

What a way to make a living

A visual approach to the construction of the entrepreneurial identity by Self-Employed Individuals



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ABSTRACT

In current society, more and more individuals choose to become self-employed. In order to understand the implications of this shift, information is needed to develop a better understanding of self-employment transition. In this study, an identity perspective has been adopted as it provided the possibility to gather information on the construction of the entrepreneurial identity by the Self-Employed Individual (SEI), and at the same time contribute to the development of an overarching identity theory. In order to incorporate the visual dimension in meaning construction and gather deeper and different information, a new rigorous visual method based on the Experience Sampling Methodology (ESM) and the Photo-Elicitation Interview (PEI) was developed and implemented to gather in-depth qualitative data. The results show that the SEIs construct the entrepreneurial identity on the basis of an ideal entrepreneurial type, and on a commitment with a specific entrepreneurial group that emphasizes cooperation and the rejection of a commercially oriented suit-culture and. In turn, this entrepreneurial identity is being authenticated by the individuals through their person identity. Moreover, multiple identities are salient in a context where other identities such as a family member, friend or jogger are highly salient as well, suggesting an increased importance for the person identity.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|-------|---|----|
| 1 | List of abbreviations..... | 5 |
| 2 | Introduction..... | 6 |
| 3 | Theoretical framework..... | 9 |
| 3.1 | Why individuals choose to become self-employed..... | 9 |
| 3.2 | An overarching theory of Identity..... | 10 |
| 3.3 | Social Identity Theory versus Identity Theory | 11 |
| 3.3.1 | Distinction one: The bases of social identities and role identities | 12 |
| 3.3.2 | Distinction two: Identity salience | 13 |
| 3.3.3 | Distinction three: Motivational and cognitive consequences | 14 |
| 3.4 | The composition of social, role and person identities..... | 14 |
| 3.5 | Person identity..... | 15 |
| 3.6 | Social identities and role identities in entrepreneurship | 18 |
| 3.7 | Person identity in entrepreneurship..... | 21 |
| 4 | Methodology | 24 |
| 4.1 | Operationalization..... | 26 |
| 4.1.1 | Process of data collection..... | 26 |
| 4.2 | Participant sampling..... | 28 |
| 4.3 | Data analysis | 29 |
| 5 | Results..... | 31 |
| 5.1 | The context of the SEI | 31 |
| 5.1.1 | Cooperation and networks | 31 |
| 5.1.2 | The need to be meaningful..... | 35 |
| 5.1.3 | Future plans..... | 38 |
| 5.2 | The meaning of being an entrepreneur according to the SEIs | 39 |
| 5.2.1 | The ideal entrepreneur | 40 |
| 5.2.2 | The reflection of personal characteristics | 44 |

| | | |
|-------|--|----|
| 5.2.3 | Experienced conflicts | 45 |
| 5.3 | Being an entrepreneur: the visual dimension | 48 |
| 5.3.1 | The role of hobbies in describing “who am I” | 48 |
| 5.3.2 | Representational choices | 49 |
| 5.3.3 | Implementation of the creative process: type of photographs and visual documents | 49 |
| 5.3.4 | Emphasized means and the role of senses in visualization | 50 |
| 6 | Discussion | 51 |
| 6.1 | Construction of the entrepreneurial identity | 51 |
| 6.1.1 | The entrepreneurial identity as a role identity | 52 |
| 6.1.2 | The entrepreneurial identity as a social identity | 53 |
| 6.2 | Authenticating the entrepreneurial identity..... | 55 |
| 6.3 | The salience of identities in the context of SEIs | 56 |
| 6.4 | The contribution of the ESM based Photo-Elicitation research method..... | 57 |
| 6.5 | Limitations and areas of future research | 58 |
| 6.5.1 | Areas of future research | 59 |
| 7 | Conclusions..... | 61 |
| 8 | Bibliography..... | 63 |
| 9 | Appendix 1: feedback session 1: protocol | 71 |
| 10 | Appendix 2: feedback session 2: protocol | 72 |
| 11 | Appendix 3: feedback session 3: protocol | 73 |
| 12 | Appendix 4: feedback session 4: protocol | 74 |
| 13 | Appendix 5: information letter for participants | 75 |
| 14 | Appendix 6: overview translation of sample quotations..... | 76 |

1 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESM: Experience Sampling Methodology

IT: Identity Theory

PEI: Photo-Elicitation Interview

SEI: Self-Employed Individuals

SIT: Social Identity Theory

2 INTRODUCTION

*Workin' 9 to 5, what a way to make a livin'
Barely gettin' by, it's all takin' and no givin'
They just use your mind and they never give you credit
It's enough to drive you crazy if you let it*

- Dolly Parton, 1980

This particular song was chosen because it describes one of the reasons why individuals choose to become a Self-Employed Individual. In recent years, more and more people are starting to work independently, either next to their regular job or completely independent. Currently, 34% of the American workforce are Freelancers (Freelancers Union & Elance-oDesk, 2014). Leighton (2013) claims that in the last decade, there has been a growth of 45% in number of total freelancers in the 27 European states. In the Netherlands, this number is even more mindblowing, counting a 93% rise in number of freelancers. The Freelancers Union and the Elance-oDesk compare this uprising of the freelancer with the Industrial Revolution, as it could cause an economic, cultural and social shift in power, way of living and organizing. As a response to the upcoming European Elections, the European Forum for Independent Professionals has set up a campaign named the European Freelancers Movement 2014 to put the issues experienced by freelancers on the political agenda. This comes as no surprise, freelancers experience a lack of information provision that is focused on their particular situation as they do differ from the Small-Medium sized Enterprises or other private or public ventures on which established institutions are focused (Leighton, 2013). These numbers show the importance of developing a better understanding of the Self-Employed Individual (SEI), as it on the one hand can contribute to a better provision of information for SEIs and on the other hand can help governmental institutions to gain insight into the development of the current economy.

Leighton (2013) suggests that there has been a lack of attention towards freelancers on an academic level as well. This accusation is open to discussion, as scholars have paid much attention to entrepreneurs setting-up and managing their own business, specifically looking into the reasons why and how individuals explore, discover and exploit opportunities (Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). The freelancer sets up and manages a business that is based on the individual. The freelancer can therefore be regarded as a Self-Employed Individual (SEI), a sub-category of the entrepreneur. Even more contradictory to the statement of Leighton,

(2013), scholars have also paid attention to the reasons why individuals transition into self-employment. Aldirch (1999) claims that attitudes and motivations of individuals who are self-employed have been studied extensively at the macro-level, and concurrently, many references can be found in the literature of studies that focused on the factors (partially) explaining the choice to become self-employed (Guerra & Patuelli, 2014).

In recent years Identity Theory (IT) and Social Identity Theory (SIT) are adopted as theoretical lenses to gain a better understanding of why individuals engage in entrepreneurial behavior. Murnieks and Mosakowski (2007) for example found that having a salient entrepreneurial identity influences the individual's entrepreneurial behavior. Entrepreneurship scholars however have mainly adopted either IT that focuses on the entrepreneurial role identity or SIT that focuses on the entrepreneurial social identity, while there has been a call to bridge IT and SIT as the two theories significantly overlap and social and role identities are empirically and analytically difficult to separate (Stets & Burke, 2000).

In an attempt contribute to this overarching theory, there has been a focus on the person identity (Hitlin, 2003) in explaining entrepreneurial behavior. Conger, York and Wry (2012) for example claim that the person identity plays a role in the goals social entrepreneurs set for their organization. Lewis (2013) has shown the role of the person identity in the case of female entrepreneurs in Southern England by focusing on the discourse used in their authenticity driven identity work. There has not been a study however that, in order to contribute to the development of an overarching identity theory, approached the entrepreneurial identity as an overarching identity incorporating role and group aspects. Moreover, IT and SIT have not been used in studying SEIs. Neither has there been a study that looked into the role of the person identity of SEIs and their entrepreneurial behavior. It is suggested that by incorporating aspects of both theories, more information can be provided on the construction of the entrepreneurial identity. In addition, it is expected that the person identity plays an important role for SEIs, as who the person is, plays a role in the shaping of the organization (Conger, York & Wry, 2012). Because the work of the SEI revolves around the individual, the person identity of the SEI is likely to be very important in the development of the organization and in the construction of the entrepreneurial identity.

In addition, studies on the entrepreneurial identity have overlooked the myriad of identities that an entrepreneur has and how the relations among these identities play a role in emotions, social interactions and behavior (Conger, York & Wry, 2012). As the SEI is not restricted to one work place, it is suggested that in a social situation, the SEI experiences multiple highly

salient identities. Thus, applying the two theories IT and SIT in this particular context can bring interesting insights in identity construction processes and in explaining behavior of this particular entrepreneur.

The aim of this study is to contribute in three ways. First, in order to gain a better understanding of economic and societal developments in the future, insights are needed in the entrepreneurial behavior of SEIs and why SEIs choose to become self-employed. By enhancing this understanding, more focused information provision for this group of entrepreneurs can be provided by governmental institutions and the private sector. Because identity is an unexplored area in the case of SEIs, using identity theory as a lens to gain more insight into self-employment transition is regarded as an appropriate choice to contribute to this information gap.

Second, there has been a call to develop an overarching theory of identity (Burke, 2004). As studies in entrepreneurship that focus on identity either adopt IT or SIT, it is expected that information is neglected that can provide a better understanding of how identity influences behavior. Therefore, this study follows Burke (2004) and incorporates an overarching identity approach which includes the social identity, role identity and person identity. It is expected that the situation of SEIs is very suitable to study the composition of different identities as these individuals are expected to work in social situations where multiple identities, next to the entrepreneurial identity are highly salient.

Final, there has been a call to adopt visual research methodologies in organization and management research as it can provide valuable information on meaning construction of individuals (Meyer, Höllerer, Jancsary & Van Leeuwen, 2013). Moreover, it is even suggested that incorporating a visual research strategy can provide an increased understanding of how organizational, professional and person identities are constructed and communicated by individuals. Despite the potential, organizational and management scholars have been reluctant to adopt visual approaches (Ray & Smith, 2012). Choosing a visual research strategy is regarded as highly appropriate in this study as the main focus is identity construction of SEIs. To increase the rigor of this research a new visual research methodology has been developed that is based on the Experience Sampling Methodology (Uy, Foo & Aguinis, 2008) and the framework suggested by Pauwels (2010).

In sum, to gather in-depth information on the construction of the entrepreneurial identity by SEIs and thereby contributing to practice and theory on the three discussed points, the following research question has been developed.

How do Self-Employed Individuals construct the Entrepreneurial Identity?

The structure of the report will be as follows. First, the theoretical framework will be presented in which this study is grounded. Second, the methodology will be illustrated after which the results will be presented. The discussion will go deeper into the findings, the limitations will be discussed and finally, recommendations will be given for areas of future research.

3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Bosma, 2013, p. 10), uses the following occupational oriented definition of entrepreneurship:

“Any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment, a new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business.”

On the basis of this definition, Self-Employed Individuals (SEIs) can be classified as entrepreneurs. The reasons why individuals transfer from employee-based work into self-employment has been an extensive topic of research for over the last 15 to 20 years, and has focused on macro-level, meso- and micro-level factors.

3.1 WHY INDIVIDUALS CHOOSE TO BECOME SELF-EMPLOYED

Self-employment has been studied mostly with agent based models, emphasizing the assessment of expected utility of self-employment compared to the expected utility of wage employment (Baumol, 1990). The greater the reward for the individual when he or she is self-employed, the greater the stimulus is to transition into self-employment. However, Hamilton (2000) has shown that even for individuals who transitioned into self-employment and have lower earnings and growth of earnings, the non-pecuniary benefits resulting out of self-employment influence entering and staying in self-employment. Other studies focused on micro- and meso-level explanations have shown that the increased independence when

deciding to transition into self-employment plays a role in transitioning into self-employment (Evans & Leighton, 1990), previous job satisfaction (Guerra & Patuelli, 2014) and socio-economic features (Giacomin, Janssen, Guyot, & Lohest, 2011). Personality traits have been found to play a role in the self-employment transition as well (Shane, Locke & Collins, 2003). Individuals are more likely to become self-employed and successful when they have a higher need for achievement (Collins, Hanges & Locke, 2004), risk-taking (Corman, Perles & Vancini, 1988) and have a different locus of control (Bowen & Hisrich, 1986). Knörr, Alvarez and Urbano (2013) even found that firm founders differ from others in cultural-cognitive level.

Scholars focused on macro-level have found that several factors influence the transition into self-employment, such as working conditions and wages, market size, stage of economic development, unemployment, social security benefits, pension taxation, business cycle, cultural and institutional aspects (Blanchflower & Oswald, 1998; Blau, 1987; Cullen et al.; Evans & Leighton, 1990; Long, 1982; Ritsilä & Tervo, 2002; Schuetze, 2000; Taylor, 1996; Quinn, 1980). In addition, immigration and urbanization are regarded as important factors in explaining self-employment as well (Blanchflower, 2000; Borjas & Bronars, 1989).

The self-employed individual has thus been studied from several points of view and multiple factors have been found to explain behavior. However, no literature has been found that focuses on the construction of social identity, role identity and person identity processes in the specific context of SEIs. Understanding how SEIs construct the entrepreneurial identity and, specifically, the role within of the person identity within this construction can provide a better understanding of these individuals that choose for self-employment. In order to place this study in the current literature on entrepreneurship and identity, first a clear description will be provided of the concept identity and the two theories SIT and IT that provide the basis for overarching theory development.

3.2 AN OVERARCHING THEORY OF IDENTITY

In this study, an identity theory perspective has been adopted as suggested by Stets and Burke (2000). Burke (2004, p. 5) refers to identities as:

“the sets of meanings people hold for themselves that define “what it means” to be who they are as persons, as role occupants, and as group members.”

In this definition, the author makes a distinction between three forms of identity, which can be referred to as a social identity, role identity and person identity. These identities have originally different theoretical bases, namely Identity Theory (IT) and Social Identity Theory (SIT). Where social identities find their origin in SIT, role identities originate from IT. Person Identities have been described in both SIT and IT but to a lesser extent. There have been calls to bridge the two theories and find common ground for an overarching theory, as the two theories are found to significantly overlap (Burke, 2004; Stets & Burke, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2012). Moreover, it is questioned whether role identities, social identities and person identities can be empirically and analytically separated clearly (Stets & Burke, 2000). To contribute to the development of this overarching theory, the definition of Burke (2004) is followed and serves as a basis for the theoretical framework of this study. First, a description of the central components of SIT and IT will be provided and the three areas in which IT and SIT are found to differ. Second, a description of the person identity will be provided and how it relates to social and role identities. Third, the current entrepreneurship literature in which IT and SIT have been adopted will be illustrated.

3.3 SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY VERSUS IDENTITY THEORY

With a foundation in psychological social psychology (Stets & Burke, 2012), SIT was developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979), to explain 1) group processes, 2) the social self, and 3) intergroup relations (Pearce, 2013). The knowledge that a person belongs to a category or group, leads to the formation of an individual’s social identity (Stets & Burke, 2000). This sense of belonging to a certain social category can influence the sense of who a person is, their so-called self-concept, and their behavior. A person can belong to multiple categories, and this social identity is the source to which thoughts, feelings and behaviors are described to. There are two important processes in SIT: self-categorization and social comparison (Stets & Burke, 2000). Self-categorization refers to the process whereby individuals are able to classify the self in relation to other social categories, whereas social comparison refers to the process whereby others are categorized in line with the individual’s self and are named as in-group. Thus whereas self-categorization refers to the categorization of the self within a group,

social comparison is the recognition of similar individuals and placing them in the same group as the individual.

