly important for his daughter to go to college because he did not have that opportunity. “My mother did go to college and that was very enlightening; the fact that she ended up in college at that time was unheard of. She grew up on a ranch and sending her to college was visionary of my grandfather,” Dr. Ramirez emphasized.

Though she had dreams of going out of town for college, so much happened that year that it was just understood it wasn't feasible for her to do so at that time. Dr. Ramirez stayed in town and obtained a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from Laredo State University (now known as TAMIU). She went on to earn a Master of Science in School Administration from Texas A&M University-Kingsville in 1989 and a PhD in Higher Education Administration from Capella University in 2007. Dr. Ramirez also earned a Graduate Fellowship with the University of Michigan's National Center for Institutional Diversity in 2016, and in 2017 she fulfilled the requirements for graduation from the Governor's Executive Development Program — LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. Her journey through the world of education would not have been possible if not for the fortuitous encounters and formative challenges that she experienced along the way.

### *Fortuitous Encounters and Formative Challenges*

All throughout her life Dr. Ramirez has been guided through her professionalization efforts by folks she encountered on her path. This guidance first started at home with her parents and grandparents and later sprawled out across the networks she developed over time. During our interviews together, Dr. Ramirez admitted that she never really set goals at the onset of her career because she hadn't exactly been taught to do that; she mentioned "I don't think I ever said, I'm going to have a PhD by the time I'm whatever.... or I'm going to be X.... I never did that! It was survival. I did the things I needed to do at the time to continue to just grow and develop." Layered in and across each of these experiences, she never lost sight of what she learned from home. Her mother, was and continues to be her primary force and most influential role model; she taught Dr. Ramirez at a very young age that *de alguna manera salta el chivo*. This is a Spanish idiom that loses its punch when translated — one way or another the goat will jump — the English equivalent roughly being — there's more than one way to skin a cat. She remarked:

I think that very early on I understood that I was going to face adversities and oppression. That struggle was going to either make me or break me — and how I dealt with it was going to determine: 1) how I was going to be perceived, and 2) whether or not I was going to be respected in the field, which was important to me. It was important that people understood that my true mission was not one of self-promotion, but one of a vision set on the development and architecture of human capital.

Dr. Ramirez embraced this and other lessons and often finds herself putting them to use on a daily basis; her journey through various advancements in her professional career have not been without their struggles, but the payoff — watching students graduate, fulfill their dreams, and contribute to society — has been worth every moment.

Dr. Ramirez faced a particularly difficult set of obstacles in the time shortly after college and just prior to landing her job at TAMIU. At that point Dr. Ramirez found herself married, divorced, and a single parent. Despite having to navigate the challenges of being a single parent, she attributes much of her success to her son. Watching him grow and succeed in his own life has been one of her proudest milestones. This was a pivotal moment for Dr. Ramirez, she explained:

I had to really figure out how I was going to do this and not mess up... or screw up his life, and mine. And so, I think that my commitment was very different. I

recreated myself. In that area, I did have goals. I did have a plan. I thought, I'm going to go solo on this. I'm going to figure this out in my own way. I knew that by the time my son graduated from college, I was young enough to build another life for myself. I didn't date and I just stuck to the plan. [I have since] found a great partner, but if I had tried to do that then — it probably wouldn't have worked. The influence of having my son forced me into a realm of not being afraid to make hard decisions and pushed me to do things that I needed to do professionally because I was trying to set a good example for him.

At the time, Dr. Ramirez had been working as a teacher for UISD. Shortly thereafter, she was recommended for a position at TAMIU and the day she was scheduled for the interview her dad died. These formative challenges reinforced the lessons she had learned growing up; not to mention, the skills she acquired while helping to manage and run the family businesses also informed the way she navigated these hurdles. She has, on many occasions since then, had to rely on her knowledge and expertise in order to make difficult decisions at work and in her many service roles within the community. Along the way these experiences have become the foundation of her ethos, and the way she has gone about making her own life choices has modeled and mentored many young individuals along the way.

From an academic standpoint, Dr. Ramirez has had strong influencers that have taught her the value and power of being authentic and vulnerable. If life is just one giant conversation, then it is up to everyone to make it worthwhile; the power of sharing narratives in their most raw and honest form requires one to occupy space that is normally manicured for onlookers — both on and offline. For Dr. Ramirez, being a woman of color in a position of power among many men has had its benefits and consequences. On the one hand, she has had male colleagues and supporters that championed her at different stages in her life that have told her she could do more and that she should believe in herself. These men, she mentioned:

They were just such amazing people, and the stories that they shared about themselves with me, were critical. The fact that they were so willing to share their stories — about who they were, as human beings, how fragile they were as human beings, and how strong they were as human beings — has really really impacted my life because I learned that while you can be fragile, you can be strong at the same time. How, even your fears propel you to do things that are so supportive of others and of the mission or the goals; and, that you have to find balance... and sometimes you do, sometimes you don't, and it's okay.

The flip side, though, is that Dr. Ramirez sometimes has to censor how she's feeling so as not to fall victim to the stereotype that emotional women are less competent. This is, indeed, a catch twenty-two because others typecast women who don't show enough emotion as frigid and cold. Dr. Ramirez explains that this is a side of her identity that she keeps private, that only her family and close friends get to see. "When I get angry and I want to cry, I don't cry publicly," Dr. Ramirez told me. She went on to add:

I may get teary eyed, but I will not. I will not cry. And so, I think I'm perceived — based on what my colleagues and subordinates say — as being very hard sometimes... but the people that are close to me and know me, know that I'm really not.

Additionally, there are times when these gender stereotypes carry over into the way Dr. Ramirez is treated by male colleagues in harmful and negative ways; confronting microaggressions targeted at her because she is a woman is just another obstacle she is tasked with navigating amid the institutionalized social hierarchies that structure spaces like administration in higher education. Nevertheless, Dr. Ramirez acknowledged that this is where she is supposed to be; she is certain of her vocation and her relentless dedication to it demonstrates a level of commitment and leadership that many stand to learn from.

### *Mission/Objective*

As I have argued elsewhere (Bay and Ruiz, 2020), everyday-entrepreneurs' lives are organized by deeply rooted beliefs and values that are observable through their actions that support themselves, their communities, and others. Dr. Ramirez shared that she believes everyone has an obligation to discover, develop, and fulfill individual mission(s), which their own strengths make possible. For Dr. Ramirez it is evident that many, if not all, of her life choices are compartmentalized by specific tasks or undertakings that contribute to an overarching goal that guides and informs her life-path. She explained, "My mission motivates me... I just want to know that the day I leave this Earth, I made a little difference in people's lives and that I left it a better place than where I came." As previously mentioned, Dr. Ramirez's mission first became known to her through her work at the flower shop; when she began teaching for LISD, and then later at TAMIU, that mission was brought into sharper focus.

In her twenty plus years at TAMIU, Dr. Ramirez's mission melded with that of the university to the extent that the two reinforce a critical reciprocity that is deeply felt by the community. She

mentioned that her own mission and that of the university have become embedded over the years as she has served in her role:

My mission has always been to educate others — to give opportunities to folks who have the capacity and potential [to make the most of] opportunities, if they just knew it. My mission is grounded in helping others realize their potential... planting seeds in people's minds of what they could be, if they just gave it a shot. And so the mission at the university, in spite of life's issues, has always been to serve the underserved. I think that has always propelled me to do the work that I do and to find people to work in our division that believe in the same mission, that understand that what we're doing is bigger than ourselves. That's what we're trying to accomplish, and it is a lot of hard work.

Dr. Ramirez's actions aimed at serving the underserved and helping folks realize their true potential demonstrates her awareness of social justice issues; not to mention, her ability to identify as well as confront disharmonies within her communities places her in a position to approach problems with innovative responses that stand the potential to create lasting change(s).

Living in the borderlands and leveraging her power within higher education administration for the greater good, Dr. Ramirez embodies Angela Davis' assertion that "walls turned sideways are bridges." As the case study vignette will show in greater detail, Dr. Ramirez has had to develop and execute innovative ways of serving students at the regional level. Her everyday-entrepreneurship shows us how Carnegie's text remains relevant in expanded and broadened definitions of entrepreneurship, especially in the way that she makes a case for how the impact of entrepreneurial citizenship affects communities — something that would not otherwise be acknowledged within entrepreneurship discourse. Representing the organizational-entrepreneurial domain, her work highlights *How to Be a Leader*; digging deeper into the way she facilitated restructuring of TAMIU's Enrollment Management and revamping of student recruitment we learn how Dr. Ramirez's work creates collaborative and supportive work environments that ultimately create new social possibilities for students, broadly speaking.

## Rachel Wolman | Jewish Song Leader & Orangetheory Memes Page Founder



**Figure 14** Collective-Entrepreneurial Representative — Rachel Wolman

Rachel Wolman divides her time and attention across two primary communities — religion and fitness; she is both a Jewish song leader and a brand ambassador for Orangetheory Fitness where she is best known for being the founder of the first ever Orangetheory Memes page on Instagram. In each of these roles, Rachel embodies a servant-leader approach focused on attending to the needs of others; she is committed to spreading joy by building inclusive spaces for communities on and offline. Rachel best represents the *collective*-entrepreneurial domain insofar as her work affectively influences large groups of people across many sites, networks, and communities all around the world. In this entrepreneurial domain, the scale of Rachel’s work is much larger than that of the *micro*- and *organizational*-representatives in this study. Within the scope of this project, Rachel demonstrates what everyday-entrepreneurship looks like among communities with global constituents.

### ***Early Life and Education***

Rachel attributes so much of who she is to the privileges she was born with and that she had access to growing up. The Wolmans raised their children just outside of DC in Northern Virginia, and Rachel relishes in some of the greatest gifts they offered her and her sibling — a supportive home, an example of a healthy relationship that spans forty-plus years, financial literacy that would come in handy during unforeseen circumstances later in life, and a whole host of other things as well. Rachel commented:

Every single day that I'm alive I think about the privilege I have because of my parents. What [our parents do] impacts us so much. The reason why I'm the person I am today is because of them. They are so open to people they're around, they assume the best, they trust people, and they have really good experiences. I feel like my relationship with them, and most especially with my dad, really made me who I am in a lot of ways. They set me up for success, and they're so supportive of me.

At eight years old, Rachel's home life looked a little different than her peers; her mom had been working from home at the time, and when she found a new job her parents switched responsibilities and shattered stereotypes about traditional gender roles. From second grade all the way through high school, her dad played a huge role in her life; this included pickup and drop off from school, helping to manage field hockey, substitute teaching at times, and things around the house — cooking, cleaning, laundry, and the like. This is not to suggest that Rachel's mom was not in the picture, it's just that she was the sole source of income for their family during some of Rachel's most formative teen years. "I never really grew out of the 'my parents are superheroes' phase," Rachel beamed, and their love and support continues to be a sustaining factor throughout her life.

