

Professional discourse and professional identities at cross-purposes: Designer or entrepreneur?

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Abstract: What happens when designer dreams meet business reality? This paper illustrates how a group of professional designers experienced emotional tensions and conflicts of personal and professional identity during an eight-week voluntary course on business and entrepreneurship for the creative professions. The designers' discourse, which revolved around ideals of commitments towards artistic integrity, aesthetics and design, clashed with the hard core discourse of business which highlighted practical concerns relating especially to market considerations and the necessity of adapting designs to existing means of production. Intellectually, the designers agreed on the need to develop business skills to improve their financial situation and enhance their employability. Emotionally, however, their choice of discourse, metaphors and framing strategies reflected a series of professional and personal conflicts and struggles of identity. The study illustrates the oscillating nature of designers' identity negotiations between business and design but offers no one-size-fits-all solution to business training for the creative professions. The data reflect that identity negotiations do not take the form of a linear process in which logic, material concerns and business sense will eventually prevail. To facilitate the potential incorporation of business thinking into the professional identity of designers, the data indicate that business related training targeting the creative professions would benefit from paying increased attention to the influence of professional discourse and sensemaking patterns on the construction of personal and professional selves. The study contributes to communication research on the interrelated fields of discourse and identity in professional contexts in which studies of transient and oscillating professional identities are scarce. This issue is of particular relevance in the present Danish labour market in which the focus on business-related employability dominates educational and academic agendas.

Keywords: Designers, business, professional identity, professional discourse, sensemaking, passion.

1. Introduction

The present study illustrates how conflicts of professional discourse and professional identity emerged as a group of 25 professional Danish designers specializing in jewellery design, fashion design, graphic design, installation art etc. voluntarily participated in an eight-week course on business and entrepreneurship in order to improve their career opportunities and enhance their employability.

The idealistic discourse of art and design clashed with the hard core discourse of business and gave rise to conflicts of identity at both personal and professional levels. Intellectually the designers agreed on the need to develop business skills to improve their financial situation. However, during the course on business and entrepreneurship, the designers' discursive choices and framing strategies reflected emotional experiences of professional and personal conflicts and struggles of identity: "It's a challenge to accept that you have to choose between professional values and business values"; "You need to be true to yourself and to keep your integrity"; "I don't want to accept multiple identities"; "We must stand by our values".

As explicated in the findings, the discourse of the participating designers revealed feelings of being trapped between conflicting and potentially incompatible professional identities. The professional discourse and identity of business and entrepreneurship clashed with integrated designer ideals of artistic integrity and personal authenticity.

2. Method and data

The study is anchored in phenomenology as it is concerned with explicating the participating designers' individual and personal experiences of the voluntary course on business and

entrepreneurship. Due to the complexity and open nature of phenomenology, the question of what constitutes a phenomenological study is debated (Norlyk & Harder 2010). The present study was guided by the methodology of Reflective Lifeworld Research in which the philosophy of phenomenology is mediated to a scientific research approach (Dahlberg et al. 2008). This approach implies the study of the everyday world of experience and aims at describing phenomena as they are lived before adding any theoretical explanations.

A phenomenological approach requires the researcher to strive to bridle all cultural and personal preunderstandings and to constantly reflect critically on the importance of avoiding preconceived notions in order to let the data speak for themselves rather than imposing personal ideas on the material (Dahlberg et al. 2008: 125-130). Critical questions regarding the researcher's role and the inherent danger of limiting alternative interpretations of data constitute a perpetual challenge within a phenomenological approach. The researcher must avoid giving verbal and non-verbal feedback during interviews and must constantly question interpretations of data by asking questions such as "Are other potentially conflicting interpretations possible?"

The descriptive nature of phenomenology and its focus on illuminating individuals' personal experiences of a given phenomenon provide researchers with a "methodology that remains rigorously open to emergent change". (Küpers et al. 2013: 96). Although sparingly applied in research on business and entrepreneurship, phenomenological approaches are increasingly applied in studies of social, professional and organizational arenas ranging from studies of nursing (Norlyk & Harder 2009), studies of the vocational professions (Conklin 2012), and studies of organizational communication and strategic management (Küpers et al. 2013).