The concept identity is also approached from a sociological social psychology perspective, resulting in Identity Theory (IT) (Stets & Burke, 2012). Unlike social identities in SIT that focuses on category based (social) identities, identity theory emphasizes role identities (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The process that forms the basis of IT and role identities is, just as according to SIT, categorization, also referred to as identification by Stets and Burke (2000). This categorization is, according to Stryker (1980) dependent upon a classified world, in which the terms that are learned by the individual within a certain culture are symbols, employed to describe positions within the social structure. These positions are called roles. A role identity can be verified in two ways (Stryker & Burke, 2000). When individuals experience conformity between the expectations of themselves and their own personal self-meanings of the identity standard, the individuals will act consistent with their meanings of the identity standards. Second, individuals can experience a discrepancy between their perceived self-meanings of the identity standard and expectations of themselves that are different from the identity standard, and act in such a way to reduce this discrepancy.

Stets and Burke (2000) claim that there are three aspects in which SIT and IT differ: 1) the bases of identity (group versus role); 2) focus points when studying the activation and salience of identities and; 3) the motivational and cognitive foundations of SIT and IT.

3.3.1 Distinction one: The bases of social identities and role identities

The basis of a social identity is the identification with a social category, or group (Stets & Burke, 2000). This identification with a group entails that the same perspectives are shared among group members and their resulting actions. The consequences self-categorization and social comparison is known as the accentuation effect, whereby for self-categorization similarities between the self of the individual with others in the in-group and the differences with the out-group are accentuated, whereas the accentuation-effect for social comparison only happens selectively (Stets & Burke, 2000). This emphasis on the shared perspectives among group members shows the difference with role identities. In contrast with social identities, the basis of a role identity can be found in the differences in perceptions and actions compared to other counter roles (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The process of categorization in IT entails that an individual incorporates meanings and expectations that are associated with a role that is part of the social structure, and categorizes the self as an occupant of the role (Stets & Burke, 2000). The meaning of a role identity is acquired through interaction with others,

and adapted and sustained (Burke, 1980). For example, what it means to be a son or a daughter can only be defined through its relation to the counter roles of mother and father. A role identity thus does not emphasize the uniformity of perceptions and behaviors as in social identities, but the interconnected distinctiveness (Stets & Burke, 2000).

Now that an overview is given of the two bases of a role-based identity and a group-based identity, the next question that arises relates to the activation and verification of an identity in a social situation. Within IT, the activation and verification of an identity is dependent on the salience of an identity, whereas in SIT, a salient identity refers to salience and activation interchangeably. Identity salience is thus the second distinction between the two theories.

3.3.2 Distinction two: Identity salience

The term identity salience is used in both SIT and in IT, but in a different manner. In IT, salience refers to *the likelihood* that an identity will be activated in a situation (Stryker, 1980). The salience of an identity is explained in IT on the basis of commitment to the identity (Stets & Burke, 2000). Commitment is based on a qualitative and quantitative component. The qualitative component refers to the extent an individual is tied to others by an identity. The greater the strength of the tie to others by an identity, the higher the commitment to that identity (Stryker & Serpe, 1982). The quantitative component refers to the amount of people the individual is tied to through that identity. The more people the individual is tied to through the identity, the higher the commitment. And in turn, if the commitment to an identity is high, the more salient the identity becomes.

If more identities are applicable in a situation the most salient identity is most likely to be activated, also referred to as salience hierarchy (Stryker, 1968). When an individual defines the situation in such a way that makes a certain identity more relevant than other identities, it enables the individual to enact that certain identity (Burke & Franzoi, 1988). Whether this identity is enacted and confirmed, however, also depends on others and their enacted identities (Riley & Burke, 1995). Stryker (1980) even suggests that not only the situation and context can activate an identity, but that an identity that is salient can be activated and change the situation at hand.

In contrast, in SIT the term salience refers to *the activation* of an identity in a situation (Stets & Burke, 2000). As a result of the interaction between characteristics of the individual that perceives the situation at hand and the situation itself, an identity becomes salient/activated. Oakes (1987) defines a salient social identity as a process in which an individual works

psychologically to increase the influence on perception and behavior in his or hers group membership. Thus, in SIT the terms activation and salience are used in a similar manner, while in IT salience refers to a probability of activation. In turn, activation refers to the actual implementation of the identity (Stets & Burke, 2000). When a social identity or role identity is activated, different processes take place. These different processes are the third aspect in which SIT and IT differ.

3.3.3 Distinction three: Motivational and cognitive consequences

A result of the activation of a social identity is *depersonalization* (Stets & Burke, 2000). The term refers to the process in which the normative aspects of being a member of the group is perceived in the example, and the individual acts in line with these aspects. Studies have shown mixed results when it comes to the consequences of depersonalization (Stets & Burke, 2000), including maintaining and increasing (collective) self-esteem (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990; Turner et al., 1987). In IT, the central cognitive process is called *self-verification* (Burke, 1991). Self-verification refers to the process when the individual perceives him- or herself in line with the role identity standard, and emphasizes the behaviors shown (Stets & Burke, 2000). It is suggested that the result of a positive self-verification, thus performing a role well, is an increased sense of self-esteem and self-efficacy (Burke & Stets, 1999). Thus, when the role identity is verified successfully feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem are increased, while when a social identity is verified successfully, the individual experiences a higher sense of self-esteem or self-worth (Stryker & Burke, 2000; Stets & Burke, 2012).

3.4 THE COMPOSITION OF SOCIAL, ROLE AND PERSON IDENTITIES

The three discussed aspects provide a clear overview of the differences between the two theories. However, it is questioned to what extent the terms roles and groups as discussed are related and can be clearly separated. Social identities and role identities are not exclusive, and role and social identities can be applicable in the same situation. On an analytic level as well as on an empirical level, it is therefore difficult to separate a role from a group, as an individual always occupies a role and belongs to a group concurrently (Stets & Burke, 2000; Thoits & Virshup, 1997). Therefore, behaviors and perceptions can be related back to role-based identities as well as (social) group-based identities. This difficulty provides the opportunity for the development of an overarching identity theory. It might be suggested that looking deeper into the person identity is a good starting point as it is discussed in both IT and SIT. Stets and Burke (2000) claim however, that the person identity cannot easily be

separated from role and social identities as well. A short explanation of the person identity will be provided next.

3.5 PERSON IDENTITY

In SIT, the person identity is seen as the lowest form of self-categorization as own goals are pursued instead of those of the category or group (Brewer 1991; Hogg & Abrams, 1998). In IT, the person identity is seen as the set of meanings that belong to and sustain the individual self (Stets & Burke, 1995), and is somewhat comparable to the way the person identity is described in SIT (Conger, York & Wry, 2012).

Just as role identities and social identities, person identities share a critical structural and perceptual control function, and provide the structure for self-verification processes and relationships with others (Conger, York & Wry, 2012). In addition, the perceptual control process, as in role identities and social identities, also applies to person identities (Burke, 1991). The perception a person has about him- or herself as a distinctive and unique person are used as the standard for the comparison of their perceptions of relevant events. A person identity is the set of internalized culturally recognized characteristics that make a person perceive him- or herself as unique (Burke & Stets, 2009). According to Hitlin (2003), the person identity has five characteristics as it: 1) involves concepts and beliefs, 2) relates to desired end states or behaviors, 3) is trans-situational, 4) guides the selection and evaluation of behavior and events, and 5) social- and role identities revolve around a core value structure of an individual which forms the basis of an individual's person identity.

According to Conger, York and Wry (2012) and Burke (2004), person identities are different from social and role identities in three ways. First, unlike social and role identities that are subject to change according to the situation, the person identity is trans-situational. Verification of person identities is sought in multiple situations and when the verification of person identity is achieved, it results in feelings of authenticity. Second, person identities are more likely to be favored over other identity types and are most likely more important and salient than other identities because they are shown in more situations to more people. Third, person identities are referred to as master identities as there is the possibility that they provide a standard for the control of multiple identities, by aligning group associations and role commitments (Burke & Stets, 2009; Reid & Deaux, 1996). An overview of the concepts, similarities and differences between social identities, role identities and person identities can be found in table one on the next page.

Table 1: overview similarities and differences of the social identity, role identity and person identity

| | social identity | role identity | person identity |
|--|---|---|---|
| Foundation | psychological social psychology | sociological social psychology | social psychology |
| Explains | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) group processes 2) the social self 3) intergroup relations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) meanings and expectations associated with a role that is part of the social structure 2) the categorization of the self as an occupant of the role 3) intragroup relations | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) involves concepts and beliefs 2) desired end states or behaviors 3) the guidance of selection and evaluation of behavior and events 4) the function as master identity: social- and role identities revolve around a core value structure of an individual which forms the basis of an individual's person identity |
| Bases of identities | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) self-categorization 2) social comparison | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) identification 2) categorization | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) provides a critical structural and perceptual control function 2) provides the structure for self-verification processes and relationships with others |
| Identity salience | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the activation of an identity in a situation ➤ the process in which an individual works psychologically to increase the influence on perception and behavior in his or hers group membership | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the likelihood that an identity will be activated in a situation ➤ the most salient identity is most likely to be activated in situation where multiple identities are applicable ➤ activated identity can shape the situation and vice versa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ more important and salient than other identities ➤ in multiple situations |
| Result verification | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ depersonalization | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ self-verification | |
| Motivational and cognitive consequences | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ uniformity in perceptions and actions among group members ➤ self-esteem ➤ self-worth (who one is) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ differences in perceptions and actions between individuals as roles interact with counter-roles ➤ self-esteem ➤ self-efficacy (what one does) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ feelings of authenticity |

In summation, the bases of social identities and role identities, the use of the term salience and activation, and the consequences of motivational and cognitive processes are regarded as the three main differences between IT and SIT. The person identity differs in turn from role and social identities as it is trans-situational and serves as a master identity. Choosing either SIT or IT to study the entrepreneurial identity or by just focusing on the person identity can omit important aspects. Behavior can be related back to person identities and role identities as well as social identities. Therefore, instead of choosing one of the two identity theories, the entrepreneurial identity in this study is proposed as an overarching entrepreneurial identity that incorporates role, group and personal aspects. However, in order to be able to propose an overarching entrepreneurial identity, two differences between the two theories need to be bridged. This is done as follows.

First, the different bases of the two theories, group processes and roles that are defined through counter roles, are both taken into account in this study. An individual's entrepreneurial identity can incorporate occupying an entrepreneurial role while committing to a group of entrepreneurs. Second, the two theories differ in the definition and use of the term salience. Within SIT activation and salience are both used interchangeably while in IT salience refers to the probability of identity activation. Stets & Burke (2000) argue that both theories concur that the goals and purposes of an individual are important and that an identity has no effect if it is not activated. If the focus is thus on the likelihood that an identity is activated, research need to take into account aspects of both theories. Within this study, the term salience is adopted that is in line with IT, as the probability that an entrepreneurial identity is activated precedes actual activation, and can refer to a group commitment or occupying a role. The third difference, the consequences of the motivational and cognitive processes, is disregarded at this point as this study focuses solely on the construction of the entrepreneurial identity, not on the consequences of identification and verification.

By incorporating aspects from role identities, social identities and the person identity, a more complete overview can be given of the entrepreneurial identity. In the current entrepreneurship literature however, there are no examples of studies that have adopted such an approach. Studies have either focused on IT, SIT or person identities in studying the role of identity in entrepreneurship. An overview of the current literature will be provided next.

3.6 SOCIAL IDENTITIES AND ROLE IDENTITIES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Attempts have been made to incorporate identity verification processes in the entrepreneurial process (Niels & Lassen, 2012), to understand the role of identity in having entrepreneurial intentions and the role of peer groups and parents (Falck, Heblich & Luedemann, 2012), the role of identity in immigrant entrepreneurship (González-González & Bretones, 2013; Ndofor & Priem, 2011) and identity construction in a less stable work-life context (Lindgren & Wåhlin, 2001). Down and Reveley (2004) have shown with their ethnographic study on small firm owner-managers in the UK, that entrepreneurial identities are formed and shaped by daily work interactions and by the external discourse that is adopted and used by the individuals. These generational encounters contributed to the development of two entrepreneurial groups, the younger and older generation.

Murnieks, Mosakowski and Cardon (2012) looked into the role of entrepreneurial passion and identity in performing entrepreneurial behavior. On the basis of conducted surveys, the authors studied whether the centrality and salience of the entrepreneurial identity influences the passion of entrepreneurs, and in turn entrepreneurial behavior directly as well as indirectly through the degree of entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Significant relationships were found between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial self-efficacy, and entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurial behavior. The authors conclude on the basis of structural equation modeling that entrepreneurial identities and passion drive behavior of entrepreneurs. The more central the entrepreneurial identity is to entrepreneurs and how important they feel being an entrepreneur, the higher levels of passion are shown. In a slightly older study, Murnieks and Mosakowski (2007) adopted IT as a theoretical lens to look deeper into the entrepreneurial identity and argue that individuals that act as an entrepreneur have a salient entrepreneurial identity. Based on the results of two separate studies, the authors come to the conclusion that an individual that has multiple identities next to the entrepreneurial identity has a better ability to regulate attributed affect that stems from self-verification, and that this regulation can result in more positive outcomes for the entrepreneurial activities. This would mean that the more identities the individual has in the salience hierarchy, the more positive results it has on the entrepreneurial process.

The extent to which the entrepreneurial identity is salient thus influences entrepreneurial behavior. Jain, George and Maltarich (2009) focused on the role identity of academic entrepreneurs. The aim of the study was to gather in-depth information about the reasons why academic scientists are willing to adapt their “academic” role identity by participating in commercialization activities. On the basis of qualitative interviews the authors propose that scientists that are involved in commercialization activities apply rationales that are coherent with their academic role identity and, as a result, develop a hybrid identity consisting of an academic self and a secondary commercial persona. This focus on a shift in identity is where Hoang and Gimeno (2010) concentrated on. From a role identity perspective, the authors have proposed a new model that focuses on firm founders. Individuals who shift from employee-based work to setting-up their own organizations have to transition into a new role. The authors claim that two dimensions of this founding role identity, complexity and centrality, affect the success of this transition. As the new role identity that the founder adopts is novel and can conflict with other role identities, it may affect the success of the role transition. The more an individual perceives the founder role as complex and consisting of multiple aspects, the less the individual is affected when he or she receives negative feedback on an aspect of the enacted founder role. Thus, when the founder role is less complex and the individual receives negative feedback, the authors suggest that this negative feedback has more impact on the success of the role transition. In turn, the more the founding role is central for the individual, the less the role transition is affected by role novelty and role conflict. On the basis of the developed model, the authors provided a set of propositions that need to be tested in order to empirically state if what they claim is the case. Farmer, Yao and Kung-McIntyre (2009) support the arguments of Hoang and Gimeno (2010) about the importance of the perceptions that new founders have about the entrepreneurial role when a better understanding is desired about the link between identity and entrepreneurial action.

In their own study, Farmer, Yao and Kung-McIntyre (2009) also take a closer look at entrepreneurial action, and have developed a model that describes how entrepreneurial aspiration is turned into engagement in opportunity discovery and exploitation. The authors hypothesize that the perceptions of entrepreneurial role characteristics and self-perceived characteristics of the entrepreneur would be positively related to the strength of entrepreneurial identity aspiration. They also hypothesize that this strength of entrepreneur identity aspiration is positively related to nascent entrepreneurial behaviors. Lastly Farmer et al. (2009) hypothesize that prior start-up experience would moderate the relationship between

entrepreneur identity aspiration and nascent entrepreneurial behaviors. The authors conclude that a desired identity of a person to be an entrepreneur can have strong effects on the entrepreneurial activity shown by the individual. More specific, they claim that this shows most strongly during the start-up phase.