When Rachel was growing up mental health, learning disabilities, sexual orientations, and body fat were stigmatized to the extent that none of these topics were talked about openly. In high school, she felt the effects of this cultural norm that Anzaldúa (1987) eloquently articulates as she states, "Culture forms our beliefs. We perceive the version of reality that it communicates. Dominant paradigms, predefined concepts that exist as unquestionable, unchallengeable, are transmitted to us through culture" (p. 38). Though she didn't completely know it at the time, these were the years in which Rachel began to confront having fat phobia, anxiety, and a learning disability that went undiagnosed for a long time because teachers were enthralled by her charismatic personality. All of these factors have been such a huge part of Rachel's identity and, as with most things in life, it's taken many years for her to accept, accommodate, and embrace these parts of herself. In fact, a significant portion of her advocacy work today focuses on dispelling the stigmas and stereotypes associated with these social issues.

When it came time to apply to colleges, Rachel was forced to learn that "Sometimes a breakdown can be the beginning of a kind of breakthrough, a way of living in advance through a

trauma that prepares you for a future of radical transformation” (Moraga, 1983 p.124). After receiving ten rejections from various universities, Rachel resorted to living at home and she battled depression and an eating disorder. She attempted some courses at the local community college but was unsuccessful because her heart just wasn’t in it. Despite these challenges, this was also the time when Rachel began working and earning money. Had it not been for these experiences, she might not have discovered the extent to which facilitating Jewish music and education satiated a longing deep in her soul that had been there, but dormant, since she was fourteen years old. Rachel mentioned:

I always loved music, but that was a big turning point for me even though I was severely depressed because I wasn't in college [like everyone else]. That was a big realization and I started to get involved in the online community, so that's part of the reason why I'm successful.

This experience is directly responsible for igniting Rachel’s passion for Jewish song leading and community building. Prior to that, she had been told that this was not a “real” career and/or that in order to pursue music in the Jewish community one had to become clergy and be either a rabbi or a cantor. Rachel’s journey into this role, however, was one of twists and turns that included fortuitous encounters and formative challenges along the way.

### ***Fortuitous Encounters and Formative Challenges***

Much of Rachel’s identity is built around who she is as a Jewish LGBTQ woman and how she contributes to various sectors of that global community. Given how important this area of her life is for her, Rachel has been active in serving the Jewish community in a few different ways. In fact, Rachel disclosed that a good seventy-five percent of her time on a daily-basis is dedicated to song leading, teaching Hebrew, and tutoring young children in different capacities. Rachel has also attended Jewish summer sleepaway camps since she was as young as nine years old; with the exception of this past year and its complications due to the COVID-19 pandemic, summer camp is where Rachel has had the most direct experience making connections and building community. Having attended and worked for a summer sleepaway camp myself, I understood what she meant when she said “Camp is a really powerful space that encourages you to be creative and think outside your world. You learn to think on the fly and it is truly a magically inclusive space.” Camp is where Rachel has had the opportunity to network and immerse herself



in song leading and education. Operating in this space taught Rachel how to navigate different social situations, gave her room to practice drawing on her expertise from different areas of her life, and it fostered an interpersonal skill set that has directly translated onto the way she has managed to find success within and across online communities.

A good majority of Rachel's advocacy and education work begins with an address of and acceptance for her own body; this extends across issues pertaining to body positivity and fat phobia, mental health, living with diabetes, and topics concerning the LGBTQ+ community — among other topics. The body and identity are intimately connected, especially in relation to perceived beauty standards. The fact that Rachel's physical body did and does not always conform to social expectations for what it should look like is a source of frustration that has haunted her for a great majority of her life. In a sense, Rachel admitted that she felt like she always suffered from what she calls "fat girl mentality," because she's got a larger frame. It also wasn't helpful that body positivity was not normalized into mainstream culture when she was growing up either. Rachel remembered:

It's bullshit, really. I always felt like a fat kid, my whole life. And I hated it, and it was so hard, and I would cry and it made me feel bad. I never felt like I was accepted or fit into any [groups] with skinny people. We also never had fat people in the media — that didn't exist then... It wasn't until I was eighteen when I felt seen and accepted by someone who got it; that person is still one of my best friends today.

Rachel's struggles in this area of her life continued when she was diagnosed with type two diabetes the day after she turned twenty-one; not knowing what else to do, her parents sent her to a nine week fat camp to get some help. "That place," Rachel remarked, "fucked me up so hard mentally. I got into great shape, but the way they taught about food — especially given everything I know now — was so terrible!" All the same, Rachel was able to find the silver lining in this experience. Despite how toxic that experience was, Rachel walked away from it all with two friends, one who is now a part of the Orangetheory community and a client of hers and another who later went on to become a licensed psychologist. Today, she finds herself in a space of acceptance and advocacy; this mindset and the actions necessary to arrive in that space also transfer out into interactions with others across her communities.

Rachel began participating in social media sites and digital communities as early as 2002 when she was just twelve years old; these experiences were formative as they exposed her to the cultural norms that various communities share online, as well as to some of the gendered challenges that are unique to women in these spaces (Ruiz, 2021). Rachel had access to computers and technology at a very early age because her father holds an engineering master's degree in information systems and he identifies as a "tech-guy." As a result, Rachel developed an advanced technological literacy that has since carried over and played a significant role throughout her life. In our conversations, she provided a timeline that highlights some of the major social media sites that continue to remain relevant now:

I loved social media, before it was even called social media. I had a MySpace very early on, around the age of 12-13. I've been on Facebook since 2004, which is wild. Livejournal was also a thing. I've been on YouTube since 2006, I started uploading videos in 2008 and I had a channel that actually got pretty popular at the time. Then, I got on Instagram in 2012, which was still relatively fresh for Instagram. And, now there's TikTok and Clubhouse in 2020, and 2021.

However, occupying space on each of these online communities poses interesting challenges. For example, Rachel mentioned that she holds significant trepidation with marking who she is because outing herself on and offline sometimes has significant consequences. On the Orangetheory memes page that she founded, for example, she has slowly released information about her religious identity, sexual orientation, and the like because she recognizes the importance of being authentic and transparent. To this end, she mentioned, "In that space, I slowly came out about who I was. I was scared, but I was also strategic about when I shared each of those things." The thing that's different for her, in comparison to people of color, is that she passes; therefore, it is not uncommon to observe Rachel using her platforms and privilege to draw attention and awareness to social issues — like diversity and inclusion, for instance. Indeed, thinking about the bigger picture, as well as ahead to how different forms of communication might be received is one of Rachel's strong suits; her work as an everyday-entrepreneur is strongly influenced by an overall mission that guides each of her decisions for the various communities she is a part of and contributes to.

### *Mission/Objective*

Spinosa et al. (1997) argue that an entrepreneur is a selfless individual who recognizes how important it is to be motivated by a commitment to others before one's own needs in an effort to foster life in a world that everyone shares (p. 44). Rachel's mission in life — both on and offline — is to bring people together, help them when she can, and spread joy along the way. Everything she does in life, she shared, has this objective at its crux and she is intentional about her actions, making sure to share her passion with others, make everyone feel important, help people find peace, and ensure that they feel comfortable enough to be vulnerable in that process (Ruiz, 2021). Motivation to accomplish these goals and follow this life path, she explained, comes from the people that belong to each of her communities.

Rachel mentioned that part of her tenacity to pursue this mission stems from proving (to herself and others) that anything is possible; the fuel to her fiery passion, at times, is also drawn from other people's inability to see beyond what has always been instead of what can be. At various points along the way, Rachel has had to show up for herself when others simply did not. She reflected:

When I was young and I did choir in high school my choir teacher told me I would never be able to be a song leader. She told me I was not good enough and would never be. I was not naturally good at music at all, but I worked so hard at those things at such a young age that I was able to make this my career. [I was also told] I won't find like happiness because I'm a lesbian, and so many other things. All these things that people threw at me, I just didn't let that happen.

This mindset that Rachel has adopted for herself has had scaled effects far bigger than what she could have ever imagined for herself. Orienting her behavior this way, Rachel is able to attend to social issues and target her actions towards bringing about positive social change. In her mind, everybody is somebody and that's what makes this life really special.

Inhabiting this identity means that Rachel is constantly facilitating conversations, building connections for herself and others, and finding creative ways to navigate social power structures that silence and hide people who deserve to be acknowledged. As a song leader and the founder of the Orangetheory Memes page on Instagram, Rachel has cultivated the unique skill of being able to read the energy in a room and understand the rhetorical impact behind communication as

well. As the case study vignette will show in greater detail, Rachel has had to confront specific challenges directed at her identity in order to draw awareness to social inequities and build community on and offline. Rachel's everyday-entrepreneurship shows us how Carnegie's text remains relevant despite the fact that much of today's communication is influenced by technology and social media. Representing the *collective*-entrepreneurial domain, her work highlights that winning friends and influencing others in today's world takes the understated eloquence of grace that runs in the undercurrent of building others up.

### **Everyday-Entrepreneurial Identities at Work**

This section relies on the utility of case study vignettes to present a closer look at the way the women of this study put their everyday-entrepreneurial identities to work; more specifically, these examples show how Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel combat systems of oppression that necessarily exclude them from larger narratives of entrepreneurship. These cases represent the various mundane contexts where everyday-entrepreneurship is embedded and within those situations we see some examples of the types of social issues that everyday-entrepreneurs confront in their work. Interestingly enough, these case studies present similar themes despite the degrees of separation between them; the labels on the cube heuristic were, as we shall see, applicable to each of the participants across all the domains on the entrepreneurial identity spectrum. In order to accomplish each of their unique mission/objectives, Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel each embrace feminist approaches that rely on the utility of their available means — a combination of strategies, technology, soft skills, help from their communities, and attention to the rhetorical impact of how experiences are created. Returning to the sketch in the preface of this dissertation— if not for the spotlight of these women in this project, they would remain invisible *whos* that operate in the periphery of the scope of entrepreneurship in the twenty-first century. The work these women do, what they represent for each of their communities, and who they are as people how an emerging model of entrepreneurship that extends beyond basely capitalist agendas that is worth thinking about *because* of the way they embody the concept of entrepreneurial citizenship — defined here as the many ways everyday-entrepreneurs contribute to world-building and history-making for each of the different communities they belong to.

Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel demonstrate their commitment to entrepreneurial citizenship in the key orientations they embrace, which guide their actions within and across each of the communities they belong to. These key orientations were confirmed by the cube heuristic and empirical findings. The case study vignettes will show how boundary crossing, relationships, experience architecture, soft skills, and community come together in the everyday-entrepreneur's execution of their mission/objective. At the intersections of their identities and practices, we see the ways these women facilitate fundamental changes in their own entrepreneurial domains as they draw on the available means at their disposal; some of these means are taken up and discussed in self-help materials that people so desperately crave.

The work shown in these case studies draws attention to the fact that self-help literature lacks a direct and honest address of issues pertaining to identity politics. Not to mention, these books perpetuate mainstream conceptions of entrepreneurship and they present information that is widely inaccessible to certain groups who are expected to “show grit” and “pull themselves up by their bootstraps.” In much the same way that *techné* is often misinterpreted as *either* art, skill, or craft, self-help literature is often thematically categorized in ways that fail to capture the essence of entrepreneurship and the impact of identity on that work. As we shall see, identity work is a *techne*, one that works alongside and through other forms of entrepreneurial *techne*.