2.1. Data

The data consist of researcher's recordings of designers' discourse throughout the course and of interviews with participating designers at the end of the course. At the start of the course, the researcher was introduced as a non-participating recorder of participants' use of discourse, metaphors and framing devices. In order to avoid influencing participants' discursive choices during the course, the researcher's role was explicated as that of a passive observer and recorder of discourse. In combination, the data collected through observation and the data based on the subsequent interviews with participants described below constitute a whole set of data of participants' discursive choices.

Interviews consisted of 12 in-depth interviews with participating designers each lasting between 30 and 45 minutes. Due to the descriptive focus of phenomenology, interviews were based on designers' individual and spontaneous accounts of their experiences. Accordingly, interviews were loosely structured and centred on recording participants' individual experience of the course on business and entrepreneurship. The research questions concerned designers' experience of the course and of the business framework as a potential challenge to their professional identity as designers. Interviews took the form of open questions of a purely descriptive nature inviting participants to reflect on their experience. The opening question was "How did you experience the course on business and entrepreneurship?" The participants were then encouraged to describe concrete situations and experiences, which were subsequently followed by questions of a probing nature such as "what were your thoughts in that particular situation?". Subsequently, interviews were transcribed, read and reread. Bearing in mind the importance of bridling personal preunderstandings, the researcher undertook an analysis which focused on discovering patterns of meanings and their variations as explicated by Dahlberg et al. (2008).

During the process of analysis of the total set of data from observations and interviews the researcher reflected critically on variations of meanings as expressed in the participants' use of discourse, metaphors and framing devices by constantly challenging the interpretation of data and by asking questions regarding alternative interpretations of meaning. Subsequently, a clustering of

meaning took place as presented in the findings of section 5.

3. Theoretical framework

Sections 6 and 7 discuss the findings in a theoretical framework of an interdisciplinary nature involving studies on a) discourse, metaphors and framing, b) studies on identity in a business and organizational context, and c) studies on sensemaking and sensegiving processes in organizations.

Part a bases its understanding of discourse and framing on the works of for example Fairhurst (2011), Lakoff & Johnson (1980), Fiss & Zajac (2006) and Entman (1993) and draws from their studies of discursive choices, framing devices, and preferred metaphors in organizational and societal discourse. Part b refers to research on professional identity as exemplified by Sveningsson and Alvesson (2003), Kirpal (2004), and Ancona (2012) in their studies on definitions and redefinitions of professional identity in changing organizational and societal contexts in which identities are being challenged by new systems of meaning. Part c concerns the sensemaking and sensegiving patterns in organizations and provides the theoretical conceptualization of how identity is perceived and executed in professional settings. This section draws on the conceptual framework of e.g. Weick et al. (2005), Gioia & Chittipeddi (1991), and Whittle et al. (2015). The discussion of sensemaking is based on Weick's definition of sensemaking as "the making of sense" (1995: 4), i.e. a cognitive means that enables individuals to understand, predict and adapt to changes. Sensegiving on the other hand concerns "the ability to shape the way others make sense" (Whittle et al. 2015: 378) involving the strategic communication of an organization's preferred vision and identity (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991).

In combination, the threefold structure of the theoretical framework allows for a deeper understanding of the negotiation of professional identities in transit as the interdisciplinary structure constitutes a multi-layered approach moving from the micro level of professional discourse to the macro levels of professional identity and sensemaking patterns in an organizational and business context as presented in sections 6 and 7.