Thus, the way individuals perceive the entrepreneurial identity might influence the shift from being an employee to setting up their own organization. The aspiration to become an SEI would positively influence self-employment transition, and prior-start-up experience would moderate the relationship.

The suggestions of Farmer et al. (2009) and Hoang and Gimeno (2010) concur with what Fauchart and Gruber (2011) refer to as the imprinting of the organization with the self-concepts of founders. The authors state that entrepreneurs imprint their organizations with their self-concepts through the strategic decisions they make. Fauchart and Gruber (2011) propose on the basis of a qualitative study in the sports equipment related industry a framework of different founder identity types, namely the Darwinian, Communitarian and Missionary founder identity. Fauchart and Gruber also suggest that hybrid founder identities are possible.

All the discussed articles adopted an SIT or IT perspective and provide some interesting insights in explaining entrepreneurial behavior. Even though Hoang and Gimeno (2010) as well as Fauchart and Gruber (2011) speak of the founder identity and while Farmer, Yao and Kung-McIntyre (2009) speak of entrepreneurial intentions, their suggestions can be taken into account when looking at SEIs. Becoming self-employed means individuals transition from an employee role, into a founding role. However, this founding role might be different from the founding role as suggested by Hoang and Gimeno (2010) and Fauchart and Gruber (2011) as the focus of these entrepreneurs is working independently. In addition, what does it mean to have entrepreneurial intentions in the context of the SEI? How do SEIs construct the entrepreneurial identity and how is this reflected in the organizational decisions they make?

By solely focusing on the founder role identity, entrepreneurial role identity or the entrepreneurial social identity, scholars might miss aspects that are important in understanding entrepreneurial behavior. Moreover, the studies addressed do not take into account the person identities of entrepreneurs, how it affects entrepreneurial aspiration or role transitions and the effects of person identities of entrepreneurs. Deaux (1992) is one of the scholars that, even though she did not focus on entrepreneurs and person identity, attempted

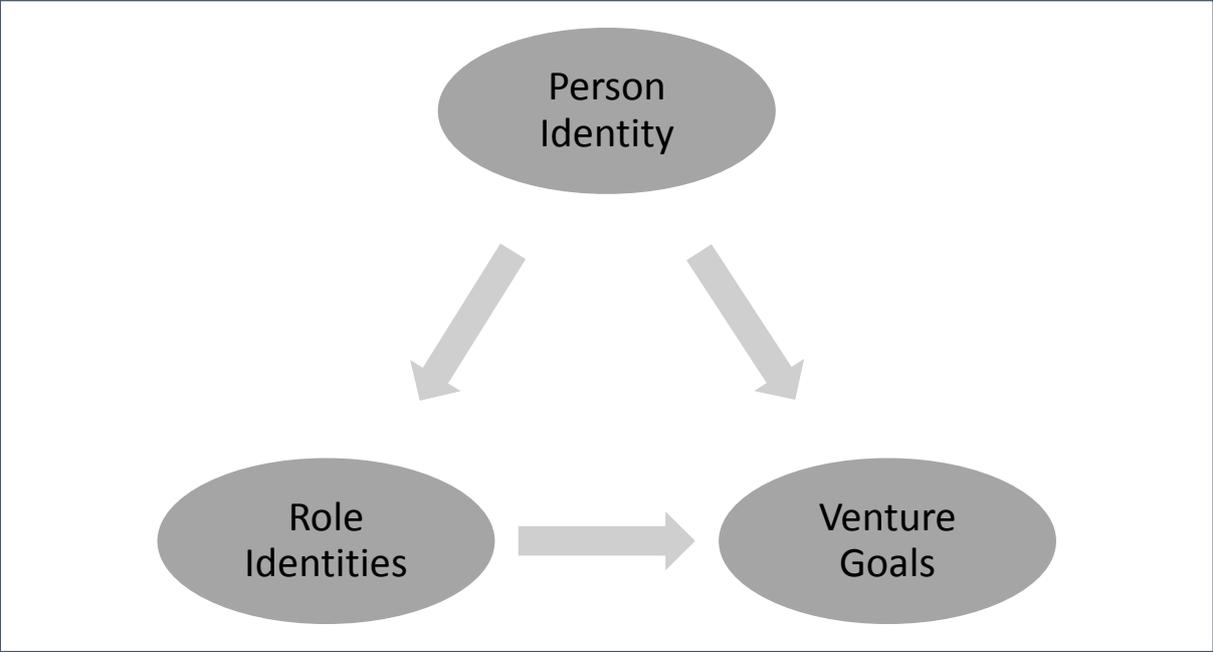
to bridge social identities and the person identity. She indicates that while social identities are expressed along normative lines, there is an aspect of social identities that may be expressed along personal, idiosyncratic lines. Thus, personal identities may be linked to social identities by creating new ways of expressing one's membership in groups. Within entrepreneurship research however, few studies have attempted to gain a better understanding of how social role and person identities are linked.

3.7 PERSON IDENTITY IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

One study that touches upon the subject of being a part of a social group as an entrepreneur but expressing the membership in this group in a distinctive way is the research of Navis and Glynn (2011). The authors have developed a set of propositions about how the entrepreneurial identity plays a role in the judgments of investors in venture plausibility. The authors propose that the constellations of claims that entrepreneurs make about their business are used as a benchmark for judgments that are made by the investors about the plausibility of the venture. These judgments would be in turn influenced by identity narratives presented by the entrepreneurs, and market context. The authors also propose that when the constellation is perceived as legitimately distinctive, the judgments of investors would be positive. The challenge for the entrepreneurs, the authors describe, is the balance that is needed between being distinctive from others, and still be regarded as legitimate. When the entrepreneur is able to find this balance, it could partially influence the investors' judgment and thus indirectly the ease of resource procurement. It might be suggested that the person identity of the entrepreneur plays a role in the development of this identity narrative. These propositions are likely to be less appropriate for SEIs, as the business these individuals (have) set up do not require large amounts of capital and therefore are less dependent on the judgments of investors. The topic of being perceived as legitimate and distinctive however is something that might be important in the case of the SEI too. Whether an SEI is successful, might be dependent on others perceiving the SEI as legitimate and distinctive. The choices that are made by the SEI, the products and services offered are all perceived in terms of the person itself. It is therefore possible that the person identity plays an important role in the development of the business and in finding the balance between being distinctive and legitimate.

One example of a recent study that shows the importance of the person identity in understanding the construction of the entrepreneurial identity and entrepreneurial behavior is the working paper of Conger, York and Wry (2012). The authors hypothesized that person identities shape the goals that the venture of the entrepreneur pursues. On the basis of survey results, the authors conclude that person identities are performed through a configuration of complementary role identities and that there is a distinction between the type of goals pursued and the use of these role commitments. When an entrepreneur pursues economic goals, role commitments are used to perform value-expressive features of the self-concept, while when social goals are pursued, the enactment of self-transcending person identities of the entrepreneurs is needed. The authors visualized their results in figure one.

Figure 1: relationships between Person Identity, Role Identity and venture goals as proposed by Conger, York and Wry (2012)

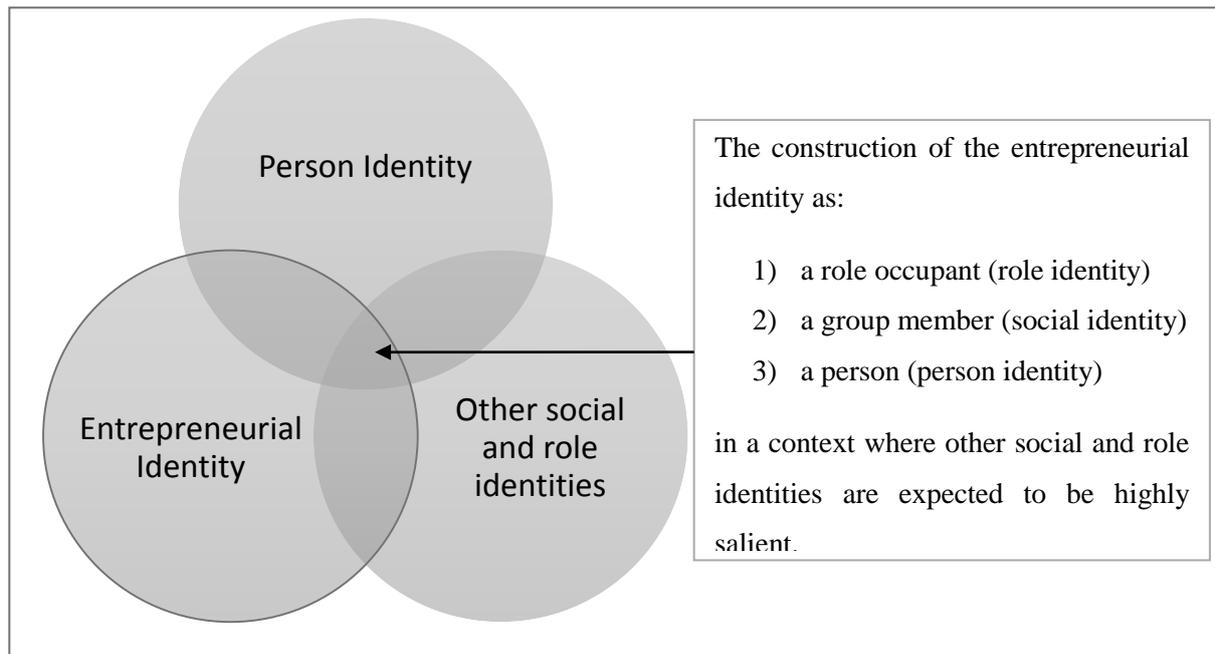


Another example that provides more insight of the role that person identities play in the construction of entrepreneurial identities is the study of Lewis (2013). Focusing on discourse, Lewis has explored the authenticity-driven identity work of a group of female business owners in the region of Southern England, who adopt a “feminized” entrepreneurial identity that is more in line with their self-identity. Lewis concludes that these women draw on two contrasting discourses, which are a feminized discourse of difference and a masculine discourse of professionalism.

On the basis of the discussed literature, it can be stated that identity plays a role in the entrepreneurial process, and that the person identity influences the entrepreneurial identity (Conger, York & Wry, 2012; Lewis, 2013). The person identity is trans-situational and thus more salient than other social or role identities. The situation of an SEI is unique for studying identity processes, as these individuals enact entrepreneurial behavior in situations where other social and/or role identities might be highly salient as well. For example, An SEI is not restricted to perform daily work activities in a work space with employees where the entrepreneurial identity might be more salient. SEIs have the possibility to work from home where other role identities such as mother, daughter or father or social identities such as being a member of a friend group or family might be highly salient as well. As the person identity is trans-situational and can act as a master identity it is possible that person identity aspects are more reflected in the context of the SEI as different social and role identities are highly salient in multiple situations. Previous studies have only looked into the entrepreneurial identity without taking into account other identities that are part of the entrepreneur's self (Conger, York & Wry, 2012). In addition, it is likely that who an entrepreneur is shapes an organization (Conger, York & Wry, 2012). In the case for an SEI, it is likely that who he or she is plays even a more important role as the organization is revolved around the individual. It is therefore suggested that studying the entrepreneurial identity in the context of SEIs can provide valuable insights in the construction of the entrepreneurial identity, the role of the person identity in this construction and might take the development of an overarching theory of identity and entrepreneurship research a step further. The focus of this study is illustrated in the following figure two.

Figure two needs further explanation. The circles used suggest that the person identity, entrepreneurial identity and other social and role identities are equal in importance and have a partial overlap. This however is not proposed in this study. The figure is based on the propositions that the person identity influences the entrepreneurial identity and other social and role identities as it functions as a master identity. In what way is however not clear. In addition, it is also proposed that SEIs work in situations where the person identity, entrepreneurial identity and other social and role identities are all salient and applicable. Therefore, the figure proposes an investigation of the construction of the entrepreneurial identity (the emphasized circle) in the context of the SEI, where other social identities and role identities, together with the person identity overlap.

Figure 2: focus of the current study



The focus of this study visualized in figure two is challenging to investigate, as multiple identity processes are occurring simultaneously and identities are related. To gain an in-depth understanding of the situation at hand one needs to understand the place, context and interaction of SEIs. It is felt that current standard quantitative as well as qualitative methodologies are inadequate to get a grasp of the processes at hand. Therefore, a new qualitative inductive visual methodology has been developed for this study and implemented to obtain in-depth information. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

4 METHODOLOGY

As identity construction from an overarching identity perspective in the context of SEIs is not well understood and the developed method is new, an inductive qualitative approach is adopted as this strategy is most appropriate in this situation (Glaser & Straus, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994). The participatory photo-elicitation interview (PEI) served as the main method for inquiry. Also referred to as the autodriver interview (Clark, 1999), the photo-elicitation strategy is a good strategy for theory-driven as well as inductive research (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). Not only do the visual elements extract different and deeper information from participants, it provides an immediate context of the daily identity construction processes. Adopting a visual research strategy can provide a better understanding of how organizational,

professional and person identities are constructed and communicated (Meyer, Höllerer, Jancsary & Van Leeuwen, 2013).

In organization and management research only few scholars have used visual methodologies, while in other fields within social science visual methods have found prominent adoption (Buchanan, 2001; Harper, 2002; Kunter & Bell, 2006; Meyer, 1991). More specifically, when it comes to the study of meaning construction in organization and management research, the visual dimension remains neglected (Meyer, Höllerer, Jancsary & Van Leeuwen, 2013). Clarke (2011) is one of the exceptions that incorporated the visual dimensions in entrepreneurship research. The author has adopted a visual ethnographic approach to study the adoption and implementation of visual symbols by entrepreneurs. On the basis of in-depth interviews and video recordings of the participants in interaction, she concludes that more experienced entrepreneurs are better in the use of visual symbols during interactions. When it comes to the use of photography in organizational research, Ray and Smith (2012) state that there are three advantages: 1) the data collection process and the analysis of the data can be less limiting and more accurate in comparison to other methods as photographs have the potential to avoid distortion of organizational reality; 2) by using photographs, researchers have the opportunity to portray organizational experiences in real time, and; 3) voices from members of various organizational levels can be included, reflecting the participatory nature of photography methods.

The literature provides many examples where the photographs for the PEIs are taken as a snapshot or where existing material is used. Woodward and Jenkins (2011) studied military identities in which up to ten photographs were used in single in-depth interviews, as well as Venkatram and Nelson (2008) who used a single in-depth PEI interview in studying experiences of young Chinese Starbucks consumers. It is questioned if a single interview based on photographs, whether they are provided by the participants or the researchers, can provide rigorous results on identity, especially in entrepreneurship. The interview itself would be a snapshot in time, and depending on the way PEIs are used, the photographs taken and/or chosen can be based on one single moment in time as well. Therefore, to be able to gather more reliable information on: 1) the entrepreneurial identity constructed by the participants; 2) their person identities; 3) the way they perceive aspects of their organization; and 4) how the participants visualize their answers, this research has developed a new data collection process that has similarities with the Experience Sampling Methodology (ESM). The ESM

approach is a process-oriented methodology that allows the researcher to gather longitudinal data and analyze between and within-person variability (Uy, Foo & Aguinis, 2008). Moreover, using ESM as a guideline is particularly appropriate as it is suggested that ESM has the potential to explore important hypotheses in identity theory (Stryker, 1980). Burke and Franzoi (1988) for example studied how particular meanings of identities are selected in certain situations by implementing ESM, as it provides the possibility to gather unobtrusive information “in situ”.