*Techné* operates on two levels within this project; *techné* is at work pragmatically in the participants' interpersonal exchanges and meta-theoretically insofar as it is a framework that scholars, like myself, can use to engage transdisciplinary approaches for better understanding the performance of everyday-entrepreneurial identity and the embedded contextual variables that conceal and reveal it. Returning to the argument presented in chapter two, *techné* offers a flexible and adaptive framework that bridges interdisciplinary gaps, which ultimately reveals nuanced understandings of the rhetoric of everyday-entrepreneurship. More specifically, I assert that *techné* is embedded within entrepreneurial identity as a “principle-driven, adaptable, and cross-contextual knowledge making capacity” (Scott and Pinkert, 2020). Whether these women recognize it or not, *techné* accounts for the dynamic ways they are able to transfer, build, and refine skills across domains and in shifting contexts. As such, *techné* is a precise distillation of rhetorical work itself. Rhetoric captures the way(s) we think about communication,

communicative act(s) themselves, and considerations for the entire situation in which those acts take place; likewise, *techné* is also just as much about the embodied attunement of everyday-entrepreneurship as it is a schema that exposes the way everyday-entrepreneurs are able to harness available means for innovative purposes that attend to social disharmonies, which extend beyond the bounds of capitalist agendas.

I posit that the case study vignettes presented here show how and why entrepreneurship discourse should also be held to the ‘yes+and’ perspective that *techné* abides with. Reframing entrepreneurship requires a shift in perspective that embraces both profit-driven *and* philanthropic success metrics, in much the same way that theoretical principles *and* lived experience(s) constitute the value of *techné*. Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel’s work embraces *techné*’s key defining features as Pender (2011) outlines them; time, circumstance, experience, the contingencies of human interaction, and the situational potential of rhetorical ecologies necessarily engage with these women’s entrepreneurial identities as they fulfill their mission/objectives, which bring forth new social possibilities. Now, I call on *techné* as a framework for analyzing Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel’s individual experiences, which expose some of the many challenges everyday-entrepreneurs confront as they navigate their life-paths in and among the *micro-*, *organizational-*, and *collective-* domains.

### ***Micro-Entrepreneurial Vignette: Confronting Stereotypes and Transforming Advocacy Efforts into Learning Opportunities***

Carina has had to confront, navigate, and challenge racist stereotypes cast on her identity as a Latina over the course of her career. In the *micro*-entrepreneurial domain this obstacle, and others like it, renders the everyday-entrepreneur and her work invisible; not to mention, while the effects of these challenges are targeted at one individual in particular, they also stand to impose additional affective consequences on the communities Carina is committed to helping. During our conversations together, she shared many memories that capture times when this has been an issue for her personally and professionally. The list is much too long to share in its entirety, but one particular instance stands out among the rest. She recounted:

I think one thing that really stood out to me was this oppressive state that I saw my students in when I was faculty at [my previous institution]; the students were

from urban areas of Chicago, they were students of color, minoritized and marginalized students, and I had to speak up for them. I think that's when I just had to kind of sit in my angry Latina status and not care about the way that I'm viewed. I think that as someone who has been empowered, especially like when I was faculty and now that I'm director, I can speak to the difficulties that students are facing because of these systems that are in place against them. [Then and now] I had to learn how to speak up. I had to become more vocal and not care about what people are going to think. The thing is, people are always going to think that I'm being too unprofessional and that I'm being angry if I say something that doesn't vibe well with them. I am always going to be marked as this angry Latina when I speak up. Whereas a man, and especially a white man, isn't going to be; he's going to be deemed the leader. So, how do I resolve those two things? How do I work within those confines and negotiate my own identity *and* the identity that people are imposing on me — [the stereotype of] the angry Latina?

Carina has walked away from this and other experiences developing skills and strategies that empower her to reconcile agency when making decisions concerning the obligations associated with her role(s), her personal beliefs and convictions, and the modifications/expectations that others have imposed on her identity (i.e., whether racially charged or otherwise). In situations where issues like this might come to presence and pose problems, Carina has resorted to pairing observation with proactive measures that ensure she is armed with information; additionally, she also mentioned that she often stops to ask herself “how would a man approach this? Or, more specifically, how would a white man approach this?” Moreover, these experiences have also provided Carina base-line models of behaviors and attitudes that she wishes to avoid reproducing among each of her communities, and especially as the director of the LCC.

Carina reflected that her time at Monmouth greatly prepared her for the work she finds herself doing for the LCC at Purdue. Being put in situations where she had to address the racist elephant in the room resulted in the accumulated confidence that is necessary for advocacy and education. When she was exploring different options for the students, she flipped the script on how their experiences — her own included — were being tokenized. She says:

I went to my dean of faculty and gave him one of the chapters from the book *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersections of Race and Class for Women in Academia* and told him ‘I need you to listen. He was a white man....so, my strategy was to go to his office as the only Latina faculty member on campus. I told him he needed to understand my experience as a Latina faculty member and accept that things weren't going to be solved, or fixed. You can't fix racism in a day, or by reading one article. I had written out seven points that I wanted to share

with him and I really needed him to not talk. I think about it now, and I'm like — *What was I thinking?!* But [my thought process was] to share this information that was going to help him champion me in different areas that would maybe become more visible on campus by calling upon me in public spaces and stuff like that.

Engaging in this way, Carina disrupted the engrained history of treating underrepresented minorities and marginalized students as less-than their white-majority counterparts. In doing so, she subverted the expectations of her dean and colleagues in ways that promoted worthwhile changes for the lived realities of students at that campus.

Borrowing from and building upon the experiences she had as a faculty member at Monmouth, Carina has focused her attention on the way technology and strategies pair together in the LCC's programming efforts for the Purdue community and the experiences they facilitate for students, faculty, and staff. When Carina first started with Purdue, for example, the LCC was on the brink of elimination due to issues with funding, low student engagement, and few faculty utilizing the space and services the center offered. Over the years, Carina has implemented several new changes to the way the LCC markets their services, developed robust programs that include guest speakers, and organized events that seek to educate the greater Purdue community about themes central to Latinx culture. Recognizing the valuable contributions that faculty could make to support Latinx students and each other, Carina reinvigorated the Latino Faculty & Staff Association (LaFaSA) which had been unofficially functioning since 2002 prior to the start of her tenure as director in 2016. LaFaSA's main goals are promoting the Latino community as well as advocating for the inclusion of Latinx voices in higher education. Drawing from previous experiences, Carina shared a motto she developed for herself that she's come to live by — “my thing is that people always question ideas [... but] if you build it they will come. This is always what I say [and have always said] to myself and others.” LaFaSA is just one example of how Carina and the LCC team have harnessed the positive potential technology offers, while making choices about how folks would experience and encounter the center, especially one that is situated against the backdrop of a predominantly white institution that houses many other educational communities. “We [had] to create that space,” she told me; in the same breath, she narrated what that conversation looked like with her colleagues at the time, “If we build it, they will come. It might take a year, it might take two years. It's going to be a lot of work, but we have to create the space and design it with [faculty] in mind.” Today, LaFaSA is a thriving



listserv that houses a community of supportive faculty that hold regular meetings and events, which highlight the history, heritage, and culture of the community, as well as further Carina's mission for the LCC to establish a sense of belonging and create meaningful dialogue.

The way success is measured in this space contributes to the ongoing conversation this work has started about how scholars might reframe entrepreneurship. Carina's work as an everyday-entrepreneur is rooted in the learning experiences the center offers Purdue affiliates. Since 2016, when she first stepped into this role, the LCC has seen a dramatic increase in visits to the center, engagement with the planned programming put together by her staff, and other community-building events like book club, the "Sana Sana Self-Care Series", and guest lectures on behalf of Purdue's *Pursuing Racial Justice Together* events — to name a few. As Carina so eloquently described:

Numbers are tangible; I can give that to someone and say, 'Look, you know, we've increased our numbers', and that's a good thing that people are coming in and using the resources. There may be 1200 people coming, but for me, success is finding out there's one student, two students, or a group of students who feel like they can do more, or achieve more, or be more, or get through Purdue University because the LCC exists —then I've done my job. The stories that I hear, more so like the qualitative data that I get from the people who are positively impacted by the LCC, is helpful and that's how I define my success. So, people who come back and tell me stories — whatever way that they were impacted positively is helpful and it's successful. And sometimes I fail at certain things.... and I think that's okay too, right? I learn from that and just continue to improve wherever I can. But yeah, we have data, we have numbers, we have evaluations; I look at those and I'm like 'Okay. Good. We're doing something good. We're doing stuff that is helpful for students, faculty, staff', but if I just had the data without any narrative, or stories, or people — actual people behind them — I wouldn't feel successful.

Carina's choice to assess the center's success in this way speaks to the larger commitment she has made to being a resource for others and effectuating change within her communities. Shifting metrics towards a more philanthropic perspective not only values the LCC's constituents' dignity as human beings, but also emphasizes that there is more to world-building and history-making than the production and circulation of capital.

In this vignette, Carina shows us how everyday-entrepreneurs engage *techné* as available means are leveraged in different social situations. In the face of experienced racism, Carina has developed a *techné* for coping with, confronting, and transforming it alongside other pursuits such as finding success and other aspects of entrepreneurial work. By analyzing the different skills and strategies Carina relies on, as well as the ways she collaborates with folks within her communities, we begin to develop a more holistic understanding of how entrepreneurial identities carry out their larger commitments that seek to address social disharmonies and injustice(s). Carina's gesture of entrepreneurial citizenship is reflected in the ways she has applied lessons from her experiences at her previous institution to the programming and advocacy efforts that she carries out for the LCC and the different components that make this endeavor possibly are clearly articulated in the third identity map she composed during this study.

Carina's identity maps that she created in phase three of this study collectively show how her work — which is primarily focused on local one-to-one interactions in the *micro*-entrepreneurial domain — requires attention to and collaboration with a number of individuals and organizations whose networks and interactions span across the entirety of the entrepreneurial identity spectrum. The fluidity and flux of Carina's identity as an everyday-entrepreneur can be traced across her maps in Figures 15-17.

# I. PARTICIPANT PROFILE

## CARINA OLARU

### Identity Markers

What are some of your visible and invisible identity markers?

Latina	Cisgender	Multilingual	Empathy	Passionate	Chicagoan
	Able-bodied	First-generation college student	Daughter of immigrants	Urban	Woman

### Mission/Objective

Think of this as your main purpose in life; the goals you have that motivate everything you do.

Constantly wanting to serve as a resource for others; create impactful/improve/empower change on wider scales as reach expands; to be a public servant in whatever capacity presents itself; share knowledge & open doors, create access, facilitate possibilities for others.

### Job(s)/Role(s)

What are some of the identities that encompass who you are?

Director of Latino Cultural Center	Advocate	Community Member
Mother	Partner	Volunteer
Mentor	Family Member	Role Model
	Educator & Scholar	

### Technology

What are some of the software and hardware that you rely on daily?

Laptop	Instagram	Asana
Listservs	Cascade	Delivra
iphone	Canva	Zoom
Teams	Outlook	Excel
Facebook	Airpods	

### Skills

Which are the skills you are most proud of?  
— Ones you feel you excel at?

Observant	Leadership	Critical
Determined	Patient	Organizational
Resourceful	Skeptical	Adaptable
Quick-Learner	Listener ★	

### Challenges / Obstacles

What challenges and obstacles do you or have you confront(ed) that get in the way of your mission?