4. Case and background

The eight-week course on business and entrepreneurship took place in Denmark. The course aimed at facilitating a transition of designer ideas into a context of business and entrepreneurship in order to facilitate career opportunities for professional designers and to improve their employability in a labour market under pressure. From a business point of view, the course was part of a five year project concerning the potential use of design in Danish companies' business models and the integration of design as a competitive advantage. The course was funded by a series of different agents including the European Regional Development Fund, Danish Design Centre, Danish Designers' Cooperation, University of Southern Denmark, local government and other regional platforms concerned with facilitating the use of design in a business or entrepreneurial context. The course was of an experimental nature and did not fall within the framework of a formal academic program. However, participating designers were required to possess a formal design degree or diploma in design. The course was conceptualized and taught by business representatives, established entrepreneurs, representatives of Danish Designers' Cooperation, and professors of entrepreneurship, marketing and design from colleges and universities.

The 25 designers enrolled in the eight-week business course all participated on a voluntary basis. To be admitted, the designers had to present a motivated application explicating their design concept and, upon acceptance, pay a modest fee to take part in the course. Towards the end of the course designers were required to present a professional business plan which was subsequently evaluated by a group of specialists and representatives of the business and entrepreneurial environment. The acceptance of the business plan did not involve formal academic exams, degree or diploma.

5. Findings: four dominant clusters

Based on the total data set four dominant lexical clusters were identified in the designers' discursive choices, metaphors and framing devices. The lexical clusters were based on frequency and patterns of meaning. Described in further detail below, the dominant clusters revolve around the following themes: a) experiences of physical force related to the body; b) experiences of conflicts of identity; c) experiences of the enemy; and d) experiences of entrapment.

Table 1: An overview of clusters

<p><i>Cluster one: experiences of physical force related to the body</i></p> <p><i>Cluster two: experiences of conflicts of identity. Who am I?</i></p> <p><i>Cluster three: stereotypes and experiences of the enemy</i></p> <p><i>Cluster four: experiences of entrapment</i></p>

Table 1 above presents a brief overview of the four dominant clusters in the data. In the following, each cluster is exemplified. Subsequently, sections 6 and 7 discuss the findings in a theoretical framework of discursive choices, patterns of framing, identity negotiations and sensemaking strategies.

5.1. Cluster one: experiences of physical force related to the body

Designers' descriptions of their experiences of the training course in business and entrepreneurship revealed a shared experience of physical force as expressed the choice of metaphors relating physical force to bodily experiences as illustrated in the examples below. On the one hand, physical force was experienced as threatening to the individual's identity as a professional designer. On the other hand, designers also acknowledged the potential dynamics of force in situations which required them to incorporate the role of design entrepreneurs and to perform in an alien business context. The data reveals that participants' shared experience of force is of a concrete and physical nature as illustrated below.

Cluster one reflects discursive expressions of a physical, almost aggressive nature. These expressions are related to experiences of change and of moving away from secure locations (i.e. the designers' workshop) to places of an unknown and potentially dangerous nature (i.e. the business world). "I need to be kicked out of my workshop"; "Somebody has to force me"; "I need to have my backside kicked". On the other hand, the analysis of the designers' discourse also revealed that the negative image of force was complemented by the positive consequences of having been forced. A set of positive sports metaphors reflects designers' acknowledgement of the advantages of having been forced to become a team player. Being a team player enabled them to transcend a purely individual framework and presented new possibilities for professional and personal self-realization: "I need to be part of the team"; "At present I play in my own court yard"; "I've got to play ball". Still, the choice of verbs such as "need to" and "got to" indicates an element of experienced force.

Concrete experiences of force also included designers' experiences of hands-on selling exercises in which the designers were asked to contact potential business partners to present a sales pitch. Many designers protested vehemently as they found these exercises incompatible with their personal and professional identity as designers. Tension was running high. Some designers spontaneously walked out on the training too infuriated to speak, whilst others refused point blank to take part in the sales training activities. Unexpectedly, state of the art mobiles went suddenly dead or sick children had to be immediately attended to.

Applying what he later described as constructive force, the sales instructor insisted that designers had to practice their sales pitch in a real business context. Much to their surprise those designers, who reluctantly took on the challenge, subsequently reported that: "It was actually quite

easy”; “He [the potential business contact] was quite friendly and asked me to call back”; “I’m not afraid any more”. For some fear and anxiety as concerns sales and marketing activities remain a difficult challenge: “Although none of us has had mega-negative experiences [in the contact with potential business partners] fear dominates everything”.