Within the ESM approach, multiple interviews are held on the basis of data that is gathered over a period of time. The PEI method enables the gathering of data over a longer period of time. However, the data that has been gathered is discussed in only one interview. The method used in this study combines the advantages of the two approaches, by incorporating visual imagery and the gathering of verbal data at multiple points in time. Because of this combination, this method is expected to be more rigorous than the standard PEI. Because ESM is a process oriented method, it is well suitable to study the entrepreneurial process. In addition, because there are few examples of studies where visual research approaches are adopted in entrepreneurship, it is also interesting to see what PEIs contribute in this context.

4.1 OPERATIONALIZATION

The framework developed by Pauwels (2010) served as the main guideline for the methodology. The nature of the visuals are researcher instigated participant generated material. While the researcher has control over the initial topic, the participant controls the photographs used. This results in a more equal research process, often emphasized as an advantage of photo-elicitation research (Beilin, 2005; Bloustien, 2003; Frohmann, 2005). Questions about the strategic decisions made referred to the concepts that were the subject of the photographs. The analytical focus was the respondents’ feedback on the photographs, however, the production process is taken into account as the representational choices and strategies the respondents used provide valuable information about context. In addition, the participants were asked to answer specific questions with photographs. This meant that the participants were challenged to visualize their responses, resulting in an extra dimension for data analysis.

4.1.1 Process of data collection

The freelancers participated in a four week data collection process, in which each respondent received an assignment at the beginning of every week. The assignment consisted of

delivering five to ten photographs that would provide information on one, two, or three questions. The questions developed operationalized the three concepts of Abell's (1980) model, (market segment(s) served, addressing customer needs and resources/capabilities deployed), as he states that most important strategic decisions about these three concepts made during set- and start-up, have an imprinting effect on the organization. Fauchart and Gruber (2011) have used the concepts of Abell (1980) in their study on founder identity as well, and argue that these initial strategic decisions are the precursor for other strategic decisions in the future, as initial strategic decisions cannot be reversed easily. "SEIs" are founders of their businesses and have to make decisions in line with the model of Abell (1980). The descriptions of the SEIs can deliver more insights in the reasons why certain choices have been made. In addition, because the method allows to gather in-depth information over a longer period of time and the possibility to establish within-person patterns, it might be possible to gain a better understanding of the person identity, group affiliations and roles occupied.

The model created by Abell (1980) however, does not incorporate future plans and the role of peers in the creation of those future plans. According to Jack and Anderson (2002) entrepreneurship is more than an economic process. Social context in which the entrepreneur is embedded shapes and forms entrepreneurial outcomes. It is expected that this is the same for SEIs. To understand which stakeholders play a role in the development of future plans and in what way, it was chosen to include a question about the involvement of stakeholders.

4.1.1.1 Feedback sessions

At the end of each week, the photographs provided by the respondents were discussed. The questions for the next week were given at the end of each feedback session. As a result, each respondent produced twelve to forty photographs, discussed within four meetings. Two additional meetings were held to introduce, and wrap-up the data-collection process. The time needed for each feedback session were estimated on 35 minutes as four meetings would be comparable to the time needed for an in-depth interview. The feedback sessions were audio recorded and transcribed.

During the sessions, the provided photographs were discussed and served as the main guideline for the interview. An advantage of this is that it can provide the respondent a sense of ownership in the research process (Bloustien, 2003; Frohmann, 2005). However, in order to obtain information about key aspects of the work of SEIs, the strategic decisions made and to add some structure to the discussion, a semi-structured interview protocol was developed. The

protocol consisted of three phases: the introduction, start of the feedback session, and wrap-up. The second phase was structured around the questions that were given to the participants at the end of the previous feedback session. Standard questions were developed for every question given as part of the assignment. The rest of the feedback session protocol remained unchanged for the reliability of the instrument. For an overview of the feedback session protocols, see appendix one to four. An overview example of the process can be found in figure three.

4.2 PARTICIPANT SAMPLING

Participants were sampled through a combination of the snowball sampling technique and convenience sampling. The private network of the researcher was used to obtain access to a business incubator in Enschede, where the first respondents were sampled. This approach was regarded as most appropriate as the respondents were required to put in a significant amount of time and effort, due to the creative nature of the data collection process. Already having established a personal connection helped in this regard. Nonetheless, the data gathering process was developed in such a way that the participants could provide as much data as possible within the least amount of time. The participants were contacted via mail, asking for their participation. A letter was developed describing the benefits of participating in this research, without revealing the subject of the research as it could influence the data. For an overview of the letter, see appendix five. All initial participants were asked if they could refer other individuals to participate in this research, resulting in one extra participant. In addition, one more participant was obtained by attending network gatherings in Enschede set up by entrepreneurs from the incubator. An overview of the participants can be found in table two.

Table 2: overview participants

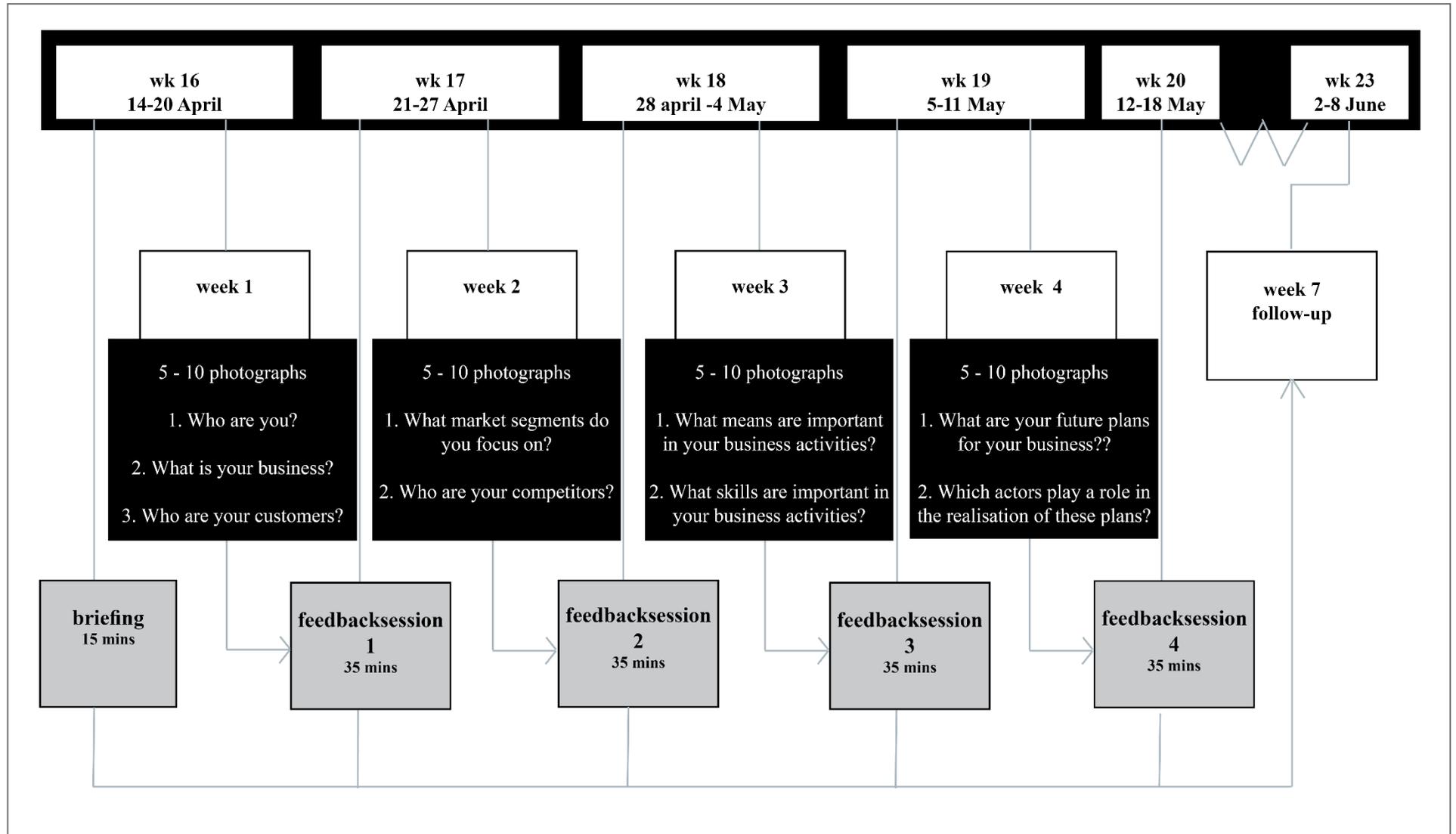
| Participant | Venture focus | Gender | Age group in years | Age organization in years |
|--------------------|---|---------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Emotional assertiveness training and coaching | Male | 25 – 30 | 0 – 2 |
| 2 | Communication advice | Female | 30 – 35 | 5 – 10 |
| 3 | Funeral products | Female | 30 – 35 | 0 – 2 |
| 4 | Graphic design | Male | 25 – 30 | 0 – 2 |
| 5 | Technological innovation by children | Male | 60 – 65 | 10 – 15 |
| 6 | Media design | Female | 30 – 35 | 5 – 10 |
| 7 | Web development | Male | 20 – 25 | 0 – 2 |
| 8 | Awareness raising for sustainability | Female | 30 – 35 | 0 – 2 |
| 9 | Life style products | Female | 20 – 25 | 0 – 2 |
| 10 | Organizational identity consulting | Male | 25 - 30 | 2 – 5 |

4.3 DATA ANALYSIS

The implementation of the data gathering process resulted in 40 interviews that were audio-recorded and transcribed, and 280 photographs. The transcribed interviews went through a two-round open coding process. As the participants provided the photographs and their subsequent meanings, this study has a participatory nature. The In-Vivo open coding method was used in the first coding round as it is very suited for studies that place an emphasis on the voice of the participant (Saldana, 2009). The second round of coding was based on the pattern coding method (Saldana, 2009), to discover consistencies and discrepancies between interviews from the same participant, and between participants. The visual data was analyzed on the basis of a one-round coding process, using the descriptive coding method. Due to the amount of photographs provided by the participants, in combination with the audio transcripts and the limited amount of time available for analysis, it was chosen to use the descriptive coding method as this method enables the researcher to categorize the data and get an organizational grasp of the study (Saldana, 2009). The resulting themes and concepts of the transcripts will be discussed in the next chapter, as well as the visual data results.

To increase the reliability of data analysis it was chosen to subject a 25% sample of the transcribed data to a separate coding process, implemented by an independent coder. Out of every four interviews per participant one interview was randomly included in the sample, resulting in ten transcripts. The ten interviews were thus for a second time coded according to the developed code book. After finalizing the coding of the data a negotiated agreement approach was adopted, in which the two coders discuss their codes after independently coding the material to reduce discrepancies where possible to assess intercoder reliability (Campbell, Quincy, Osseman & Pedersen, 2013). Consequently, inter-rater reliability was calculated on basis of the percentages of agreement between coders per interview. The agreement percentages per interview were then added to calculate the mean of the percentages and resulted in a 93.19% agreement.

Figure 3: overview example of data collection process



5 RESULTS

The Photo-Elicitation method in this study yielded results that give insight in the social world of the SEI. Their description of themselves, their business, core activities, means and skills and their future plans resulted in rich personal descriptions. In order to understand what it means to be an SEI and how the participants engage in identity processes, the important aspects of the context in which the SEI is situated as described by the participants will be discussed in the first section of the results. The second section will illustrate what it means to be an entrepreneur, how the participants described an ideal entrepreneurial type and in what way their personal characteristics are reflected in being an entrepreneur. The second section will end with an overview of the results that show the participants' experienced discrepancies between the ideal entrepreneurial type and personal characteristics. The third and final section will provide an overview of the preliminary results from the analysis of the photographs.

5.1 THE CONTEXT OF THE SEI

Three themes emerged that provide an understanding of the context of the SEI, their motives to become and work as an SEI and the goals SEI have set for themselves. These themes will be discussed in the following order: 1) the role of cooperation and networks: 2) being meaningful: and 3) the importance of future plans.

5.1.1 Cooperation and networks

For the participants, being part of a network is crucial for survival. Four participants state that they could not survive without access to a useful network. Looking at the activities and resources that a network provides, the participants explained that networks are an important source for information, customers, assignments and skills. Networks were described as important by four of the ten participants.

“Dat is wel heel erg belangrijk en daarom dat ik op mijn eh website zo van dat een beetje een gedeelte heb ook met partners dus dat ik mensen samenwerk en ik weet niet of dat nu alleen maar in deze tijd heel erg belangrijk is of dat het altijd zo was maar nu heb ik zoiets van als je nu niet in een soort van netwerk ben of gewoon mensen om je heen hebt ja dan dan dan heb je eigenlijk geen opdrachten dan kun je het eigenlijk wel vergeten want dan ben je een beetje alleen de dingen aan het maken met een kunstenaar of zo”

“Die insteek is dan wel van he we gaan samenwerken we gaan de juiste connecties opzoeken ga vooral ook en zoals nu mag het dan ook lokaal dat het gewoon altijd wel eh belangrijk is

om eerst die lijntjes te hebben en het samenwerken te doen en eigenlijk nu ook wel weer als volgende stap maar dat is misschien ook elke keer het stukje ja meer ondernemerschap snappen of misschien beter de lijntjes zien”

Seven out of ten participants perceive the network as a means to obtain customers or assignments, and six of the ten participants explain that in order to do their work, there are necessary skills that they personally do not possess. Through cooperation with other entrepreneurs, they are able to access these necessary skills to provide the services and products requested.

“Nou ja als je het niet hebt en niet kunt leren en niet wilt leren en zo dan en zo dan ja dan moet je uitbesteden aan iemand anders of misschien alleen computerprogramma of weet ik veel wat maar dat mis ik in ieder geval dat ja”

“Ik ben niet alleen het middel maar ook de mensen met wie ik samenwerk in dit geval zijn dat twee collega’s van studio –naam- waar ik dan 1 dag in de week werk zij doen ook camerawerk voor mij dus zonder hen kan ik mijn werk ook niet goed doen”

Cooperation with other entrepreneurs was described by the participants as very important. The participants had a tendency to emphasize how entrepreneurs can and need to help others instead of perceiving other entrepreneurs and organizations as competition. The participants working and living in the Twente region, suggested that there was no need to compete with one another as there was enough work for everyone. One of the participants even referred to obtaining jobs and customers as a way of dividing work amongst entrepreneurs. Six participants emphasized cooperation with fellow entrepreneurs, instead of perceiving them as competition.

Photograph 1: visualization of the importance of networks and cooperation instead of competition



“Dat is inherent, allemaal uiteindelijk zijn dat wel concurrenten maar ook collega’s. Want je leert ook weer van elkaar. Dus dan zijn het eerder concullega’s”

“Dus dat is wel iets dat in die zin ben ik mezelf de grootste concurrent als het gaat om de voortgang van het bedrijf en niet zozeer de bedrijven die hetzelfde doen als ik. Die zie ik meer als collega’s dan als echte concurrenten”

“Dan is het ook nog zo van dat een beetje een spinnenweb ik probeer ook wel met mijn bedrijf en dat is nu een beetje voor de Duitse regio om ja een beetje een netwerk ook te maken of iets waar wat je in Nederland heel veel ziet maar wat je in Duitsland nog niet zo heel veel ziet dat je ook als ondernemers en bedrijven dat je onder elkaar een beetje probeert te helpen en ja niet zozeer alleen maar dat concurrentiegevoel hebt”

Photograph 2: visualization of competitors who are also colleagues



The importance of networks and the relationships with “competitors” was visualized by the participants in several ways. A participant emphasized the importance of networks through photograph one. It shows how entrepreneurs and organizations have the tendency to help one another instead of competing for customers. One of the participants visualized the relationship between

competitors by using photograph two. The photograph showed two street vendors that were arguing while they were selling food together. Somehow they were working together but had a difference of opinion. Another participant referred to the importance of having a connection with the cooperating entrepreneurs, while another participant emphasizes the positive feelings provided by cooperation as these entrepreneurs are colleagues on a business level but friends as well.