COVID	Budgetary Constraints	Under-resourced
Micro-aggressions	Too many roles	Lack of Leadership at Purdue
Lack of Time	Lack of Mentoring from leadership at Purdue	Job Security
University's Conservative Priorities	Fear of violence on campus/community	Work-Life Balance

### Success Metrics

How do you measure/assess your own actions?

Fulfillment in current role; assessing impact -- through recognition of work, awards, conversations with others; For the LCC -- dramatic increase in student engagement; getting paid well enough to provide for family and contribute; acknowledgement of labor; success and growth of mentees; when others mention they've succeeded and accomplished things because of their shared relationship; having a successful partnership/home-life;

Figure 15 Carina's Participant Profile Map

## II. COMMUNITIES + DOMAINS

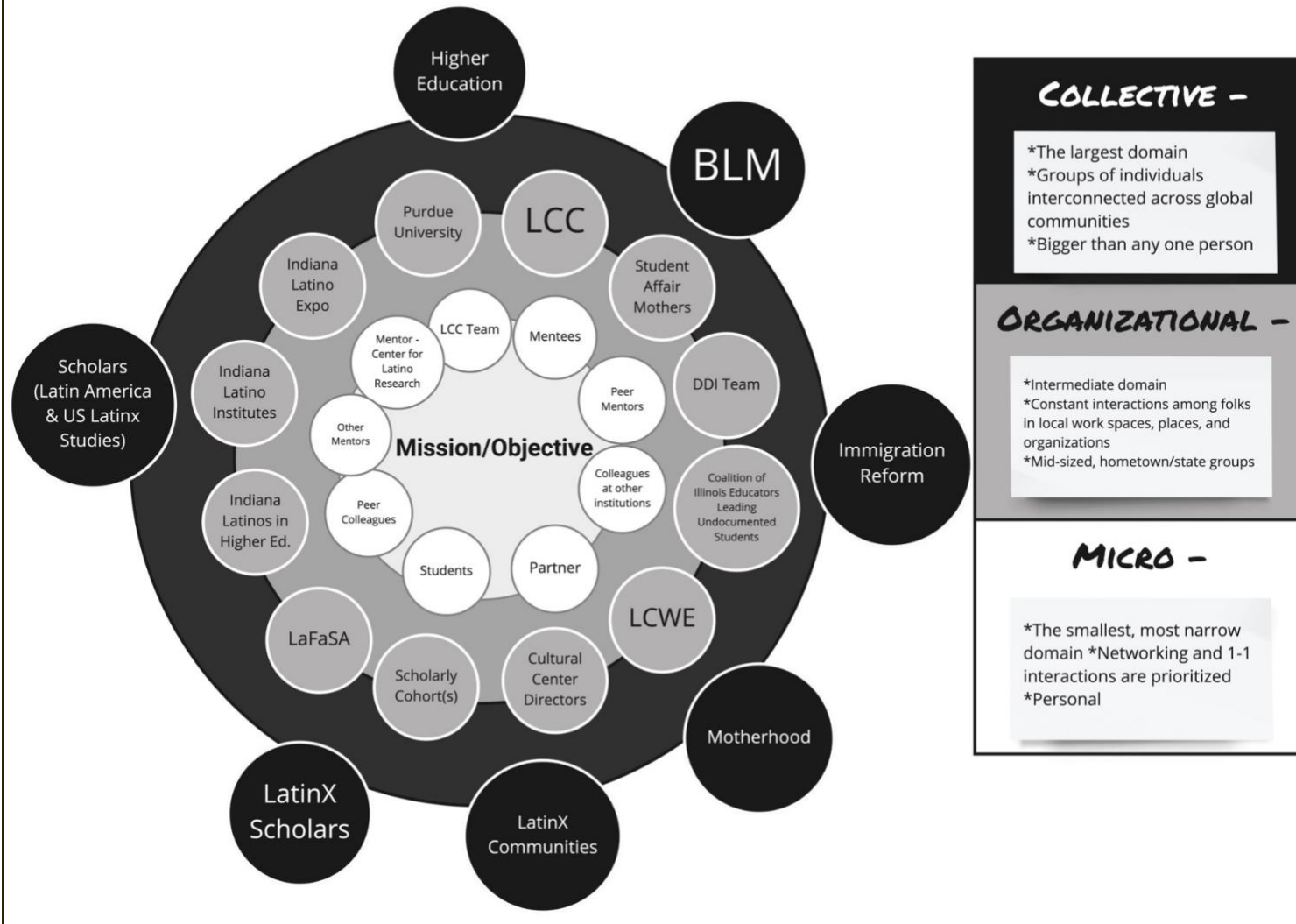


Figure 16 Carina's Communities & Domains Map

### III. ENTREPRENEURIAL CITIZENSHIP

The ways participants enact entrepreneurial behavior(s) contribute to world-building and history-making for each of the communities they belong to.

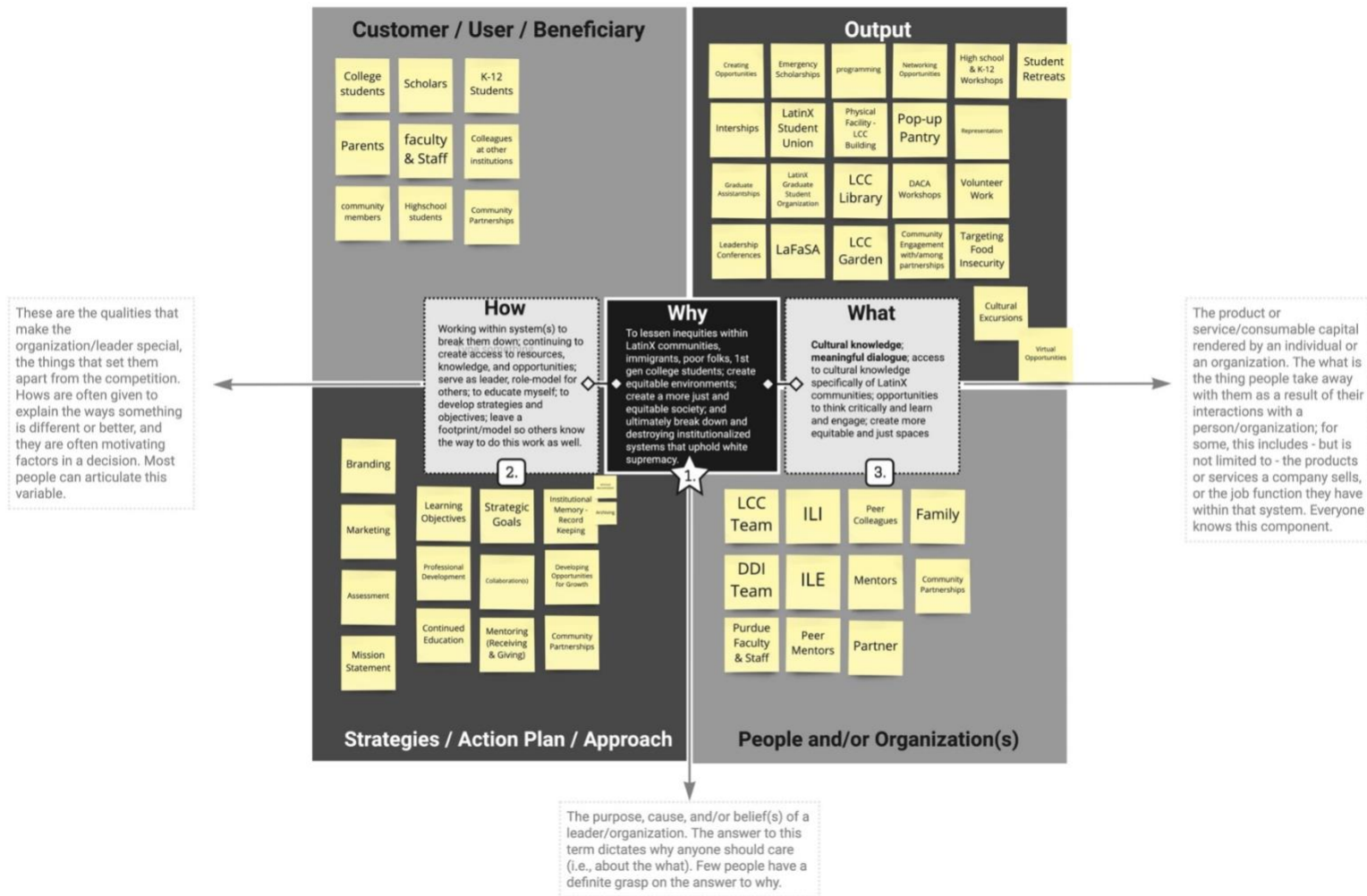


Figure 17 Carina's Entrepreneurial Citizenship Map

### ***Organizational-Entrepreneurial Vignette: Rebuilding Enrollment & Recruitment Procedures at the Intersection of Academia & Entrepreneurship***

Dr. Ramirez's career trajectory has largely focused on rebuilding, and to a certain extent rebranding, TAMIU's enrollment and recruitment procedures in response to the sustained demand for higher education by students living in the South Texas region along the US-Mexico Border. In the *organizational-entrepreneurial* domain, the rigor of this challenge tasks the everyday-entrepreneur with developing and implementing innovative procedures that sustainably structure changes for the university's administrative efforts; this work inherently requires cross-collaboration among the university's constituents both on and off campus, extending out into regional levels and beyond. Folks in leadership positions necessarily need to be committed to seeing goals like this be executed across the entirety of their projected duration; put another way, in order to effectively execute these complex tasks, university administrators must depend on their capacity rhetorically adapt their expertise to meet the demands of the situation at large, and the day-to-day challenges that accompany large scale goals. As one of few women in a leadership position that directly concerns itself with students' success, Dr. Ramirez has been faced with negotiating her identity in a context where academia and entrepreneurship overlap.

In order to begin this work, Dr. Ramirez reflected on critical considerations that she felt needed to be communicated with her superiors. Acknowledging the rhetorical impact of the way administration viewed students was the first step in creating the rippled and iterative process that ultimately resulted in the student-focused enrollment and recruitment process that continue to be used today. Dr. Ramirez mentioned, "One time, at an executive council meeting, I said 'you know, you all treat students like it's a privilege for them to be here. We need students. They're our customers'." She went on to elaborate, "Well, we had this big blowout about students not being customers *because* they're students, but since then [the council] changed [their] mind." At this point in the process, Dr. Ramirez demonstrated how identification of the values and priorities of colleagues created space to transform conflict into an opportunity that appealed to her own everyday-entrepreneurial mission/objective *and* the concerns of the university at large.

Dr. Ramirez views the rebuilding of TAMIU's enrollment and recruitment procedures as an issue of human-centered design — an integral tenant of experience architecture discourse. She mentioned:

[When I started this work,] university enrollment was [somewhere in the ballpark of] 1480 students. It was very small. So, I kept harping the president. 'Why do you call it that? Why do you call it enrollment management?' The thing was, we didn't have enrollment to manage — that was the first thing that was my big issue. And, secondly, the people we were trying to get into college did not understand the words 'enrollment management.' I [proposed that] the office be called 'recruitment and school relations,' because that's what we were trying to build — relationships with schools, with high schools, so that we could recruit their students. [They acquiesced and] we changed it. Then we started to develop the office. That was kind of an interesting time in the development of TAMIU. The mission of the school was to serve an underserved population. And so, we had to figure out ways to do that and still manage and maintain the integrity of the academic program, which has been my line for, almost 25 years.