However, looking back on the sales training and their initial reluctance to participate in this basic hands-on business activity, several of the designers subsequently described their forced training as a positive experience of breaking new ground and of transcending boundaries at a personal level.

5.2. *Cluster two: experiences of conflicts of identity. Who am I?*

The analysis of the data illustrates that the concept of professional identity represents a major concern for the designers as their professional identity constitutes a central part of their understanding of self. Personal and professional identities converge into a shared commitment to authenticity and integrity at both professional and personal levels.

The discourse reveals that the course in business and design entrepreneurship was experienced as challenging the designers' professional identity. Could they stay true to their designer identity if they were to incorporate a business identity? Could conflicting and competing identities co-exist? Intellectually, designers acknowledged the need to compromise on personal and professional values to succeed in a business context. Emotionally, however, designers experienced the business and entrepreneurial identity as a direct attack on their personal and professional integrity as reflected in the following statements: “We need to do things our way”; “You need to be true to yourself and to keep your integrity”; “I don’t want to accept multiple identities”; “I *am* these designs”; “My hands speak for me”.

The discourse reflects that the designers' professional identity is based on immaterial values of an aesthetic and intellectual nature connoting concepts such as purity, authenticity, and aesthetics. The analysis of the designers' discourse illustrates that some designers favour a quasi-religious discourse such as “holy calling” and “sacred creative powers” when characterizing designer identity and core design values. Other characterizations of professional identity reflected a discourse revolving around a set of immaterial qualities such as imagination, poetry, reflection, innovation and play emphasizing designers' obligation and ability to think outside the box and to respect aesthetic demands: “As a designer you create things that don't yet exist”; “I want to please the eye and to create 'eye pleasure”.

The problems of juggling and balancing conflicting professional identities, i. e. the artistic and creative demands of design versus the hard-core demands of business, are likewise reflected in the designers' discourse throughout the course. Key business values and key business terms such as production, standardization, costs, finance, logistics, marketing and sales etc. do not possess the emotional appeal of core designer values as described above: “By nature I tend to forget the stuff that doesn't interest me”; “Budgets, cash flow, business plans ... not particularly interesting... On the other hand [knowing about it] might save me trouble later on”.

5.3. *Cluster three: stereotypes and experiences of the enemy*

The discourse and metaphors found in the data reveal a set of deeply rooted stereotypes in relation to both business and design. Stereotypes, pre-understandings and preconceived opinions of the business world characterize designers' discourse. Representatives of especially sales and marketing stand out as stereotypical images of the enemy. Discursive choices and metaphors reveal that, for several designers, caricature representations of the sales man represent their ultimate image of the enemy: “Sales?”; “Sales man?”; “Hell, no!”.

For the designers participating in the course the stereotypical caricature of the sales man represented the number one enemy. The negative and very emotional reactions to sales activities

and designers' negative framing of the sales man are characteristic of the discursive choices and metaphors reflected in the main part of data. Sales men are characterized as being notoriously unreliable, superficial, and hyper materialistic. They possess no understanding of immaterial values and are oblivious to the importance of aesthetics and design. This is reflected in discursive references to sales representatives as "smarmy, second hand car dealers" and "sleek, big city guys". Other examples of enemy images and stereotypes of the business world are reflected in designers' discursive choices when describing banking and finance. As the course requires designers to present a concrete business plan for potentially setting up in business, an ongoing dialogue with representatives of banking and finance constitutes an essential part of the designers' training in business and entrepreneurship. Again professional identities clash. In the designers' discourse this clash is reflected in descriptions of accountants and financial advisors as "spread sheets in suits", "hard-core business guys" and "personified versions of Excel".

However, towards the end of the business course, references to business-related stereotypes and images of the enemy become less frequent. Although the designers' discourse still reflects the conflict between professional designer identity and professional business identity, the discourse also provides examples of an increasing intellectual understanding and acceptance of the importance of the business aspect: "My designs... Well, it *is* business... After all, I'm making *money*".