Two of the ten participants described competition in a different way. One participant described competition not as organizations or individuals, but as the functioning of society. Even though the participant explained that cooperation and competition go hand in hand locally, the way individuals in society behave was seen as a way of

Photograph 3: visualization of mass production and capitalism as competitors



competition as well. Watching television is a passive way of spending one’s free time and therefore, it is a form of competition because it contradicts what the participant aims to achieve. This perceptions was described along a photograph of her own television. Other forms of competition according to the participant, was mass production and capitalism,

represented in photograph three. The second participant that perceived competition differently, described international corporations and governmental institutions as competitors, as they claim to have the same goal as the participant's organization but at the same time have a different agenda.

One of the respondents visualized the emphasis she places on the importance of the relationships she has with her customers, which are often SEIs as well, with photograph four. It is a Bossche Bol that one of her customers brought to her when she was ill, emphasizing the personal aspects of her business relationships and the importance of being helpful.

Photograph 4: visualization of the personal aspects in business relationships with customers



As the network provides customers, skills and information, cooperation with other entrepreneurs means survival. The data showed that participants have a tendency to gather other entrepreneurs for cooperation on the basis of identification, as well as their choice of customer group. This includes customers who assign importance to

long-term relationships and friends. In addition, one participant described his organization as different from his competitors based on his identification with the customer group. Examples of quotes that show these findings are the following:

“Het is gewoon wel als je iemand hebt leren kennen en daar heb je de gunfactor van ja die gaat jou dan eerder benaderen dan een andere dus op die manier kom je da ook juist in contact met mensen die op een zelfde lijn als jou zitten of denken anders heb je met elkaar die klik niet dus dan ga je het juist ja de juiste groep om je heen verzamelen is wel heel fijn”

“Ja, of dat we ze aanbevelen of weet ik veel wat maar zo werkt het uiteindelijk een beetje dat is het netwerk dat je om je heen bouwt en ik vind het heel fijn dat mijn zakelijke netwerk grotendeels ook gewoon uit vrienden bestaat”

“Dat ik zeg maar om het werk heen wel echt die oprechte interesse wil tonen in anderen en dat ik vind het belangrijk en dat zijn ook wel al mijn klanten die ik eigenlijk wel altijd gehad heb ehm dat ik het zijn nooit klanten van korte termijn zeg maar ik ga altijd ik zorg altijd dat ik een lange termijn relatie met iemand aanga dat vind ik zelf belangrijk voor hoe ik zelf ben maar ook als ik vind het gewoon prettig”

“En ik vond deze wel heel leuk erbij en (..) die is eigenlijk ook wel, die op de foto staat dan, naar mijn idee ook wel heel erg sprekend voor de doelgroep die ik mezelf ook vind maar die ik ook wel een beetje wil benaderen. Dat dat vooral de mensen zijn, hey ik wil wel maar ik weet niet precies hoe bewuster of anders leven.”

“Het verschil is dat ik in de doelgroep sta. Echt middenin de doelgroep sta”

An overview of the aspects that are important in cooperation and networks plus an overview of quotes can be found in table three. Working as an SEI thus entails an emphasis on cooperation with other entrepreneurs in the available network. Helping other entrepreneurs is more valued than competing for assignments. The important network consists of friends and family, as well as other SEIs and organizations that the participants have met on networking events. As being helpful and cooperative are important elements in being an SEI in the current context, it comes as no surprise that a different meaning is given to the role that the business of the participants hold. It appears that the participants aim for a certain quality of life, instead of working to grow their business. This need to be meaningful will be discussed next.

5.1.2 The need to be meaningful

The second theme that emerged from the data was the need to be meaningful. The function of the participants' businesses were described as being a means to obtain a certain quality of life. This quality of life was defined as having a good feeling about what they do, instead of increasing their income. Five out of ten participants described the function of their business as a means to obtain personal goals that were significant to them, such as being happy, achieve personal growth or have a happy work life. Five participants described financial goals such as profit or revenues as secondary.

“Ik zit op dit moment heel erg in een fase dat ik zoiets heb ik pak gewoon aan wat ik tegen kom en daar wil ik van leren en daar groei je persoonlijk en nou het is leuk als mijn financiële situatie daar ook beter van wordt”

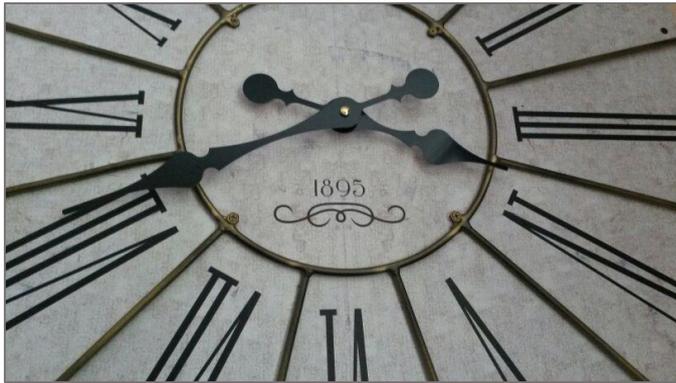
“Je verdienmodel is dan ook geld. En dan denk ik ja. Als ik een basis heb aan geld dan kan ik me wel redden en dan vind ik het voor de rest belangrijk dat er toffe dingen gebeuren. Leuke sociale inspirerende, waar je gelukkig van wordt dingen.”

“Maar dat bedrijf is een middel om een stukje leven te kunnen behalen en zo zou het volgens mij ook moeten zijn”

Table 3: overview of aspects of cooperation and networks

| Theme: cooperation and networks | Nr | Example Quotes |
|---|-----------|--|
| Networks provide jobs/customers | 7 out 10 | <i>En die hebben we 1x of een paar keer gesproken op een netwerkborreltje en nou ja hem bij hem valt het verhaal dan ook wel op dat manier dat (...) en daar moeten we het van hebben Dit is simpel dit is eigenlijk een deel van mijn klanten –namen- dat waren de twee grootste klanten en zij ook wel redelijk groot die hangen zelf aan een heel groot netwerk en dat is dus een van mijn eigenlijk middelen geweest want via hun werkte ik</i> |
| Networks are a means to complement missing skills | 6 out 10 | <i>Met en en en dus ook samenwerken met mensen die dus dingen kunnen die ik niet kan maar die ik wel wil hebben zeg maar Ja ja ook maar ook de boekhouder en zo dat is natuurlijk niet echt direct personeel maar je moet ook zoveel uitbesteden op een gegeven moment omdat jij daar geen kennis van hebt eerder in de zin van samenwerken zelf doen (..) of zo je kunt elkaar aanvullen dan dat ik denk je bent een concurrent van mij</i> |
| Cooperation means survival | 4 out 10 | <i>Het lijkt mij heel goed dat je juist dat die mensen elkaar wel kennen op die bedrijfjes of die instanties en dat je ook kunt kijken waar je eventueel samen kunt werken dat je dan wel kunt overleven Maar het is gewoon samenwerken en dat je bij samenwerken iets groter creëert dat je alleen niet kunt ehm omdat je anders niet overleeft denk ik</i> |
| Networks are important | 4 out 10 | <i>Nou vanwege het netwerk hij dus ik zou bij een uitvaartonderneming aan moeten kloppen gewoon me voorstellen en eh met zo iemand naast je als diegene zo iemand al kent is de drempel veel lager en dan zit je er zo mee om tafel Zo veel goeie partijen zijn er al helemaal niet en uiteindelijk netwerk is netwerken hier je grootste key</i> |
| Networking as an activity is important | 4 out 10 | <i>De initiatieven samenbrengen maar ook zelf de lijntjes zoeken en het netwerken blijkt toch ook wel dat netwerken daar moet je dan toch ook echt achterkomen als je bezig bent dat het toch wel echt zo'n ding is van iedereen roept wel van netwerken en blabla maar het is gewoon wel als je iemand hebt leren kennen en daar heb je de gunfactor van ja die gaat jou dan eerder benaderen dan een andere dus op die manier kom je da ook juist in contact met mensen die op een zelfde lijn als jou zitten of denken anders heb je met elkaar die klik niet dus dan ga je het juist ja de juiste groep om je heen verzamelen is wel heel fijn</i> |
| Networks provide information | 2 out 10 | <i>Ik zocht nog een plaatje met netwerken en ik zocht eerst dat ik dacht oh oude mensen met hele goede ideeën of oude mensen met een frisse kijk op het leven maar ach ja dat je vooral denkt wat je met elkaar doet en dat anders denkenden altijd wat is dat netwerk wat gebeurt er al waar kun je elkaar versterken en waar kun je je input vandaan halen dat dat ook belangrijke betrokkenen zijn Ehm nou ja het is op dit moment is het zo zoals ik net al aangaf heb ik niet echt een hele uitgebreide kennis van de markt waar ik in zit en ehm dat wil dus zeggen dat ik die kennis op een andere manier moet opdoen en de beste manier om dat te doen is dus daadwerkelijk mijn handen uit te steken en naar mensen toe te gaan en me zelf voor te stellen als de start-up en gewoon vragen te gaan stellen dus interviews te gaan afnemen bij uitvaartondernemers, verzekeraars vragen of er überhaupt wel vraag is of zij vraag voelen bij hun klanten naar een dergelijk product en zo en Het ja het maken van contact het vergroten van het netwerk</i> |
| Networks create opportunities | 2 out 10 | <i>Het huidige netwerk is dan heel erg belangrijk om in de gaten te houden van o.k. wie is daar ook mee bezig en vanuit de klanten ja kan ik daar bij aansluiten of hoe gaan we dat oppakken dus dat je ook gezamenlijk verantwoordelijk wordt uiteindelijk of zo iets dat doen dus vind ik wel mooi ja en dan ook van uit huis dat kan wel o.k. is en dat je dan ook wel gesteund in dat idee van o.k. je gaat misschien twee weken of drie weken op pad voor je werk naar een heel ander land</i> |

Photograph 5: visualization of perception on time as not important



This emphasis on meaningful work was visualized by the participants in diverse ways. A participant explained that she did not value long term planning as much as other people that are significant to her. She visualized this through photograph five. It shows a clock in her house that, even though not

visible in the photograph, is not running. The batteries needed to be replaced but she thought it was not that important. According to her, it showed her perception on time as not that important. Another participant visualized the importance of having a fun work life by showing holiday photographs. The participant emphasized that because of working independently, the participant had the financial means and freedom to travel the world. Travelling the world was perceived as the most important goal for the participant. He also explained that one of the motivators to start his business was because he came to the conclusion with one of his friends that they disliked the posts on Facebook by friends on Monday, that they wished it was weekend again.

Instead of describing financial goals as secondary, one of the participants described the importance of money in running an organization. Previous experiences contributed to the realization that money is the most important aspect when it comes to means necessary for a business. The participant thus described the meaning of money as crucial, however not to achieve wealth but to run a business. According to the participant, cash flow means survival. The participant visualized the importance of money with photograph six. The participant chose to take a photograph of foreign currency, from the countries where his organization is active.

Photograph 6: visualization of the importance of money



These results thus show the tendency of the participants to refer to their business as a means, as business goals being secondary to personal goals and that financial goals are secondary to

feeling good about yourself and what you do. An overview of these aspects of the theme meaningfulness can be found in table four.

Table 4: overview of aspects of having meaningful work

| Theme: meaningful | Nr | Example Quotes |
|--|---------|--|
| Financial goals are secondary | 5 of 10 | <i>Zeg maar wat voor het bedrijf wat meer van belang zou kunnen zijn dan waar ik op dit moment mee bezig ben. En dan kies is op dat moment voor de persoonlijke ontwikkeling dan voor het belang van het bedrijf zeg maar Dus ik hoop niet te veel op de toekomst te halen dat wat ik vroeger wel had van carrière maken en groot bureau reclame bureau technisch bureau en dan gewoon carrière maken en zo geld verdienen en dikke auto en zo ja dat hoeft ik allemaal niet meer O.k. Daar word ik niet meer blij van ik word blij van als ik doe voor mensen die het nodig hebben en als ik mensen ja mensen helpen die het echt nodig hebben en niet zo van kleine dingetjes doen die even een beetje voor geluk zorgen</i> |
| Primary goal is to have fun in the work you do | 5 of 10 | <i>En heel veel van die dingen in die lijstjes kloppen inmiddels niet meer maar de grote lijnen dat wat we in het verleden hadden bedacht die komen nog wel overeen vooral ook omdat we we zagen om ons heen zoveel mensen of afstuderen of net wat oudere mensen die al een tijd lang in een baan zaten en ja die het daar helemaal niet per se zo naar hun zin hadden er waren mensen die op maandag al op hun Facebook postten dat ze hoopten dat het vrijdag was En als ik dan ook nog plezier heb in dat werk en met mensen kan samenwerken ja dan is het voor mij al doel behaald zeg maar ja</i> |
| Financial goals as means to achieve primary goal | 3 of 10 | <i>Ja. Je verdienmodel is dan ook geld. En dan denk ik ja. Als ik een basis heb aan geld dan kan ik me wel redden en dan vind ik het voor de rest belangrijk dat er toffe dingen gebeuren. Leuke sociale inspirerende, waar je gelukkig van wordt dingen. Maar dat bedrijf is een middel om een stukje leven te kunnen behalen en zo zou het volgens mij ook moeten zijn</i> |
| Primary goal is personal development | 2 of 10 | <i>Het is niet allemaal zo strak en zakelijk kijk het hoeft voor mij niet per se zo te zijn dat ik omzet groei moet hebben of ehm bepaalde doelen moet nastreven ik zit op dit moment heel erg in een fase dat ik zoiets heb ik pak gewoon aan wat ik tegen kom en daar wil ik van leren en daar groei je persoonlijk en nou het is leuk als mijn financiële situatie daar ook beter van wordt Als ik er zelf naar kijk vind ik het, vind ik de route die ik heb gekozen op dit moment ook goed. Want ik kan nu rustig de tijd nemen en ik kan ook mensen nu wel helpen maar dan niks voor vragen. Zodat ik mezelf kan ontplooien en mezelf kan laten groeien op het gebied van coaching. Zonder dat mensen daarvoor hoeven te betalen. Zodat ik kan schaven aan mijn eigen methode. Aan mijn eigen visie.</i> |

5.1.3 Future plans

The participants were asked to elaborate on their future plans and which stakeholders would play a role in their realization. Five out of the ten participants referred to their future plans as undefined and open. Even though two of the ten participants emphasized concrete preferred steps in the near future, there was a tendency to see the future as undefined and subject to change.