Her address and concern for students' understanding of the office's function on campus demonstrates the way Dr. Ramirez was able to begin creating a more equitable experience for students navigating the environment of academia and higher education, which is especially impactful for those who are first generation and/or for whom English is a second language. In this instance, we must also note that the strategic move to rename Enrollment Management to Recruitment and School Relations was one of many ways Dr. Ramirez has harnessed the capacity to leverage language and communication practices in favor of socially-attuned goals.

Over the years, continued changes to the university's recruitment and enrollment required significant reorganization of the structure and management of several administrative offices. This meant that many departments were moved under Dr. Ramirez's management. She recalled:

So what I did in each one of those cases, every time I acquired a new department, I would actually move into the department so that I could shadow and see what people were doing and how they were doing it. I was learning from some of the people that were there, but I also questioned how they did things. And, in many cases, they didn't like it. I was pushing the envelope and people were getting very nervous about whether or not they were going to keep their jobs. We had to start training programs and develop people to get them to understand that the goal was not to fire anybody but to recreate ourselves as a university.

Today — the Division of Student success, under the leadership of Dr. Ramirez supervises:

1. Offices of Recruitment and School Relations
2. Admissions
3. Financial Aid
4. University Registrar
5. Student Counseling and Disabilities Services
6. Student Health Services
7. Student Orientation Leadership and Engagement (SOLE)
8. Student Conduct and Community Engagement (SCCE)
9. International Engagement
10. Recreational Sports
11. University Housing
12. Office of Outreach and Pre-College Programs :
  1. GEAR UP
  2. CAMP - Migrant Programs
  3. Tex-Prep
  4. EMSIP Grants
  5. Testing Center

Dr. Ramirez's efforts to rebuild and rebrand TAMIU'S recruitment and enrollment procedures would not have been effective or successful if she had not taken care to build a team of support grounded in the larger everyday-entrepreneurial commitment to attend to the inequities that need to be rectified in order to serve the underserved in the development of human capital. Doing so required special consideration for the cultivation of soft skills that affectively built motivation and momentum for herself and her team; in addition, Dr. Ramirez also paid reflective and deliberative attention to the ways technology, leadership, and collaboration come together to foreground students' experiences at TAMIU.

Dr. Ramirez demonstrates her dedication to fulfilling her mission/objective by extending her work in service of students beyond Laredo's city limits; in addition to her role at the university, she also presently serves in the elected positions of Laredo Independent School District Board Trustee and the Texas Council of Chief Student Affairs Officers (TCCSAO) President; not to



mention, she was also a member of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Committee on Student Affairs and Financial Aid in 2019, and she remains a regular and active member of the Texas Association of College & University Student Personnel Administration Fall Conference, Texas Women in Higher Education State Conference, and Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC) Operating Council quarterly meetings — for whom her service began in 2009.

Using *techné* as an analytical framework for analyzing this case study vignette shows the rhetorical impact of Dr. Ramirez's entrepreneurial identity insofar as there are (and have been) observable changes to university procedures that resulted from her work in this domain. Through innovative recruitment strategies that are culturally sensitive, environmentally aware and community-based, she has been able to help the University increase the enrollment and capacity of the Laredo/TAMIU community. On average, enrollment has grown between 5 - 10% each semester over the past 10 years culminating in an over 100% growth over the last 10 years. Coupled with the empirical data, Dr. Ramirez remarked that so much of what she does in her role and on a daily basis cannot be measured in the same ways that other assessment metrics render results so quickly. She mentioned:

In the world that I work in, we're building/producing human capital... So, one of the things that we struggle with every day, not just from an academic standpoint but from what I consider a co-curricular standpoint, [is that] students' experience of the classroom is one thing and their experience outside the classroom is another. Somewhere [administrators and instructors] expect that they shall meet, but if they don't the experience inside the classroom still has to help prepare them for the future.

In this light, *techné* reveals the way Dr. Ramirez negotiates academic and entrepreneurial concerns in her day-to-day actions, each of which seek to achieve her mission/objective. Her service towards students constantly weighs out the variables present on the cube heuristic: strategies, soft skills, technology, communities, identity markers, and experience creation. And, in and through examples like these we note her commitment to feminist mentorship that advocates for equity for everyone. Not to mention, as the sole educated Latina in a leadership position surrounded by men, *techné* calls also unveils challenges with gender also remain at issue — despite not being addressed in this vignette in particular detail.

Dr. Ramirez's identity maps that she created for this study categorically show how her work — which is primarily focused on the most intermediate domain of the entrepreneurial identity spectrum — pays close attention to personal networking in addition to an individual and/or group's *inter-* and *intra-* actions with themselves and others.

# I. PARTICIPANT PROFILE

## MINITA RAMIREZ

### Identity Markers

What are some of your visible and invisible identity markers?

Woman	Latina	Cisgender	Bilingual	Accepting
She	Teacher	Reader	Learner	Dancer

### Mission/Objective

Think of this as your main purpose in life; the goals you have that motivate everything you do.

My goals in life have been motivated by my parents and watching them work to make our lives better. In addition, my faith has guided me to understand that I have a role, a mission, to fulfill while on this earth. I hope that when I leave here I will have made a difference in the lives of others and been a good example for my son so that he too will live a life of fulfillment.

### Job(s)/Role(s)

What are some of the identities that encompass who you are?

VP of Student Success	School Board Member	Sister
Mother	Friend	Girlfriend
Daughter	Community Leader	Teacher & Educator

### Technology

What are some of the software and hardware that you rely on daily?

Laptop	Office Software
WebEx	Word
Excel	iPhone

### Skills

Which are the skills you are most proud of? – Ones you feel you excel at?

Leadership	Rhetorical Listener	Lecturer
Empathetic	Mentorship	Determined
Flexible	Problem Solver	Connector
Humble	Nurturing	Motivator
	Creative	

### Challenges / Obstacles

What challenges and obstacles do you or have you confront(ed) that get in the way of your mission?

COVID	Budgetary Constraints	Limited knowledge of others motivations
Micro-aggressions	Systematic Approaches	Lack of Creativity
Fear of Failure	Colleagues who do not share the mission	New HR Rules

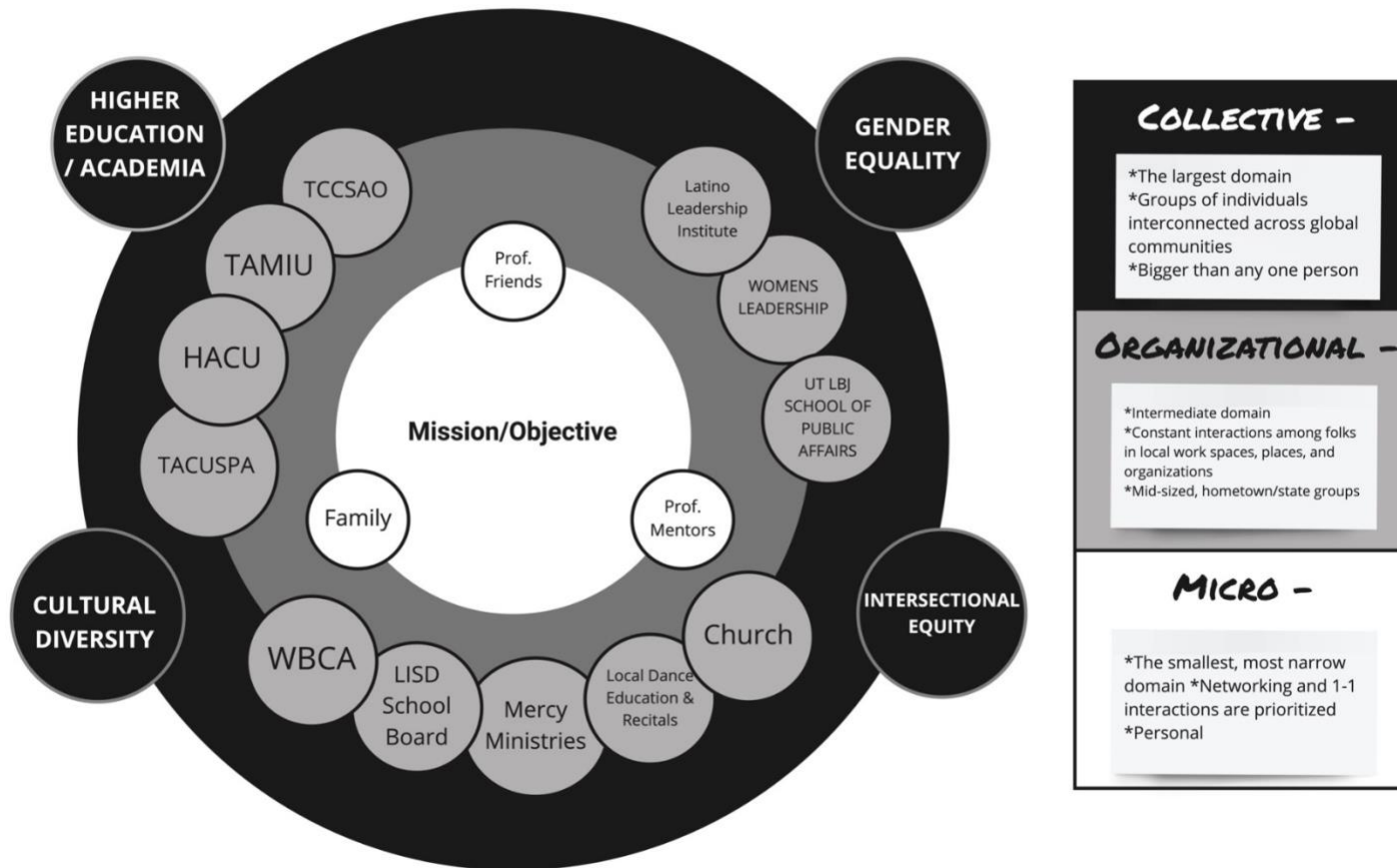
### Success Metrics

How do you measure/assess your own actions?

I measure my success by the success of those around me; completion of tasks and met goals; positive growth development and success are indicators of how well I have influenced the growth and development in others and in projects that affect others.

**Figure 18** Dr. Ramirez's Participant Profile Map

## II. COMMUNITIES + DOMAINS



**Figure 19** Dr. Ramirez's Communities & Domains Map

# III. ENTREPRENEURIAL CITIZENSHIP

The ways participants enact entrepreneurial behavior(s) contribute to world-building and history-making for each of the communities they belong to.