Still the integration of design and business constitutes an emotional and moral challenge and many designers find it hard to incorporate the intellectual understanding of business demands into their personal and professional identity: "Sometimes I really do see myself as being a part of the business world... I think I can learn the ropes... But then, later, when they [course instructors] talk about different types of costs and budgeting ... hard core business... Then I feel disheartened. Am I a part of this? Can I do it? After all, you need to stay true to your core values".

Towards the end of the course on business and entrepreneurship a smaller group of designers openly acknowledge the usefulness of being able to perform successfully in a business context as reflected in the following statement: "I don't want to be considered a naïve designer"; "I want to be in control".

5.4. Cluster four: experiences of entrapment

The last cluster in the data revolves around the participating designers' experiences of loss of freedom and feelings of being trapped in the potential transformation process from designer to design entrepreneur. The free spirit of the designer is confronted with the structured framework of business thinking which designers experience as rigid and alien: "I'm afraid of being stuck into a box".

Gradually, however, the discourse of some designers reflects a growing awareness and acceptance of the necessity of being able to navigate in business waters. For several participants, the initial experience of being caught in a sea of restrictive systems and inflexible boxes gradually seems to have given way to a more balanced view in which both worlds potentially may coexist in an uneasy symbiosis characterized by sudden flashes of existential fear and self-doubt.

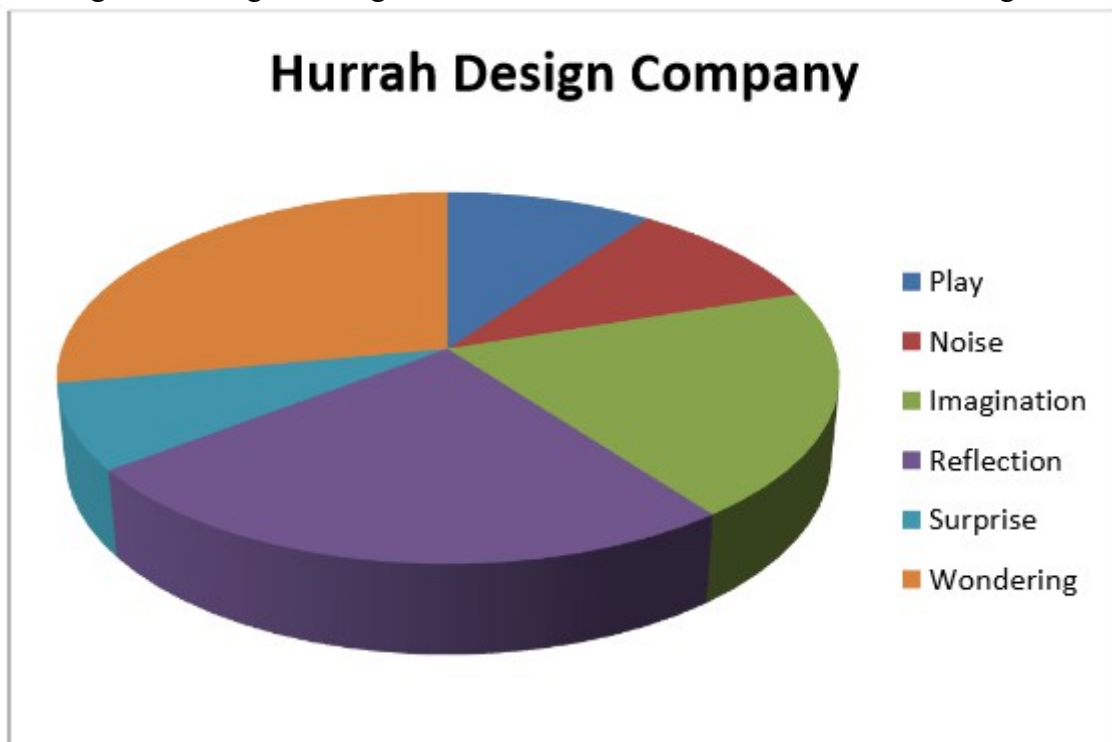
On the one hand, the participating designers fear that they risk losing their identity as designers if they incorporate entrepreneurial thinking and business values into their understanding of self. On the other hand, refusing to accept business and entrepreneurial thinking, may lead to a life of non-recognition, waste of talent and a constant struggle to survive financially. Discursive choices illustrated that the maximization of potential profit is not an issue for the participating designers. Instead, the driving force is primarily rooted in a personal and professional ambition to achieve professional recognition and to be acknowledged as a unique designer. Motivation is about name and fame rather than fame and fortune: "I just want to be able to make a living ... my dream is not to become a millionaire... I just want to survive"; "What I really want is for my *name* to be recognized".