“Voor mij ligt het best wel open van he wat is voor mij ook de meest passende manier van wat nodig gaat zijn”

“Dat is het avontuur ook een beetje en dat is de reden waarom we geen businessplan schrijven omdat je op dat moment zet je vast wat je over drie jaar wil zijn en dan kun je daar naar toe werken alleen wij veranderen als persoon zijnde zo snel en dat bedrijf hangt om die personen en niet per se om onze activiteiten dus doelen die we dan en dan hebben gezet ja die kunnen zo maar ineens veranderen na drie jaar doorlopen”

One of the participants visualized the open future through photograph seven. To her the photograph represented a dreamy state of the future where many things could happen. The openness was represented by the blue sky. Another participant that perceived the future as undefined and open visualized this with photograph eight. The participant explained that the road could be taken in many different ways. The open desert showed that there was opportunity to build any figurative buildings.

Photograph 7: visualization of future plans



Photograph 8: visualization of an open future



The results show that the SEI operates in an environment in which cooperation with others is important, and where he or she is dependent of the network that consists of friends, family, co-entrepreneurs and organizations. Financial goals are seen as secondary by five of the participants and one emphasizes the important role of revenue and financial means. Five participants emphasize the importance of having fun in the work the participant does. In addition, the future is perceived as open and undefined by the majority of the participants. The next section of the results will go deeper into how the participants described what it means to be an entrepreneur in this particular context.

5.2 THE MEANING OF BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR ACCORDING TO THE SEIS

The SEIs strive for a quality of life in which the business functions as a means to sustain it. When the participants were asked to define what it means to them to be an entrepreneur, an ideal entrepreneurial type emerged. This ideal entrepreneurial type was constructed as a composition of ideal characteristics that an individual needs to possess to be able to work and be successful in the context described in the previous results section. In discussing these characteristics, participants also elaborated on their own personal characteristics, how they were reflected in being an entrepreneur, and how some characteristics did not correspond with who they were as a person. This discrepancy between the ideal characteristics and perceptions of themselves as a person caused a conflict between the expectations in line with the ideal entrepreneur as described, and the expectations that are in line with their own values.

5.2.1 The ideal entrepreneur

According to the participants, entrepreneurs are ambitious. Four participants emphasized that entrepreneurs actively engage in behavior to accomplish a goal. Of these four participants, two explained the difference between individuals who choose not to be an entrepreneur as being more passive, while entrepreneurs are not.

“Heel veel mensen misschien ook juist wel niet ondernemer worden die dan wat meer afwachtend blijven of ook wat meer eh hoe zeg je dat dienstverlenend van oh die willen graag ook horen van he doe dit en dit maar dan is het goed”

“Ja het niet ondernemen is dan ja ja een beetje passief en gewoon dingen die gewoon gezegd worden gewoon doen en ook minder soort van die dingen uitzoeken dus niet dat eh wat dan ook een vaardigheid is maar wat niet in die foto maar wat een beetje aansturen is ja je wordt gewoon aangestuurd nou ja je hebt toch een beetje die zelf verantwoordelijk”

Entrepreneurs were also described by three out of ten participants as intuitive. One participant stated that:

“Het ondernemen is heel erg een Fingerspitzengefühl van he dat moet er dan zo uit zien of dat moet je dan net zo doen”

Photographs provided the participants the opportunity to visualize characteristics of the entrepreneur. Participants used photographs that showed what characteristics were important, and in the third week, when asked about means and skills that are important for the organization, participants provided photographs that

Photograph 9: visualization of taking a step back to relax



visualized skills that entrepreneurs specifically should have. Being able to relax was described as an important aspect by three of the participants. As two of these three participants identified themselves as a more creative person, they suggested that it was very important to be able to take a step back. This would encourage the participants' creativity. This aspect was visualized by one of the participants through photograph nine. Several aspects within the photograph symbolized to her that experienced time in the world is going faster, and by using an analog clock, she symbolically takes a step back to relax.

Photograph 10: visualization of the entrepreneur as being persistent



Four out of the ten participants emphasized persistence. As entrepreneurs have to deal with many setbacks during the process of setting up their business but also in managing it, being persistent was perceived as important. One of the participants visualized this characteristic through photograph ten, in which a sky is filled with clouds and a ray of sunshine.

In line with the need to be persistent, as the life of an entrepreneur was described as being insecure, having faith in one's own choices and following your own path was seen as an important characteristic of being an entrepreneur as well. Also referred to as headstrong, three participants described this characteristic as important. In line with this characteristic, it therefore comes as no surprise that four out of ten participants emphasized the ability to deal with an insecure environment. Being responsible for one's own paycheck while not knowing what will happen in the future is difficult, and being an entrepreneur meant that one needs to be able to do so. In addition, one of the participants stated that an entrepreneur needs to be able to deal with risks because he or she never knows whether the developed product or service will

Photograph 11: visualization of the risk an entrepreneur has to deal with



attract customers. One of the participants visualized this with photograph eleven. The risk is represented by not knowing whether the entrepreneur will hit the apple or the person, but the person standing under the apple is the entrepreneur as well as he or she needs to deal with the risk of being hit.

“Als ik zo kijken naar ondernemerschap en zo weet je het enige wat dan zo van motiverend is dat je kunt zeggen van eh weet je je gaat eh weet je je gaat gewoon naar buiten en je gaat gewoon dingen doen die risicorijk zijn en je weet je je staat 's ochtends op en je weet niet zo precies van weet je je hebt een hele lijst van dingen die je kunt doen maar je weet niet precies wat het oplevert dus je toch van durft van gewoon dingen te doen ik denk dat is toch de enige motivatie dat je zegt van ja doet die dingen en aan het eind van de dag ga je gewoon zo naar

bed en dan heb je zoiets van nou ik heb tenminste heb ik gewoon dat gedaan waar ik zin in had wat ik goed vond en wat andere mensen misschien gaat helpen”

One aspect of being an entrepreneur that five out of ten participants referred to when describing entrepreneurial characteristics was the business side of being an entrepreneur. This business side entails that a person is able to perceive situations from a business perspective and see the important connections. However, there appeared a nuance in having this business side as on the one hand being able to see things from a business perspective was regarded as an aspect of being an entrepreneur, emphasizing this business side of being an entrepreneur reflected a more commercial entrepreneur with whom participants could not identify with..

“Het is niet allemaal zo strak en zakelijk kijk het hoeft voor mij niet per se zo te zijn dat ik omzet groei moet hebben of ehm bepaalde doelen moet nastreven”

This standard of having a business side became also clear when the participants were asked to explain the market segments they focused on. Only two out of the ten participants did not need an explanation of what a market segment exactly entails.

The participants’ description of the ideal entrepreneur extended beyond ideal characteristics, and personal characteristics were incorporated. The next section will go deeper into this specific theme. An overview of the ideal entrepreneur characteristics and quotes can be found in table two.

Table 5: overview ideal characteristics of an entrepreneur and corresponding quotes

| Ideal characteristics | Nr | Example Quotes |
|--|-----------|--|
| Entrepreneurs have a business side | 5 of 10 | <i>Dit is dat zakelijke wereldje waar ik nooit zo heel veel eh affectie mee had of in ieder geval niet per se in terecht wilde komen</i> |
| Entrepreneurs are not passive | 4 of 10 | <i>Realisatie is dan ook juist wel iemand die de zakelijke dingen kan of die verstand heeft van zulke aanvragen of die mij helpt de administratie op orde te hebben Heel veel mensen misschien ook juist wel niet ondernemer worden die dan wat meer afwachtend blijven of ook wat meer eh hoe zeg je dat dienstverlenend van oh die willen graag ook horen van he doe dit en dit maar dan is het goed</i> |
| Entrepreneurs need to deal with insecurities | 4 of 10 | <i>Ja het niet ondernemen is dan ja ja een beetje passief en gewoon dingen die gewoon gezegd worden gewoon doen en ook minder soort van die dingen uitzoeken Het is niet dat je iedere dag bij een baas om 9 uur op de stoep staat en om vijf uur weer naar huis gaat hmm. En dat geeft ook een bepaalde spanning met zich mee dat het stukje vrijheid maar ook ja de onzekerheid En de onzekerheden, de variable onzekerheden die je hebt voornamelijk. Dus zoals de financiën, de balans die je moet krijgen in de onzekerheid. Die maakt het lastig. En die kunnen je belemmeren als het daarnaar te veel doorslaat.</i> |
| Entrepreneurs are headstrong | 3 of 10 | <i>Nou ja de of in ieder geval de ambitie hebben om eh net effen dat stukje te verder te kijken niet per se te willen conformeren aan de status gou vandaar kijk je natuurlijk van hoe doe je dat natuurlijk zeten we die stappen tot je op het niveau bent met je concurrentie maar je moet ook wel bereid zijn om het risico te kunnen nemen om drie stappen verder te kunnen kijken en daar liever ook op te gaan ontwikkelen. En dat maakt het voor ons ook interessante projecten maar dat is wel een profiel wat een ondernemer ook moet waarborgen anders kom je er niet Als je jonge entrepreneur bent dan heb je absoluut geen tijd voor advies of om te luisteren je wil gewoon doen en slagen en succes ervaren en zo voort en het vermogen om te luisteren dat heeft bijna geen mens</i> |
| Entrepreneurs are persistent | 3 of 10 | <i>En eh kijk als je vaak succesvol ondernemer wat succes dan ook mag zijn ja dan hebben ze wel echt ik bedoel ik ben wel een vechter of ik ben wel een doorzetter zeg maar maar ik ben geen vechter ten koste van anderen en als je echt een ja moet soms wel wat harder zijn dat mis ik Er zijn heel veel ondernemers in mijn omgeving en dat denk ik wel dat dat help dat die ondernemersgeest niet vreemd is voor mij dat doorzetten er bij hoort dat dat gewoon part of the deal is dat het niet zo maar komt aanwaaien</i> |
| Entrepreneurs are intuitive | 3 of 10 | <i>Je moet dat kunnen ruiken niet iedere keer kan je dat ruiken dat succes bereiken dat ik hier bereikt heb maar dat is een belangrijk onderdeel van ondernemerschap. Dat is dat je heel snel realiseert dit is een kans dat moet je pakken En niet voor alles overleg moet plegen omdat 9 van de 10 beslissingen toch vanuit een stukje onderbuik gevoel gemaakt worden</i> |
| Entrepreneurs are perfectionists | 2 of 10 | <i>Dat is ook iets wat je denk ik als ondernemer moet realiseren dat soms ook goed goed genoeg is en eh ik denk dat heel veel ondernemers en wij allemaal ook zijn onwijze perfectionisten en willen het beste best mogelijke resultaat maar soms is dat er gewoon simpelweg niet zit dat er gewoon niet in Ja ik ben best wel perfectionistisch ingesteld ja in mijn ik zie dat ook als een uitdaging dat soort dingetjes het is niet ik kan er zelf ook om lachen ik ben me daar ook wel bewust van dat het nergens voor nodig is maar vind wel mooi om zelf ook uitdagingen te stellen dat je zo iets hebt van nou als ik allemaal groene balletjes heb dan ga ik wat anders doen zeg maar Ja Ja ja ik denk dat ook als ondernemer belangrijk is dat je jezelf kunt uitdagen en dat je dan ook in je werk als is het maar iets kleins als je er maar plezier in hebt en ook uitdaging in ziet van</i> |
| Entrepreneurs are ambitious | 2 of 10 | <i>Kijk heel veel ondernemers die gaan ondernemen omdat ze de wereld willen veranderen maar wij willen de wereld echt veranderen Dat je dan toch merkt dat je ik weet niet of het alleen de houding is misschien ook een doel waar je naar toe wil anders is of ja het ondernemerschap dat is dan eigenlijk ook wel het woord dat het weer een beetje zegt ja ik denk ook dat niks echt te groot kan zijn en zo dat je altijd ook wel naar anderen toe kunt stappen bijvoorbeeld ook op het bandje of gaat het wel goed denk je</i> |
| Entrepreneurs are able to relax | 2 of 10 | <i>Deels zie ik dat wel als vaardigheid het niet zo mee willen gaan met de gehaastheid dat dan nou ja kun je ook zien als middel maar je moet het wel kunnen dit is dus een vaardigheid wat ik echt met wat ik hier zo even over aan het repeteren was voor mezelf nee het lukt voor een deel ehm nou ja het creatieve kun je ook alleen zelf als je jezelf er de ruimte voor geeft of neemt Van én doorzetten maar ook ontspannen daar heb ik ook een foto bijgedaan want zo blijft je geest scherp denk ik dus je ik merk dat als ik met mijn vriend bijvoorbeeld op vakantie ga en wij zijn aan het ontspannen dat er dan veel meer gebeurt eh op creatief gebied dan dat je achter je computer gaat zitten en het moet gebeuren zeg maar</i> |

5.2.2 The reflection of personal characteristics

Next to a description of the ideal entrepreneur, participants authenticated themselves as an entrepreneur on the basis of personal characteristics. One of the participants described himself as a person that is oriented towards living in the current moment, and this part of him is reflected in his entrepreneurship, while another participant defined herself as being very optimistic as an entrepreneur but also very much as a person.

“Nou dat is soms een héle grote stap die je moet maken en als je me dan vraagt wie ben ik dan, ehh of ik dan ook zo pluk de dag, of of op het moment zijnde ben, ehh als ondernemer, ja dat denk ik wel. Zeker in mijn werk”.

“Dit vond ik heel erg wie ik ben en daar heb ik een paar aspecten los van die foto die ik heb toegevoegd dat ben ik en dat is ook wel echt wie ik ben wat ik net al zei wie ik ben als ondernemer maar ook als persoon heel erg optimistisch ik zie het mooie van het leven in de mogelijkheden en niet de obstakels”

One of the participants explained that in an organization he previously had set-up, he employed several individuals. He discussed the difference between himself as an entrepreneur compared to other entrepreneurs, and argued that he had spent much more time on the well-being of his employees as opposed to other entrepreneurs. He ascribed his choice to spend much time on the well-being of employees to his character.

“ik denk de gemiddelde ondernemer minder tijd neemt dan ik voor het zorgen voor het personeel. Ik was te goed met mijn werknemers, ik was te aardig. Ehm ik gaf iedere werknemer heel veel ruimte. Tegelijkertijd grote opdrachten maar heel veel ruimte om die opdrachten af te maken”

In addition, he also explained that the way he deals with “competition” is also based on his character and even though this might not work to his advantage, this is who he is and that this will not change. Another participant emphasized her need to build long-term relationships with customers. Doing this was perceived as important for her as a person, but also for who she was as an entrepreneur:

“dat is wel 1 een ding van mij als ondernemer zijnde vind ik het heel erg belangrijk zij is sowieso een goed contact voor mij maar dat ik zeg maar om het werk heen wel echt die oprechte interesse wil tonen in anderen en dat ik vind het belangrijk en dat zijn ook wel al mijn klanten die ik eigenlijk wel altijd gehad heb ehm dat ik het zijn nooit klanten van korte

termijn zeg maar ik ga altijd ik zorg altijd dat ik een lange termijn relatie met iemand aanga dat vind ik zelf belangrijk voor hoe ik zelf ben maar ook als ik vind het gewoon prettig”

As ideal entrepreneurial characteristics were visualized with photographs by some of the participants, so were personal characteristics. The participants provided photographs in which they showed their personal characteristics that were reflected in their entrepreneurship. Photograph twelve was taken by one of the

Photograph 12: visualization of being chaotic and the difficulty of applying structure



participants to represent the struggle she experiences in applying structure, in her private life as well as in her tasks as an entrepreneur. She described herself as being chaotic, what according to her is seen in the photograph. This photograph and its explanation touches upon another theme resulting from the data, which is experienced conflict between entrepreneurial characteristics and personal characteristics.