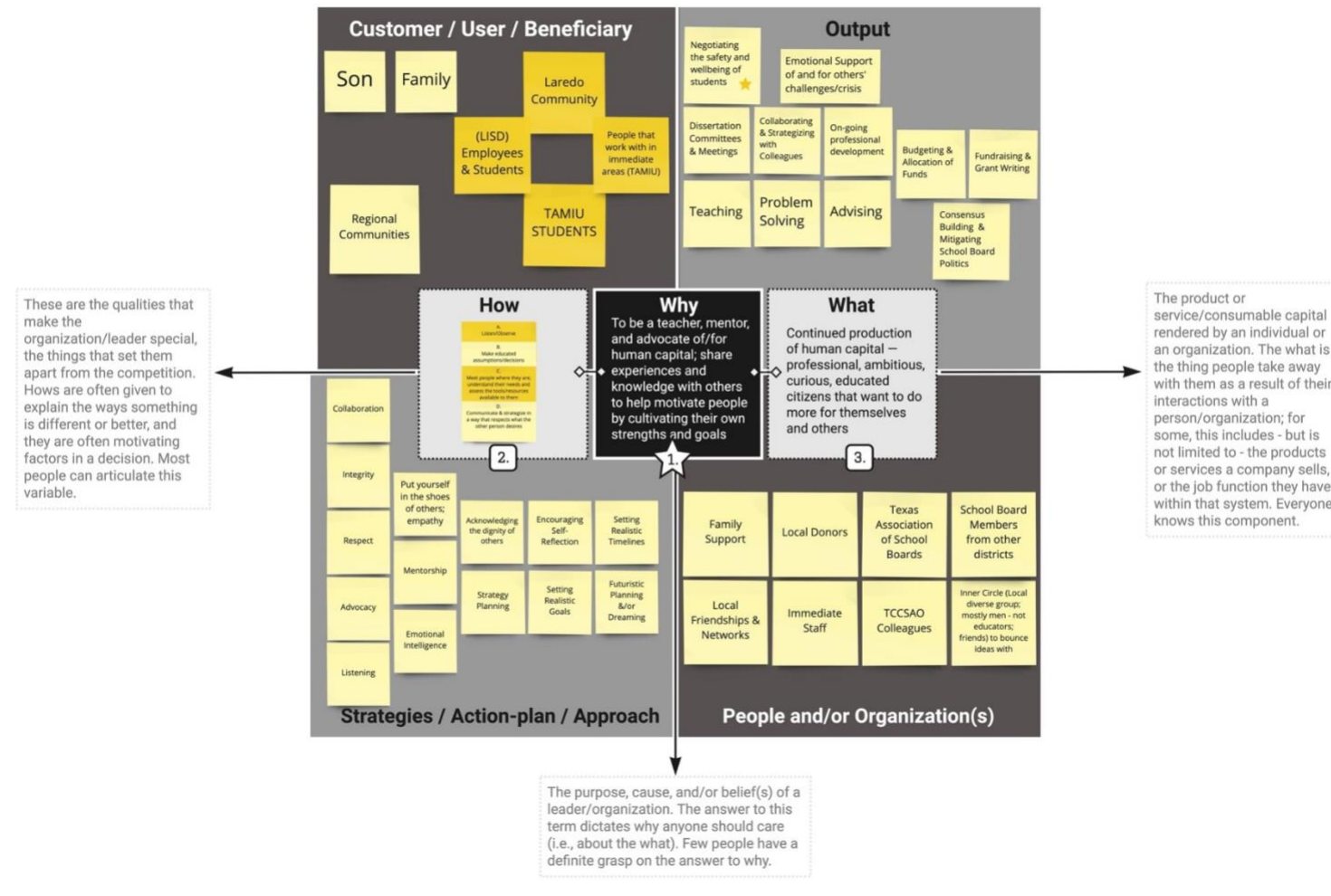


Figure 20 Dr. Ramirez's Entrepreneurial Citizenship Map

Tracing her identity across these maps, there is a consistent visual representation of just how embedded her identity is with her role as educator, administrator, and vice president. The challenges she has had to overcome to arrive at this point in her life only further assisted her pursuit of enhancing the educational pursuits of people in her communities and leaving the world a better place than she found it.

In closing, the *techné* that resonates within Dr. Ramirez's work on a daily-basis, shows a first hand account of how everyday-entrepreneurship is enmeshed in themes and concepts that are often addressed in self-help materials. Indeed, her work tugs at Carnegie's discussion for how to "Be a Leader." And, while this vignette spotlights scenarios that are unique to the overlapped space between entrepreneurship and academia, the way Dr. Ramirez has managed to make strides personally and professionally in this space put her that much closer to actualizing her mission, which has scaled effects at the regional level across the *organizational*-entrepreneurial domain that she represents. To this end, she offers the following advice:

- *Don't be held back by fear, don't be afraid to be ridiculed, or afraid to give the wrong answer, don't be afraid to admit that you don't know something.*
- *Most of the time, the people that criticize don't know either; they offer criticisms not about what they think it should be, but to cover up the fact that they don't know how to fix it.*
- *Even if you pose a question, and someone else comes up with the answer, be proud of the fact that you asked the question that led y'all there.*
- *Don't expect people to do things that you are not willing, or capable, of doing yourself.*
- *Relinquishing your leadership role when necessary... understand that there are other people who may be more efficient than you are at a particular task or event.*
- *Engage in constructive self-evaluations daily; life without self-reflection is an embrace of self-deception.*

### **Collective-Entrepreneurial Vignette: Leveraging Technology to Build Community for Faith & Fitness**

As Rachel's participant profile notes, her life path is incredibly unique; the motivation and drive that she holds for community building has, indeed, opened up opportunities to leverage

technology in order to disclose new worlds on a global scale. Operating primarily in the *collective*-entrepreneurial domain, Rachel's work reveals some of the many institutionalized barriers that discriminately force people with intersectional identities into the periphery of social sites — sometimes even making it so they are entirely unseen altogether. Since Rachel divides her time and attention across two large global communities, she often witnesses what this looks like in a number of different scenarios; turning these conflicts into opportunities, her work responds with innovative approaches for dealing with systemic issues like oppressive algorithms and being shadow banned. Elsewhere I've discussed the logistics of these challenges and the innovative responses Rachel has developed for how to navigate them (Ruiz, 2021), here I turn to our conversations about why she was inspired to start the @Orangetheorymemes page. Rachel relies on Instagram as a critical tool that helps her accomplish her life mission/objective.

OTF is a woman-owned, boutique fitness franchise gym that was first founded in 2010. It has since grown and developed a global community centered on a business model that offers group fitness classes centered on high intensity interval training (HIIT). Each class takes up a combination of three central stations — the water rower, weight floor, and treadmill. It is presently reported that there are over 1,200 studios in all 50 US states and over 23 countries with plans for many new locations to open up in the coming year (“Orangetheory Fitness Franchise Information”, 2020). Part of what makes the OTF community so strong is the shared misery of experiencing the same workout template with anyone else who has taken class that same day; not to mention, because the gym is franchised out, memberships remain active for folks to take class anywhere there's an open space at any location. Additionally, OTF headquarters makes sure to keep the workout templates different each day focusing attention to either strength, power, endurance, or some combination of all three — but never exactly the same way twice. Consequently, many people are drawn to class, if for no other reason than the fact that they know they'll get a great workout without having to expend time and effort to plan something for themselves. As an avid 6AM class attendee, myself, I can vouch for how nice it is to get through the first quarter of the workout before my brain has a chance to “wake up” and protest what's going on as I start my day. Members significantly contribute to building community through camaraderie and commiseration in and outside the studio. To the best of my knowledge, two of the most common digital spaces where members interact include Reddit and Instagram. There is

also a budding Orangetheory podcasting community and Rachel has begun to cultivate space for discussions about OTF on Clubhouse, an audio only social media application designed with the intention of creating talk spaces for a host of topics.

Rachel inadvertently became a brand ambassador for Orangetheory Fitness (OTF) after having signed up for a membership and taking her first few classes. As the @Orangetheorymemes Instagram page founder, Rachel is responsible for creating a formative space for members to engage with the brand and one another. The account has evolved over time as Rachel's follower count has continued to experience organic growth. Reflecting on her decision to create the page, Rachel mentioned:

I felt that when I did Orangetheory for the first time, it was the most meme-able workout I've ever done. These workouts scream memes because you think of memes as making fun of something or someone or whatever. [The way media circulates] like that and doing ridiculous re-mixing is what meme culture is to me. So, the fact that there wasn't a meme page about this just seemed so outrageous. I created it, and it still boggles my mind. Instagram made the most sense to me.... I didn't want to start a YouTube channel, I didn't want to make a devoted Instagram page to my fitness journey, I just wanted to make memes and spread humor. This just made so much sense to me, especially considering how fun it is to make memes and how funny they are; the fact that they [can] go viral is also pretty cool. I created something that literally didn't exist before. I think that I have a very innovative mind when it comes to social media and it's so funny because I just think it's a natural thing for me. Until then, I didn't realize the power of it and the tools that I have with that.

Admittedly, Rachel did not anticipate that the page would be the first of its kind on the Instagram scene. Her account has reached, at its highest peak, a maximum of 111K followers. On average, the page analytics show a follower breakdown of 87% women and 13% men with a target age range for both groups between 25–34 years old (49%), 35–44 years old (25%), 18–24 years old (12%), and 45–54 years old (10%). Since the inception of her page, she has posted more than 1400 times, hosted 47+ recorded interviews, and her content has been shared, viewed, and reposted enough times to be considered viral.

Though the page is anchored in humor, Rachel has taken careful and strategic measures to help it become something that is both valuable and meaningful for the community. Guided by her life mission/objective to build community and spread joy, Rachel slowly began introducing herself to



her Instagram audience. In conversation, she reflected that it was important for her to show them that there's an actual person on the other side of this page — someone who cares deeply and is incredibly passionate about the larger social issues that affect members outside the gym. As I've presented elsewhere (Ruiz, 2021) — Rachel strives to be authentic in representing her true self, including her beliefs and what she stands for; as such, her work as an everyday-entrepreneur is hinged on the issue of visibility in digital spaces. Discussing the different considerations she takes when posting to her memes page, she mentioned a code of ethics by which the page runs that allows her to dismantle (or at least confront) social issues like racism and sexism using the available means at her disposal. The first step in the process is acknowledging how privileged she is to have a voice and platform people listen to. In our conversations together, she shared some things she constantly thinks about:

I want to be as inclusive as possible, and so I try to make sure to include people of every background. I'm constantly looking at my grid and thinking, 'are there too many white people?' — That's my first thought every time. I never think 'are there too many people of color?' because there's no such thing in my mind. I try really hard to have a diverse group of people that I showcase because I think it's important to learn from other people who are different from us.

To this end, Rachel makes sure the members of the Orangetheory community benefit from the memes page beyond just a quick laugh about the day's workout template; Rachel continuously boosts other content creators within the OTF community online. Many of these pages belong to Black people and people of color; an overwhelming majority belong to women and everything that is shared aligns with the focus of the @Orangetheorymemes community.

Rachel is more than an influencer because her entrepreneurial model is not profit driven; additionally, she does not have future plans to monetize her current success with the OTF memes page. Influencers are “everyday, ordinary Internet users who accumulate a large following on social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces, and monetize their following [with] ‘advertorials’ on social media posts” Abidin (2014) informs. And, it's worth noting, that the time and attention Rachel dedicates to the Instagram page is of her own volition because the company does not pay or sponsor her work. During our conversations together Rachel mentioned that she

has been invited to visit headquarters and she was introduced to their head of social media, but their professional relationship did not ever evolve past that.