The designers' initial fears of losing their creativity and their artistic freedom in the context of business models, production plans, taxes and logistics are reflected in statements such as “I'm afraid of being stuck into a box”; “Those boxes full of business models ... that was some roller coaster ride”. However, during the final stages of the course, the discourse of some designers reflects a partial acceptance of the usefulness of being able to think in terms of boxes and systems. Occasionally, the discourse reveals that the concept of boxes and systems may be redesigned to suit individual designer identities: “I might just make round boxes instead of square ones”; “Sometimes it hard to see yourself as a person in boxes... Still ... maybe you can make your own box and change it a little”.

In spite of occasionally feeling powerless and overwhelmed by the demands of the business world, some designers gradually accepted that, in order to establish themselves in a business related context, they needed to “learn the ropes”. Others, however, experienced the business framework as painful, alienating and extremely frustrating: “VAT, business plans, contribution margins, fixed costs, tax allowances, tax reductions ... it's absolutely mind blowing”.

Working on their business plan, a small group of installation artists produced the business diagram below, Figure 1, to illustrate part of their vision for Hurrah Design Company. The diagram exemplifies how designer discourse and designer thinking challenge traditional business representations of structure and order illustrated in visual presentations of tables, statistics, and standard business diagrams.

Figure 1: Designers' tongue-in-cheek version of a traditional business diagram



To explicate the role of designers' discourse, section 6 relates the findings to a theoretical framework of discourse, framing and identity. Subsequently, section 7 discusses the findings in relation to a theoretical framework of sensemaking and sensegiving processes.

6. Discursive choices, framing and negotiations of identity

During the business course, the discourse of the designers reveals a constant negotiation of

identities in which a polyphony of multiple and self-contradicting voices manifest themselves. As reflected in the discourse, the designers' professional and personal identities synthesize into one shared identity which “makes work and identity a dynamic recursive process, each reflecting and shaping the other” (Mize Smith 2013: 132; Kirpal 2004). In this process, the design profession is framed as a personal and professional vocation and designers as having quasi-religious commitments as concerns art, aesthetics and design. Also, this quasi-religious discourse may implicitly serve to establish a framework of supreme leadership and divine authority (Fairhurst 2011; Alvesson 2011).

However, a growing intellectual realization of the necessity of incorporating a business identity into the synergized version of personal and professional identity sporadically manifests itself in the group of designers. As explicated in 5.1 on experiences of physical force, the discourse reveals that the negotiation process of potentially incorporating a business identity is experienced as painful by many of the designers. “I need to be forced”; “I need to have my backside kicked”; “I realize the problem but I don't want to embrace a business identity”.

The discursive and metaphorical choices reflected in the findings illustrate how the designers used negative framing in order to uphold their personal and professional identities as professional designers in order to morally justify their resistance towards incorporating a business identity. The findings illustrate how the strategy of negative framing is used to highlight certain “aspects of perceived reality [...] in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman 1993: 55). Through metaphors and suggestive framing of accountants and financial advisors as “spread sheets in suits” and “personified versions of Excel” and of sales representatives as “smarmy second hand car dealers” and “hard-core business guys”, the designers established negative framing of the business world (Fairhurst 2011; Holmgren 2012; Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