5.2.3 Experienced conflicts

As mentioned before, from the interviews it became clear that being an entrepreneur means that an individual needs to have to a certain extent a business side. This aspect of being an entrepreneur conflicted with some of the characteristics of the participants. The participants who described themselves as being chaotic or creative, experienced difficulties with applying the business side of being an entrepreneur.

“Ja ook dat eh dat enthousiaste enthousiasmeren verbindingen maken ook als ik met de een spreek dan heb ik bij wijze van spreken al iemand anders in mijn hoofd waarvan ik denk he die moeten eens met elkaar gaan praten he dus die verbindingen leggen doe ik heel erg eh ja dat ja dat het het enthousiasme en dan gewoon gaan en dan pas denken oh ja ik was ook nog ondernemer ik moet ook nog zakelijk blijven weet je haha”

(Interviewer): “Als je nou zou moeten kijken nou naar alle middelen en vaardigheden die je hebt opgenoemd wat welke middelen en vaardigheden mis je dan nog zijn er, zijn wel belangrijk?” (Participant): “Het zakelijke aspect”

There was a tendency to make a distinction between the preferred “soft” entrepreneur and the more commercial entrepreneur. As entrepreneurs were described on the basis of

characteristics that were perceived as positive, there was a tendency to describe entrepreneurs in a more negative fashion, in which striving for profit, the preference for competition and the lack of value for cooperation were emphasized. Four respondents described commercial entrepreneurship as a suit culture, in which profit and revenue were the main motivators for work. These commercial entrepreneurs were perceived as a different group of entrepreneurs that the participants did not identify with.

“Ik ben een beetje dat zijn mijn klanten en dan ook wel wat ik zelf prettig vind ik ben ook wel een beetje de softe ondernemer niet de keiharde commerciële kant dus”

“Mijn mening is dat bij commerciële harde bla bla kijk mij eens even niet zo heel veel inhoud maar meer zo van we gaan lekker eigen doelen ik heb een ego die zo groot is dat hij hier niet in kamer past en mijn doel is heel veel geld verdienen zulke mensen bedrijven. Die heel erg vanuit dat winst maken oogpunt werken ten kosten van andere dan en die (..) heel erg denk ik van nou ja die dragen niet bij omdat ik dat prettig vind of dat van ik wat kan betekenen voor een ander”

“Ik wil ook graag een band met iemand opbouwen zo dat ik weet hoe de manier van denken is en daar goed mee uit de voeten te kunnen voor het project een stukje ik hoeft niet per se mensen in een strak pak om mij heen”

One of the participants visualized the definition of the commercial entrepreneur she could not identify with through photograph thirteen. She mentioned her association of commercial entrepreneurs with big egos, who are more concerned about making profits instead of wanting to be of help to other entrepreneurs.

The relationships that are built with other entrepreneurs are used as means to deal with the aspects of being an entrepreneur that are conflicting with personal characteristics. One of the participants mentioned that she has a problem with networking because she thinks it is more important to show

what she can do instead of having to argue for her competencies. She relies on another entrepreneur with whom she can identify and who is, at the same time, very good at networking.

Photograph 13: visualization of commercial entrepreneurs with big egos



“Dus eh ja ik vind belangrijk dat dit zeg maar een paar van zulke mensen in de omgeving en dat je ja die ook onderhoudt zulke contacten (..) Ja en dat je elkaar helpt (..) Ja nou ja kijk ik vind haar een heel fijne persoonlijkheid en ik hou er van om zeg maar met mensen te werken (..) die dicht bij mij staan en ook weet je wel dat we weten ook veel dingen privé van elkaar en zo en kijk zij is grafisch ontwerpster maar ze is ook gewoon weet je wel en ze is ook gevoelig en eh”

This example represents a tendency of other participants as well. Participants mentioned their struggle with this aspect of being an entrepreneur. When these participants were asked what the reason was for this struggle, they mentioned that what was expected of them as an entrepreneur did not correspond with what they believed what is important.

“Nee en ik ja het ik heb ben gewoon niet zo’n babbelaar of zo dat ik dan heel goed kan zeggen ik ben daar en daar goed in en kan dit en dit voor je betekenen dat vind ik nogal lastig ik heb liever dat ik het gewoon in doen laat zien en dat mensen dan ervaren oh ja die heeft wel kunde op dat gebied en die kan het wel voor me oplossen dan dat ik ga zeggen van ja ik heb het uit mezelf naar boven of naar voren vecht dat ik zeg dat oehoe hier ben ik dit doe ik wel voor jou”

“Nou –naam - is bijvoorbeeld een netwerkenbeest want zij kan gewoon ik kan helemaal niet zo van dat small talk dus ik kan dus als er iemand is en dan nou voor mij is het gewoon belangrijk dat gewoon die dingen ja dat een beetje hoe moet ik dat noemen nou ja een beetje no nonsense en ik vind het dan bijvoorbeeld niet zo belangrijk als ik iemand leer kennen dan wil ik bijvoorbeeld niet over het huisdier praten vind ik misschien wel leuk dat die misschien een kat heeft maar ja weet je wat ik bedoel?”

In summation, the results thus show that the participants in this study describe an ideal entrepreneur that they try to adhere to. In addition, they make a distinction between two types of entrepreneurs, a soft entrepreneur, and a more commercially oriented entrepreneur. Also, the participants describe experienced conflicts when certain characteristics are not in line with their own personal characteristics. The previous themes discussed have shown photographs that confirm or emphasize aspects discussed by the participants. The descriptive analysis of the photographs provided additional results that will be discussed next.

5.3 BEING AN ENTREPRENEUR: THE VISUAL DIMENSION

Looking at the amount of photographs that were provided each week, the first week provided the most photographs by the participants, 37,9% of the total amount of photographs. Looking at the photographs per participant, three patterns were discovered: 1) the role of hobby objects as representations of personal characteristics; 2) representational choices made; 3) the type of photographs used in the implementation of the creative process, and; 4) the emphasized means and the role of senses in visualization. These results will be discussed accordingly.

5.3.1 The role of hobbies in describing “who am I”

During the first week, one of the central questions was: “who are you?”. Participants took photographs of objects that represented their hobbies. Seven out of the ten participants explained on the basis of the photographed objects who they were. Personal characteristics that these participants described in the previous results section were important in the activities of these hobbies. The photographs of these objects thus were representations of personal

characteristics that were reflected in their entrepreneurship. A participant described himself on the basis of holiday photographs. He explained that he is a person who likes to travel, and that the sense of freedom is very important to him. Another participant provided photograph fourteen, which is a typewriter. The explanation that the participant gave was that writing was one of his passions and his motivation to write stories on his typewriter came from the same

Photograph 14: visualization of a hobby in answering "who are you?"



Photograph 15: visualization of maintaining balance, staying focused and not giving up



motivation as to set-up his business, which is not to be forgotten. One of the participants took photograph fifteen, which represented who she was: being balanced and focused. These aspects, according to her, were reflected in her hobby as well as in her work.

“Het is ja ook als je doel wil behalen dan moet je er wat voor doen en met schermen dan is het ook het focussen je moet in balans blijven en ook met het bord zeg maar waar je straks op gaat richten met focus houden en ja oefenen dus dat is wel iets wat mij ook typeert in het werk”

Another participant that described her chaotic nature on the basis of a ball of yarn, see photograph sixteen. She used this ball of yarn at her home because she likes to be creative, and it represents her mind as it can be full of nodes, just like the yarn.

5.3.2 Representational choices

Another interesting pattern that emerged from the data was the representational choices of the participants. Two out of the ten participants provided photographs in which only close-ups were taken of topic of interest. The two participants did not make a distinction between objects, persons or sentences in the way the object of interest was positioned towards the camera, and only favored close-up photographs throughout the four week participation.

Photograph 16: visualization of participant's chaotic characteristic



Another participant emphasized during the interviews her need to have people and objects around her that to her suggest happiness and warmth. Throughout her photographs, this need came apparent by her choices to take photographs of objects around her home and work that, to her, suggest these things. Two participants exclusively provided photographs of other people. Both participants emphasized the need to spend time with other people in their interviews, which was, according to them, the result of their personality. It was interesting to see that the importance these two participants place on other people came forward through the photographs provided. As an answer to the question: “who are you?”, one of the two participants provided photographs only of his family, as according to him gave much insight in who he was.

5.3.3 Implementation of the creative process: type of photographs and visual documents

The third pattern found related to the type of photographs and visual documents used by the participants. Because the participants were asked to provide photographs that to them answered the questions asked, they had the opportunity to use newly taken photographs for the purpose of this research, or to provide photographs that originally had a different function. The result was that some of the participants preferred to either take new photographs or use other already available photographs such as holiday pictures, photographs with friends on special occasions, or photographs from the internet. One participant even said that he preferred photographs he already took for other occasions because they had more meaning to him.

During the first week, one of the first three questions was: “Who are you?”. Two of the participants were setting up their business and combined it as part of their studies, in which they were asked to create a collage that represented them as input for their business. Without any knowledge of this, the two participants send the collages next to the provided photographs as they felt it gave a good overview of who they were. In addition, the participant that works on an international level sent, next to the photographs, his Curriculum Vitae as he felt that it said something about who he was.

5.3.4 Emphasized means and the role of senses in visualization

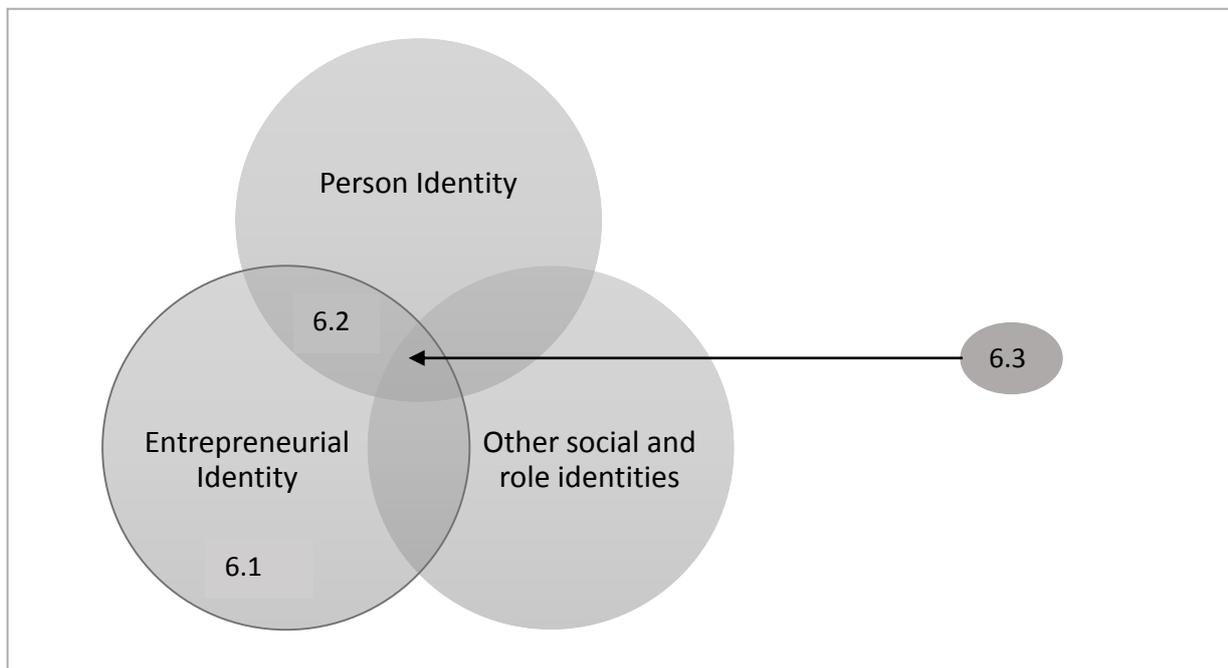
The final pattern found relates to the emphasized means and the role of senses in visualization. In the third week, the participants discussed the means and skills necessary. The participant operating on an international scale is the only one who took a photograph of money as a necessary means for his business. Four of the ten participants took photograph of books, which represented the knowledge that is needed for them in order to do their work. There was a tendency to take photographs of ears, eyes, glasses and mouths as they represented vision or the way one looks at things, communication skills. Two out of ten participants photographed their glasses, two participants took a photograph of their mouths, one participant took a photograph of her ear to emphasize her listening skills, and one participant took a photograph of the eye of one of her customers. She did this to emphasize her admiration for the vision her customers have. It appears that the SEIs experience communication skills as very important in order to do their work, and that taking photographs of the senses is a way of visualizing this.

This chapter has provided an insight in the lives of the PEI. The transcribed data, along with the photographs give an understanding of the construction of the entrepreneurial identity by the SEI, how other social and role identities play a role in the lives of the SEI and how the person identity is reflected in these identity construction processes. At a first glance, the personal characteristics as described in the first results section appear in the visual material, and differences and similarities in representational choices are found as well. In the next chapter, the results discussed according to the theory. After that, the limitations of this study and areas of future research will be proposed.

6 DISCUSSION

The aim of the current study was to gain an in-depth understanding of the SEI's identity construction. The research question developed was: "how do Self-Employed Individuals construct the entrepreneurial identity?". The results show that the construction of the entrepreneurial identity can be divided into three parts. First, the entrepreneurial identity is based on an ideal entrepreneurial type, and concurrently, on the identification with a typical entrepreneurial group. This ideal type and group formation will be discussed in paragraph 6.1. The results also show that the entrepreneurial identity is shaped by the person identity of the participants. This aspect will be discussed in paragraph 6.2. The results also suggest an overlap of other social and role identities, with the person identity and the entrepreneurial identity. The constellation of these different identities will be discussed in paragraph 6.3. Lastly, paragraph 6.4 provides an elaboration on the contribution of the developed visual methodology. Figure three that was used in the theoretical framework to illustrate the focus of this study, serves as a guideline for the discussion.

Figure 4: overview structure of discussion



6.1 CONSTRUCTION OF THE ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY

The participants in this study have described their construction of the entrepreneurial identity on the basis of ideal characteristics, experienced conflicts and have elaborated on how personal characteristics are reflected in or are in conflict with the entrepreneurial identity. As a reminder, Burke (2004) developed an overarching definition of identity that includes role

identities, social identities and the person identity. One aim of this study was to follow this path and provide an overarching construction of the entrepreneurial identity in the context of SEIs. Even though it is difficult to separate role identities from social identities and vice versa (Stets & Burke, 2000), the results suggest that the entrepreneurial identity is constructed on the basis of an ideal entrepreneurial type, and on a formation of a certain entrepreneurial group. This indicates a formation of the entrepreneurial identity as occupying a role (a role-based identity), and as a group member (a social identity) concurrently. Therefore, and to be able to discuss the results according to the theoretical framework, the entrepreneurial identity will be discussed as a role identity and as a social identity. That way, aspects that only could be found when adopting one or the other theory are both included and the results can be compared more thoroughly with studies that adopted either IT or SIT.

6.1.1 The entrepreneurial identity as a role identity

A role identity provides meanings and expectations which are associated with a role that is part of the social structure (Stryker, 1980), and is concerned with intragroup relations (Stets & Burke, 2000). To recall, an individual can at the same time identify with the father role, which is a role identity as it relates to the mother role and son/daughter role, and with the social identity of a family member. Self-verification occurs when the individual perceives him- or herself in line with the *role identity standard*. The entrepreneurial identity can be described as a role identity in the sense this role provides associated meanings and expectations through interactions with counter-roles.