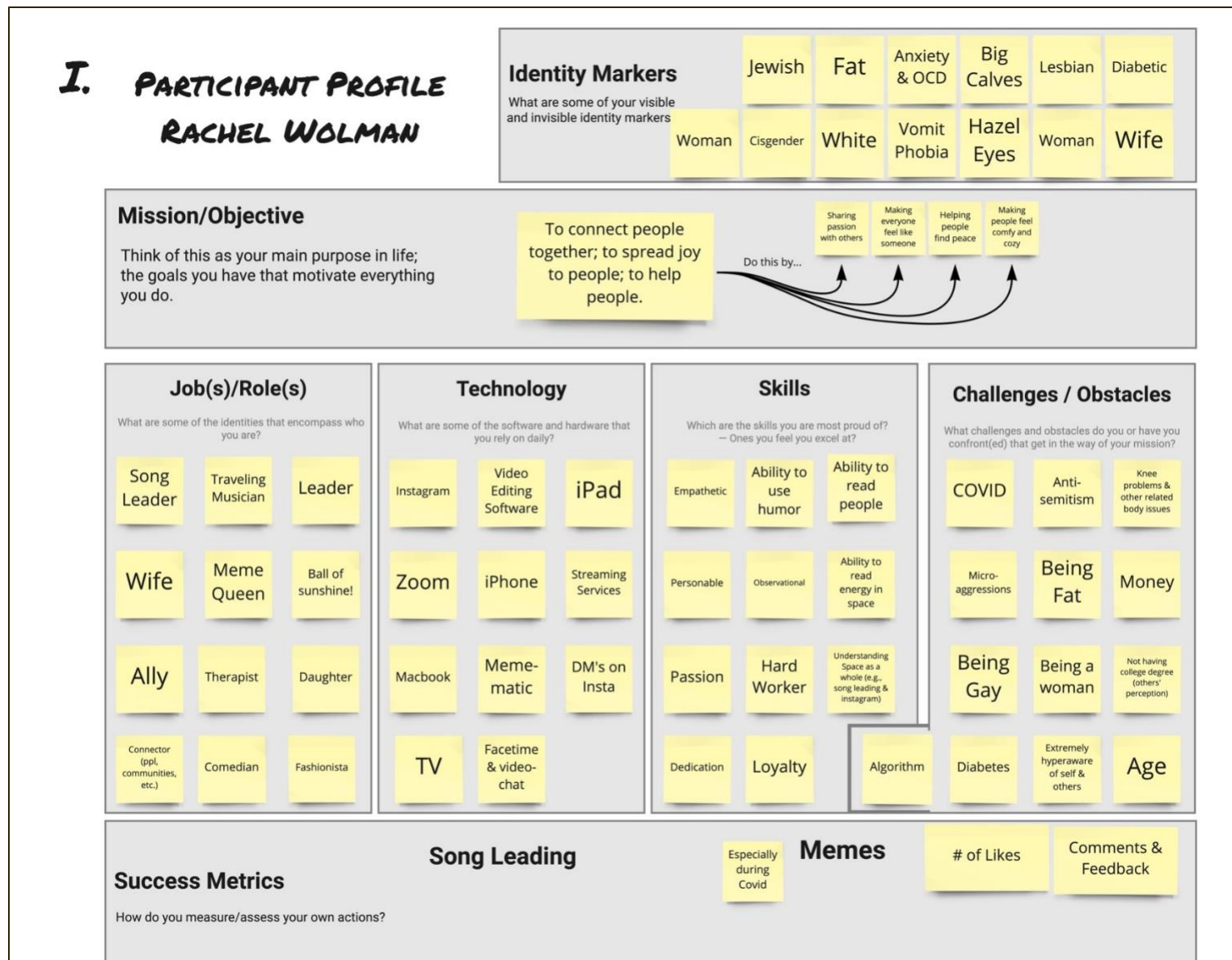
What sets her work apart from others in this space is her ability to totally transform and subvert the expectations for just how much an Instagram page can do. In truth, Rachel has carved a route for herself and others that demonstrates ways to move beyond a roll-out of superficial content. The journey has not been easy. Rachel reflected, “I have gotten my ass handed to me on that memes page, multiple times. I’m pretty good at [dealing with it] now, but I have [had to] experience a lot, a lot of challenges. It destroys me sometimes.” Negotiating a sense of community and belonging in digital spaces like Instagram is tough territory to navigate, but it is absolutely necessary to bring this forth as a social reality. In support Willcox and Hickey-Moody (2020) argue, “community can be produced by more-than-human assemblages and argue that a more nuanced account of digital community making which accounts for live Instagram intra-action is needed.” This much is reflected in Rachel’s work in that she curates the page as an assemblage of resources for the OTF community at large.

In sum, Rachel has created a space where @Orangetheorymemes page users can laugh and engage with each other; find informative interviews with coaches about specific topics; support social movements like BLM and LGBTQ Pride; utilize holiday gift guides that spotlight OTF member-owned businesses; discover other promoted OTF-adjacent Instagram accounts/media; raise donation funds for various causes; and interact with Rachel personally via live sessions, static polls, and direct messages.

Rachel shared that her definition of success is something that has shifted over time. “It’s hard for me to pinpoint it, I think, because the media has always dictated that success revolves around money,” she shared. Elaborating further, she added “Fundamentally, I know that it’s more than that...but it’s hard to put words around it. The memes page is not my career, it’s a passion project but it makes me immensely happy.” The validation that fellow OTF members provide when they comment on her content is a big deal. Rachel went on to mention, “My favorite comments that never fail to make me smile are: *how are you in my brain, were you there?*; or, *this was literally*

*me today*; sometimes it's in the realm of a compliment like *this is brilliant!*” Creating that point of shared identification via relatable content brings her the most joy.

In this case study vignette, *techné* reveals entrepreneurial citizenship at work in an online, global setting. Rachel's efforts to build community and spread joy extend across the globe in the OTF niche. Using *techné* as a framework for analyzing Rachel's work reveals how her case study stands mirrors Dr. Ramirez and Carina's — each of the participants used their available means to transform the conflict(s) of social disharmonies into opportunities where entrepreneurial citizenship was asserted to attend to various social issues. In Rachel's case, more specifically, *techné* provided a schema for reframing conversations about content creation into talks of strategy, rhetorical situation, soft skills, and the like. Additionally, *techné* as a process of production/making helped Rachel overcome the challenges imposed by certain learning disabilities as she articulated her thoughts in the tactile approaches offered by the cube heuristic and mapping exercises.



**Figure 21** Rachel's Participant Profile Map

## II. COMMUNITIES + DOMAINS

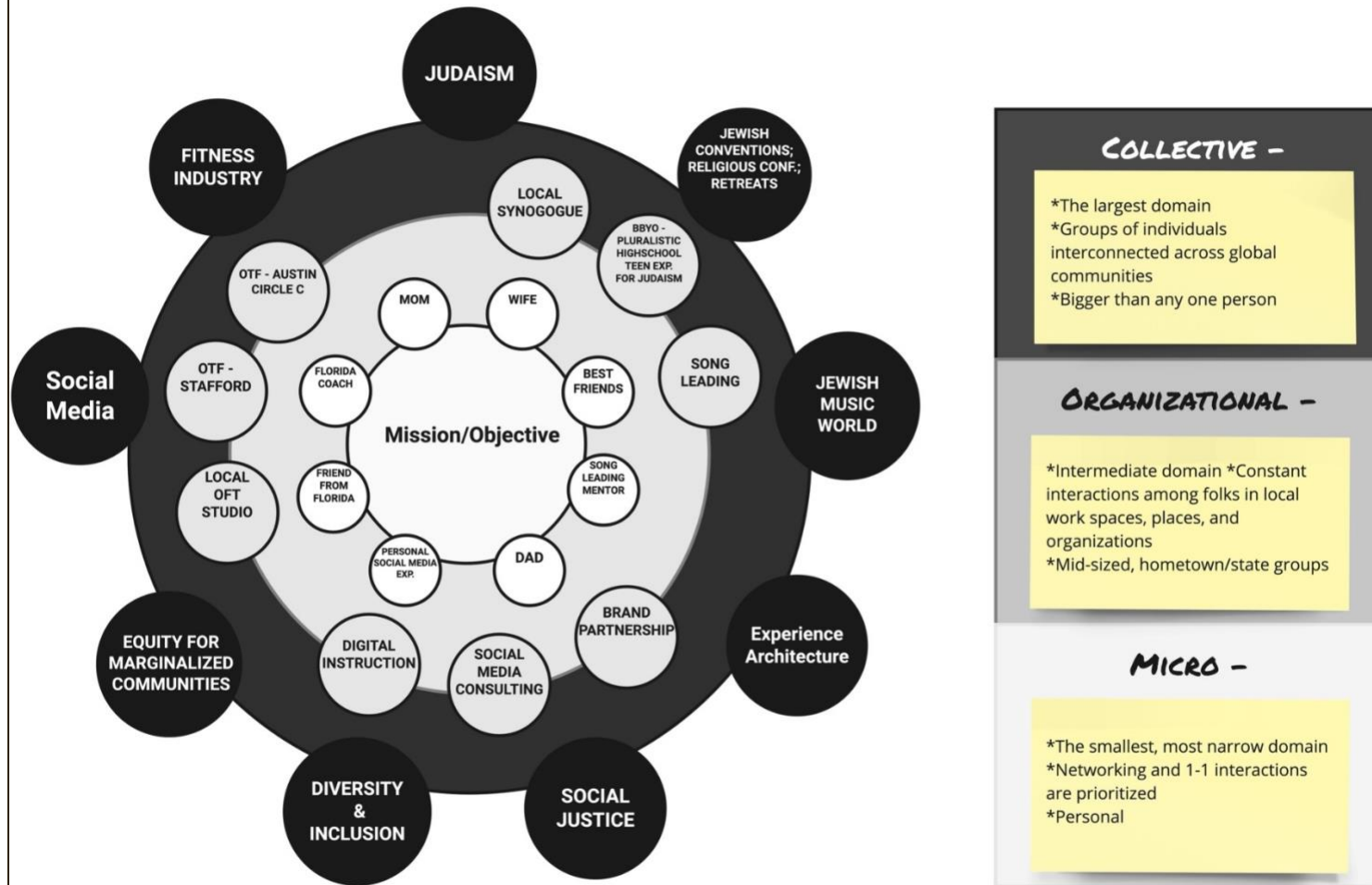


Figure 22 Rachel's Communities & Domains Map

### III. ENTREPRENEURIAL CITIZENSHIP

The ways participants enact entrepreneurial behavior(s) contribute to world-building and history-making for each of the communities they belong to.