The discursive choices and the dominant negative frames affect how business activities and entrepreneurship are perceived and categorized by the designers participating in the course. The framing of a specific situation or act determines positive or negative categorization and prevents other interpretations of a situation as “frames can become so taken for granted that it is hard for people to 'see' or 'do' differently” (Whittle et al. 2015: 378). The data gathered over eight weeks demonstrate that individual and professional identities are continually negotiated and re-negotiated according to time and context. The business world is framed and reframed according to the dynamics of individual identity negotiations which potentially enable the individual to act in unfamiliar and unknown scenarios (Ancona 2012). Although designers' discourse overall demonstrates a growing intellectual understanding of the advantages of incorporating a business identity into a designer identity, this process is not of a linear nature moving from initial non-acceptance to a final state of acceptance. For most designers the negotiations of identity was of an oscillating nature moving back and forward between opposing points of view and opposing discourses of business reality and designer ideals.

The four clusters exemplify different elements of conflict in identity construction and identity negotiation. Taking as a starting point that the concept of identity is socially constructed and hence context dependent, a discussion of identity must take into account the dynamic aspects of the concept of identity. Identity is related to context as “different identities may be drawn on in various contexts, and each identity may embody particular ways of talking and interacting that are desired, necessary, or appropriate for the situation” (Mize Smith 2013: 130). A similar observation is made by Kirpal (2004) who points out that identity work involves an ongoing and dynamic interplay between individual identity and professional identity as reflected in the findings. This interplay constitutes a dynamic and recursive process in which the designers' individual and professional identities are constantly challenged by the demands of a business related identity as reflected in clusters one and three which illustrate experiences of force and enemy stereotypes. Other studies of

designers' identity and professional culture (Jensen 2005; Mishler 1999) support these observations and emphasise that the vocational nature of the design profession constitutes an essential part of designers' professional identity and their sense of being committed to aesthetics and design rather than business oriented concerns for production and market demands.

Designers' professional identity does not concern itself with calculations of return on investment. Instead, professional and personal identities synergize into a “search for meaning and identity [...] in which the self [becomes] a project to be developed as it intertwine[s] with one's career” (Fairhurst 2011: 35). During the course on business training the designers experienced conflicting values and beliefs. The overarching theme in the search for identity concerned the individual struggle to provide a coherent and acceptable answer to the question “who am I?” (Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003: 1168; Polkinghorne 1991). Professional identity and work-related activities play a major part in shaping and defining individuals' concept of self as work “provides a means of discovering and creating oneself” (Ciulla 2000: 51; Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003). Professional backgrounds, job functions, and who we work for constitute symbolic expressions and extensions of the self in both in organizational and business contexts as reflected in the data of the present study.

7. Discussion: Sensemaking and sensegiving

The following section discusses the findings in a theoretical framework of sensemaking and sensegiving to illustrate how designers' discourse reflects conflicting and competing sensemaking patterns in their changing narrative of self. In order to define personal and professional selves, individuals use narratives to make sense of their lives, actions and ambitions. Based on the individual's total sum of lived experiences at personal, professional, organizational and societal levels, narratives may be considered “the reflective product of looking back and making sense of stories constructed to make sense of life” (Flory & Iglesias 2010: 116-117).

In this ongoing process of sensemaking, narratives may be “viewed as the cognitive framework that guides an individual in making sense of experiences” (Hawkins & Saleem 2012: 208). These sensemaking efforts constitute a frame for self-understanding, self-justification and personal brand based on experiences of who I am and what I stand for (Hatch & Schultz 2000). As reflected in the designers' discourse and in their experiences of being torn between dream and reality, i.e. the obligation of staying true to core designer values in a world of harsh economic reality, personal and professional selves are under moral and economic pressure. The designers' need for reorientation takes the form of both retrospective and prospective sensemaking and a storytelling of self which is closely related to modes of self-legitimation and moral self-justification in order to defend the individual's present and future actions and points of view (Maclean et al. 2012).

Individuals can and do have contradictory narratives in which values and identity clash. The narratives and sensemaking patterns of organizations and professions may conflict with individual narratives of self and individual sensemaking patterns (Philips 2012; Hawkins & Saleem 2012; Norlyk 2014). The discourse of the designers provides evidence of conflicting and competing sensemaking patterns reflected in statements such as “I realize the problem but I don't want to embrace a business identity”; “Am I a part of this?”; “Can I do it?”; “After all, you need to have a core”; “I *am* my designs”.

However, towards the end of the course, data indicate that some designers demonstrate a budding acceptance of potentially incorporating elements of a business identity: “I don't want to be considered a naïve designer”; “I want to be in control”; “I once took part in a two days' course on entrepreneurship and financing arranged by [an internationally recognized] bank”.

Narratives, framing devices and discursive choices enable individuals to create sensemaking structures in a context characterized by mutually exclusive or conflicting identities as illustrated in

the data. Weick (1995: 4) defines sensemaking as “the making of sense” and argues that sensemaking is a cognitive means that enables individuals to understand, predict and adapt to changes. A similar point, stressing the dynamic and inherent uncertainty related to sensemaking, is made by Ancona, who argues that sensemaking is an ongoing process which concerns individuals' structuring of the unknown in order to come up with “a plausible understanding – a map – of a shifting world” (Ancona 2012: 6).

While sensemaking concerns “the ability to make sense”, sensegiving concerns “the ability to shape the way others make sense” (Whittle et al. 2015: 378) involving the dissemination of approved frames of meanings (Fiss & Zajac 2006). In an organizational context, sensegiving refers to management's articulation of an abstract, strategic vision in order “to promote general organizational acceptance and to facilitate a preferred vision of organizational reality and identity” (Gioia & Chittipeddi 1991: 442). In the present context of encouraging designers to think in a business framework, designers' personal and professional sensemaking processes challenge the opposing sensegiving narrative of business and entrepreneurship communicated in the framework of the training course.

8. Concluding remarks: business, passion and professional identity

In the creative professions, passion and commitment to a higher cause constitute key elements of both individual and professional identity (Mishler 1999). Although the concept of passion is a recognized entrepreneurial driver, passion also constitutes an important part of the identity of elite professionals outside a business framework such as e.g. musicians, athletes, dramatic artists (Murnieks et al. 2014). The experience of passion or – equally important – the lack of passion that designers or entrepreneurs experienced when engaged in a business framework may “affect the degree of importance that individual places on enacting the entrepreneurial identity in the future” (Murnieks et al. 2014: 1600).

The lack of passion when having to operate in a business context is clearly reflected in designers' experiences of physical force, identity conflicts and of being stuck in encumbering boxes in the alien framework of business. In the present study the ongoing negotiations between a designer identity and a business identity did not take the form of a logical, linear sequence in which design identity was gradually replaced by a business identity as the course developed. Rather the negotiation of opposing identities took the shape of a recursive process oscillating between identities.

Designers' professional discourse and professional identity center stage the obligation to stay true to personal and professional ideals of design and aesthetics. Both discourse and identity contain vocational elements and highlight immaterial and moral values such as aesthetic authenticity and the importance of making a difference through unique design as reflected in the discourse describing the designers' experiences of the business world. Personal and professional ambition is related to the recognition of one's name, style and artistic integrity rather than the achievement of commercial success. Consequently, collaborating with the business world or setting up as an entrepreneur involves a series of compromises related to ideals of uniqueness in art and design.

The meeting of business and design involves incorporating changing market demands and a series of business related concerns for market, production and standardization, return on investment, taxation systems as well as banking and finance. As reflected in the designers' discourse and negative framing of these activities, synergizing or incorporating a business identity into a design identity proved a difficult task as many designers experienced these professional identities as potentially incompatible.

The present study contributes to the fields of professional discourse and professional identity by explicating how a group of designers experienced processes of transition and conflicts of identity

when taking part in a course on business and entrepreneurship. Although further research is obviously needed, the present study indicates that, as concerns professional designers, the incorporation of business thinking into the creative professions meets challenges related to professional identity and patterns of sensemaking and sensegiving.

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