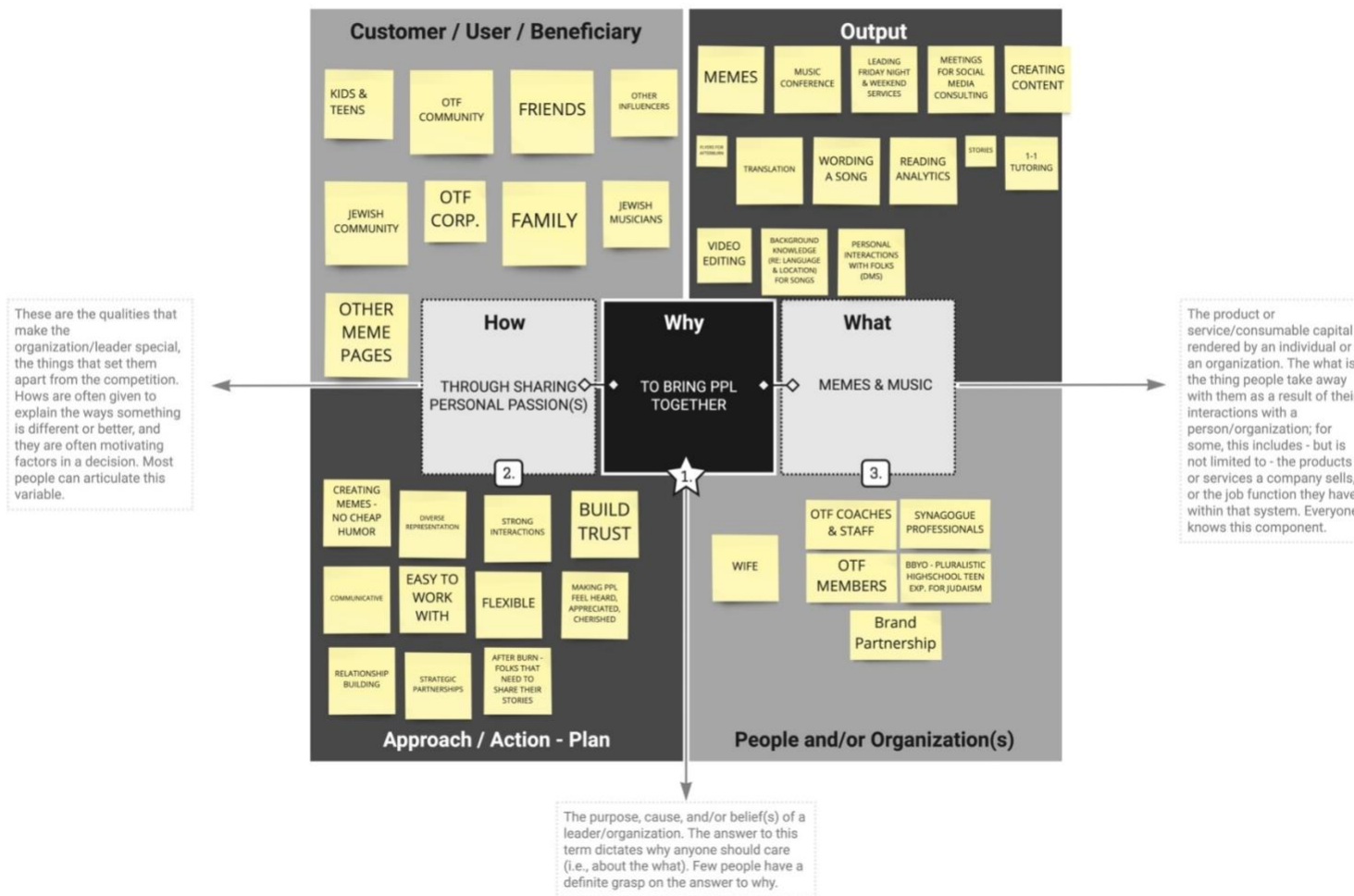


Figure 23 Rachel's Entrepreneurial Citizenship Map

Tracing Rachel's identity across these maps reveals a few points worth addressing. For one, it's easy to identify some of the different 'sectors' of her life as they are divided across her religious and fitness affiliations. I found map two to be particularly interesting, here we can see three clear divisions in Rachel's communities; she's got connections across her Jewish faith, within and across Orangetheory and the fitness community, as well as groups online. One limitation of presenting the maps in static form like this, though, is our inability to clearly articulate where these communities overlap. Additionally, map three in general — but specifically the top right quadrant — uncovers different processes of making and innovation that Rachel produces in her work.

In closing, the *techné* that resonates within Rachel's work on a daily-basis, shows a firsthand account of how everyday-entrepreneurship maintains relevance for Carnegie's original proposition for "how to win friends." And, while this vignette spotlights Rachel's founding of a multifunctional Instagram page for a niche specific community, the strategies she has cultivated in order to achieve her mission reveals the many lessons she has learned along the way. To this end, Rachel offers the following advice:

- *Be yourself.*
- *Figure out what you're passionate about and do everything you can to get there, whatever that takes, whatever hard work that is.*
- *Stay committed.*
- *Get out of the mindset of "being done" once you accomplish hard work, because it doesn't ever really stop and there are always opportunities to do and be more.*
- *Stay focused.*
- *Do what makes sense and what feels right for you... not anyone else.*
- *Learn to trust your gut.*

## **Conclusion**

As the case study vignettes have shown, the practice of everyday-entrepreneurship showcases the way this emergent model of entrepreneurship is embodied and put to work in different domains and mundane contexts. The examples offered here are just a small sampling of the many experiences participants shared during each phase of the study. It is worth noting that Carina, Dr.

Ramirez, and Rachel each collectively consider the rhetorical impact that relationships, community, and soft skills have on the communities that benefit from their overall mission/objectives. Their journeys towards making strides to rectifying social disharmonies position them as experience architects insofar as their strategies and interpersonal interactions enable them to build rhetorical ecologies that bring together the key elements of *techné* — time, circumstance, experience, the contingencies of human interaction, and situational potential for realizing change(s). In Dr. Ramirez’s example, for instance, the student body was placed at the forefront of her approach towards restructuring and rebranding the enrollment and recruitment procedures because, as she explained, they are the prime beneficiaries of her work. Over the years, she has had to collect data on students for recruitment and retention purposes, as well as guide huge groups of administrators through the acquisition and implementation of new behavior records management software. Likewise, Carina has found herself having to pivot toward the use of technology — not just for marketing purposes, but also for programming — to accommodate for the challenges brought on by the pandemic. And, for Rachel, technology and social media are instrumental for both the memes page and her work with global constituents of the Jewish community. Together, these case study vignettes demonstrate that identity is inseparable from *techné* because both are artful processes of production which rely on the rhetorical nature of disclosing, integral components of everyday-entrepreneurship.

Across each illustration of the practice of everyday-entrepreneurship technology, collaboration, and leadership play a crucial role in the success of disclosing new possibilities that transform the social disharmonies in place. This was a consistent qualitative and quantitative finding for this study; as you may recall, the key category of boundary crossing posed the only empirical outlier where the minor codes — work-life balance and culture — cropped up as a potential anomaly (see Table 8). Though it was not discussed in significant detail here, the empirical findings were consistent with both Carina and Dr. Ramirez but not so much with Rachel. Put another way, work-life balance is less of a struggle for Rachel because the work showcased here is not directly related to her career, per say. To reiterate, further development of this work should seek to explore this anomaly in closer detail.



Additionally, on a meta-theoretical level *techné* makes known the ways everyday-entrepreneurs harness the available means at their disposal that help them execute actions and tasks pertaining to their overall life mission/objective. Furthermore, I relied on *techné* as a framework for analyzing these vignettes because of the flexibility that it offers. *Techné* presents a malleable hinge for multiple levels of analysis. As it pertains to entrepreneurial identity, *techné* exposes the way cross-contextual knowledge enables boundary crossing that facilitates innovation. The case study vignettes highlight how Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel each approach situations that call on skills and knowledge acquired outside their roles as director, vice president, and song leader/memes page founder. Reframing entrepreneurial identity to include everyday-entrepreneurs creates space for scholars to rhetorically analyze the impact that disclosing new worlds has in its fundamental address of social disharmonies. Using *techné* as a frame for doing this work reinforces the ways in which this new model of entrepreneurship unveils a mode of being-in-the-world-with-others that is innovative and philanthropic *because* it is specifically focused on an embrace of the dignity and diversity of humanity. As Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel show, the work of everyday-entrepreneurship insists on diversity and inclusion, advocates for equity, and it prioritizes collaboration through communities of practice.

This project calls on the available means at its disposal, and in some ways it operates on its own meta theoretical level as well. My work is representative of everyday-entrepreneurship insofar as I have identified a specific issue (i.e., a growth area for the field) and responded to it in a new and innovative way (i.e., methods/methodology) that will (hopefully) open up the social possibility for future work like this to be done and accepted. *Techné* highlights that what these case studies disclose is the opportunity for new social possibilities — a context where transdisciplinary points of view reveal and bring forth new voices and ideas to a conversation that spans back as far as the inception of entrepreneurship as a discipline. Positioned in the intersections of identity studies, rhetorical theory, experience architecture, and entrepreneurship my project creates a space for a conversation about what it means to be entrepreneurial in day-to-day situations. Ultimately, I contend that this specific rhetorical theory helps scholars better understand entrepreneurial identity and the value in diversifying the term across mundane contexts insofar as it [i.e., *techné*] functions as a non-instrumental mode of bringing-forth and/or creates new social possibilities — per Pender's (2011) designation.

I have proposed a new way of examining entrepreneurial identity, which I explain is best understood as a spectrum that encompasses a series of overlapping domains that create feedback loops for the individual. With and through these case studies, I have demonstrated that in these spaces where domains overlap entrepreneurial citizenship is revealed — a term I present in this work as the many ways everyday-entrepreneurs contribute to world-building and history-making for each of the different communities they belong to. In this sense, *techné* functions as a schema that accounts for how everyday-entrepreneurs negotiate and perform entrepreneurial citizenship as they harness the available means at their disposal to create equitable experiences for themselves and their communities. Utilizing *techné* in this way is complementary to an exploration of a transdisciplinary phenomenon like everyday-entrepreneurship. In essence, *techné* offers a more nuanced understanding of entrepreneurial identity insofar as it exposes the way cross-contextual knowledge is applied towards the innovative approaches deployed to address, mitigate, and/or resolve social issues.

Entrepreneurship has a long standing tradition of celebrating only the new products and services that generate profit margins and, more often than not, media coverage only highlights high-profile representations of silicon valley models of entrepreneurship. Consequently, grand narratives of entrepreneurship affect mainstream understandings of everything entrepreneurship entails, the trickle-down effects of which are observable in institutionalized spaces. As Chimamanda Adichie (2014) ardently reminds us, though, “our histories cling to us. We are shaped by where we come from.” The entrepreneurship discourse currently in circulation reflects the constituents that helped build it and as I’ve argued throughout this dissertation, there’s still room to improve that; though some scholars have started the work of broadening these perspectives, people of color and those who are multiply-marginalized do not yet have a seat at the table. These folks, a small portion of whom my study participants represent, are standing just outside of the eco chambers that were built with institutionalized support intentioned on excluding others like them on the superficial basis of not meeting capital oriented criteria. Ultimately, this mixed methods study articulates that lived concrete experiences are the foundation upon which we construct and extend our capacity for thought, which ultimately builds into more abstract concepts (Sousanis, 2015); I argue, and Carina, Dr. Ramirez, and Rachel remind us that we understand the new in terms of the known and narratives are powerful

tools for winning friends, influencing people, starting with why, and architecting liberatory spaces that fundamentally change social possibilities.

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