The participants provided a description of the ideal entrepreneur. The description of the ideal entrepreneur can be seen as the role identity standard. To categorize one's self as an entrepreneur means that he or she associates the expectations of having a business side, being headstrong, active, and being able to deal with insecurities with the entrepreneurial role. Other expectations include being ambitious, intuitive and perfectionistic. At the same time, the ideal entrepreneur is able to take a step back from the chaos of daily life and relax. These results are in line with the self-employment literature focused on personality-traits, where risk-taking (Corman, Perles & Vancini, 1998) and the need for achievement (Collins, Hanges & Locke, 2004) were found to be explanatory factors of individuals who become self-employed and successful.

From an entrepreneurial role identity perspective, the participants have shown that they try to act in line with these expectations of the entrepreneurial role. When the participants experience conflict between the expectations of the ideal entrepreneurial role and expectations

in line with themselves, the participants try to reduce this discrepancy. Participants have suggested that they can draw from the skills individuals in their network possess, and that these can help in reducing the discrepancy when the participants cannot adhere to certain aspects of being an entrepreneur. These individuals in their network are friends or other entrepreneurs. When the model of Hoang and Gimeno (2010) is applied to this, the role complexity as perceived by the founder, in this case the entrepreneur, affects the success of the role transition. The entrepreneurial role described by the participants in this study consists of multiple aspects. This suggests that the participants in their transition in becoming an SEI would have been less affected by negative feedback as the entrepreneurial role described by the participants is complex. In addition, the participants in this study implement the entrepreneurial role in situations where other role identities are salient as well. This suggests a high centrality of the entrepreneurial role identity. The novelty, complexity and centrality of the entrepreneurial role identity might indeed affect the role transition from being an employee to becoming an SEI. On the basis of this study however, the model of Hoang and Gimeno (2010) cannot be confirmed or rejected.

Farmer, Yao and Kung-McIntyre (2009) suggested that perceptions nascent entrepreneurs have of entrepreneurial role characteristics and self-perceived characteristics are positively related to the strength of the aspiration to become an entrepreneur. The results of this study suggests that the SEIs can identify with characteristics of the entrepreneurial role identity, and it could explain their choice of becoming an entrepreneur. Even though this study has adopted a qualitative approach as opposed to Farmer, Yao and Kung-McIntyre (2009) and the focus has not been on entrepreneurial aspiration, the results suggest the importance of identification with entrepreneurial role characteristics in showing entrepreneurial behavior. Again, as the results of this study only provide insight in the construction of the entrepreneurial identity, no conclusions can be drawn about the effects of this described role identity.

The entrepreneurial identity thus consists of an ideal entrepreneurial type that can be regarded as a description of the entrepreneurial role identity. The results however show that the entrepreneurial identity is also constructed on the basis of identification with a particular entrepreneur group.

6.1.2 The entrepreneurial identity as a social identity

As discussed in the theoretical framework, SIT explains group processes, the social self and intergroup relations (Pearce, 2013). The results show that the participants describe an entrepreneurial type that emphasizes cooperation instead of competition, helping other

entrepreneurs and to do work that one loves to do instead of striving for profit and growth. This description of the “soft” entrepreneur was set off against a different kind of entrepreneur that is part of a suit culture, which values personal gain instead of cooperation. SEIs in this study described the function of their business as being a means to achieve personal goals. Financial goals were perceived as secondary and the importance of having meaningful work that makes the individual happy was stressed. Moreover, the business of the SEIs in this study have the function to enable them to do what they want. The “soft” entrepreneur is thus not growth-oriented and emphasizes the need to be meaningful, in contrast to the “commercial” entrepreneur. This description is in line with SIT, in the sense that it shows the formation of an in-group of soft entrepreneurs that is cooperation oriented and strive for being meaningful and achieving independence, and an out-group of entrepreneurs that work on the basis of self-interest and profit. These results are in line with studies that argue for non-pecuniary benefits influencing the choice for self-employment (Hamilton, 1990), in particular the importance of independence as suggested by Evans & Leighton (1990).

Entrepreneurial identities are formed and shaped partially by daily work interactions, according to Down and Reveley (2004). SEIs enact the entrepreneurial identity in situations where other identities are high in salience as well. It might be possible that this formation of the soft entrepreneurial identity is a result of enacting the entrepreneurial role identity in situations where other identities are activated as well. Working together with friends and family in informal situations might result in the development of this group of “soft” entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurial identity as constructed by the SEIs is based on values of cooperation instead of competition, the building of personal relationships that transcend business and the importance doing what is experienced as meaningful, instead of aiming for organizational growth or the increase of revenue and profit, and might be a result of this configuration of identities.

Fauchart and Gruber (2011) adopted an SIT approach, and provided a description of three founder types on the basis of strategic decisions made. The results of this study show that the participants describe market segments served, customer needs addressed and capabilities and resources deployed, in line with the communitarian founder type. Moreover, according to Fauchart and Gruber (2011), a similarity criterion is used by the communitarian type when market segments are described, and the customer needs addressed are based on own perceived needs. This similarity criterion is reflected in the results of this study as well, and can be seen as an identification process with customers and the individuals that SEIs cooperate with. As

the SEIs in this study work with friends and family in addition to other SEIs, the results suggest that other social identities are salient and maybe active simultaneously when the entrepreneurial identity is implemented. In addition, the authors suggest the possibility of hybrid identities that incorporate aspects of different founder types. The results implicate this possibility. Two of the participants of this study may fall in this hybrid category as they describe aspects that are in line with the communitarian type, while the participants also describe aspects that lean towards the missionary type.

Another aspect from the study of Fauchart and Gruber (2011) is the importance of authenticity for communitarians. The authors suggest that communitarians perceive authenticity as the fundamental advantage of the organization, which is an interesting conclusion if it is applied to this study. The feature of authenticity corresponds with an important aspect of the SEIs in this study. As the SEIs are the core of their organization, authenticating the services and products offered in line with their person identity seems important. Thus identification with a soft entrepreneurial type that concurs with the communitarian type as suggested by Fauchart and Gruber (2011) provides a better understanding of the entrepreneurial identity from a social identity perspective.

Authenticity is an important aspect for the SEIs in this study, who emphasized the soft entrepreneurial type that corresponds with the communitarian type proposed by Fauchart and Gruber (2011). Deax (1992) proposes that individuals can express parts of their membership in a group in a unique way, based on their person identities, and Lewis (2013) suggests the authenticity-driven identity work of entrepreneurs. Moreover, Conger, York and Wry (2012) conclude that the entrepreneurial role identity is shaped by the person identity of the entrepreneur. The results of this study suggest that the person identities of the participants in this study authenticate their entrepreneurial identity, as well as other identities.

6.2 AUTHENTICATING THE ENTREPRENEURIAL IDENTITY

As a recap: according to Hitlin (2003), the person identity has five characteristics as it: 1) involves concepts and beliefs; 2) relates to desired end states or behaviors; 3) is trans-situational; 4) guides the selection and evaluation of behavior and events, and; 5) social- and role identities revolve around a core value structure of an individual which forms the basis of an individual's person identity. The results show that the participants in this study authenticate their entrepreneurial identity in line with characteristics that to them, define who they are as a person. Conger, York and Wry (2012) state that person identities are based on a

configuration of culturally recognized characteristics that are internalized by the individual, that makes an individual perceived as unique or authentic. The authors also claim that the goals that social entrepreneurs set for their business are shaped by their person identity indirectly, as well as directly. Participants in this study have explained that they perceive their business as a means to achieve a certain quality of life, to reach personal goals such as independence, freedom or to create a happy work life. Even though there were three participants that described concrete goals, one of them included many concrete personal goals achieved through setting up his own business. Why the participants have set up their business is a reflection of who they are as a person, but it also reflects values of entrepreneurs that are part of the more “soft entrepreneur” group. The results are thus in line with the conclusions of Conger et al. (2013) in the sense that the person identity influences organizational goals directly. The results also suggest that organizational goals might be influenced indirectly, however not by aligning the entrepreneurial role, but by aligning a group commitment along the values that form the basis of the person identity.

The SEIs engage in identity work by acting in line with the ideal entrepreneurial type, act according to the values of the more “soft” entrepreneur and shape the entrepreneurial identity to become authentic as an entrepreneur. The business of the SEI revolves around the individual, which makes authenticating the entrepreneur an important process. The results of this study are consistent with the results illustrated by Lewis (2013). Examples that, according to the author, represents feminine discourse used by the entrepreneurs in her study are also reflected in this study. These examples are avoiding people in suits, seeking and establishing long-term relationships and setting high standards. The SEIs in this study emphasized the rejection of the suit culture, the quality of life and being sincere, as well as the importance of establishing intimate connections in business. Even though Lewis (2013) concludes that these examples reflect the authentication of the entrepreneurial identity in line with the person identity, it is suggested that these results tend to be a reflection of the entrepreneurial social identity as described by the participants, instead of the authentication of the entrepreneurial identity.

6.3 THE SALIENCE OF IDENTITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF SEIS

By incorporating the visual dimension into this study, it was possible to gain a better understanding of the social world in which the entrepreneurial identity is enacted. As SEIs have a flexible work space, it was suggested that multiple identities are highly salient in the social situations the SEIs work in. The photographs provided by the SEIs and the information

given during the interviews suggest that for the SEIs in this study, enacting the entrepreneurial identity transcends business relationships. Other role identities are enacted in situations when activating the entrepreneurial identity might be applicable as well. Being an SEI means that there is no clear separation between family, friends, hobbies and work and that multiple identities can be highly salient at the same time. The entrepreneurial identity is enacted in relation to family members, friends, organizations and other cooperating SEIs. It suggests that aspects of these different identities overlap. SEIs in this study explained that the aspects that attracts them in performing certain hobbies or becoming a member of certain groups are the same aspects that are reflected in being an entrepreneur and, at the same time reflects who they are. These results suggest that the person identity indeed serves as a master identity and that the meaning of being a role occupant and a group member is shaped along the values that form the basis of who an SEI is as a person.

6.4 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ESM BASED PHOTO-ELICITATION RESEARCH METHOD

The photo-elicitation method was implemented along the lines of the ESM methodology. 37,9% of all photographs were provided in the first week. Compared with the amount of photographs provided the following weeks, it appears that the first week's assignment was experienced by the participants as most fruitful for visualization. The reasons for this result might be explained due to the fact that the participant is new to the method during the first week, it is the start of building a relationship between the participant and the researcher by showing who a person is on the basis of the photographs, and it might be the specific questions asked during the first week's assignment.

Unique features of an individual's person identity were confirmed when analyzing the photographs. The same patterns might not have been discovered if the photo-elicitation method was implemented without the guidance of the ESM methodology. Participants that emphasized the importance of other people chose to use photographs that included other people significant to them, during the four week process. If the PEI method was implemented with just one interview, this pattern might not have been found.

Challenging the SEIs to visualize their answers was an attempt to obtain more in-depth information by combining visual elements with words as proposed by Harper (2002). It can be questioned whether the participants would have provided the same information on ideal entrepreneurial characteristics and personal characteristics if the interviews were performed without the guidance of the photographs. Throughout the photographs, objects symbolized

personal aspects that were important to the participants, because these aspects reflected who they are. Participants used photographs of items used in their hobbies such as running shoes and knitting material. Participating in these hobbies addresses personal characteristics of the participants, which provides insights in how the different identities such as “athlete”, “runner” or “traveler” is aligned with values that form their person identity, and are reflected in the entrepreneurial identity as well. These results suggest that the visual element of this research has contributed to the gathering of different and deeper information from the participants and consequently a better understanding of the connection between the different bases of identities.

Even though it seems that the implementation of the newly developed method has contributed to a better understanding of the construction of the entrepreneurial identity by SEIs, there are limitations of this study that have to do with the way participants are sampled, the design and implementation of the method and the analysis of the data. These limitations will be discussed next, as well as the areas of future research.

6.5 LIMITATIONS AND AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

From the participants’ point of view, the method was successfully implemented. The gathering of data started with eleven participants, of which ten participants completed the reflection process. One participant wrote a positive blog about what it meant to participate in this study and other participants emphasized the need for more feedback sessions. It appears that the implementation of the method was fruitful for both the participants and the research. Because of the dedication of the participants, it was possible to gain insights in their identity construction processes. This need for dedication from the participants as well as from the researcher points out one of the limitations of the method. It is expected that because the researcher already developed personal relationships with one of the participants, they and the other participants were more inclined to participate and share personal information. Whether the gathering of data is just as successful when participants are gathered without the already established trust, remains to be seen.

Five to six appointments were needed per participant in order to complete the data gathering process. It requires good planning skills and flexibility of the researcher to make the process as easy as possible for the participants, which is important because of the required effort that is needed from them. In addition, due to the busy schedules of the participants, it was not always possible to schedule a feedback session every week. This resulted in variation in

implementation time of data gathering between participants. It is possible that this has affected the results of the data, and can be regarded as a limitation of this study.

Another limitation has to do with the transcription of the audio material. The audio material resulting from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed as discussed in the methods section. Due to a limited amount of time and resources of the researcher it was not possible to check the material a second and third time for transcription errors. It might be possible that mistakes were made during this transcription process and that this affected the analysis of the results. Studies in the future that implement this method need to take into account this check of transcribed material in order to prevent possible bias.

To increase inter-rater reliability, 25% of the transcribed audio material went through a second coding process by an independent coder. Even though the percentage of agreement was high, the test was based on a sample of the material. It can be questioned whether the results of the inter-rater reliability test would have been the same if all the transcribed and visual material went through the second coding process. In addition, the test used for inter-rater reliability represents the mean of total agreements. Future studies might opt for more advanced inter-rater reliability tests in which possible agreement due to chance is taken into account. Moreover, the visual patterns discussed in the results section were not included to establish inter-rater reliability due to time and resource constraints. These results thus need to be read with caution.

The current study provides insight into identity construction processes of Dutch PEIs. Eight participants live and work in the Twente region in The Netherlands, while the other two live and work in the Western part of The Netherlands. A limitation of this study is that the results cannot be generalized to a broader population. Conclusions can only be drawn about the participants in this particular study. Moreover, demographic characteristics such as gender are not taken into account in the analysis and this is regarded as a limitation of this study.

6.5.1 Areas of future research

The discussed limitations of this study provide a basis to identify areas for future research. The implementation of this new method resulted in possibilities to further develop the method used in future studies, expand the insights gained through visual research methodologies on identity processes in entrepreneurship research and to gain more understanding of identity processes in other research areas. Future studies need to take into account the time and resources needed to increase the reliability as well as the generalization of the results. In

addition, future studies can look into the differences between participants on the basis of demographic characteristics. In addition, five more areas are found to be fruitful for future research. First, the results suggest an overlap of other social and role identities that are highly salient in situations where the entrepreneurial identity is enacted. It is possible that this particular social situation in which the SEI works, is very suitable for the development of a soft entrepreneurial type as values that are part of other salient social identities, and characteristics of other role identities might spill over. It might also suggest that the person identity is more important and salient in more situations in the case of the SEI because of the overlap that might exist between identities. Aligning multiple identities according to the person identities suggests less experienced identity conflicts for the SEI which makes the enactment of the identities easier. Future research might look into how other group commitments and roles play a role in the enactment of the entrepreneurial identity by SEIs.

Second, the current study has provided a description of how this particular group of SEIs construct the entrepreneurial identity. Future studies might compare the results of this studies with another group of SEIs situated in other parts of The Netherlands to see whether the entrepreneurial identity as constructed by the SEIs in this study is applicable to SEIs located elsewhere. Moreover, as the number of SEIs is growing throughout Europe and in the US, conducting a transnational study on the construction of the entrepreneurial identity amongst SEIs from different cultures has the potential to understand the similarities and differences between what it means to be an SEI, and their resulting similarities and differences in behavior.

Third, studying the person identity on an international level provides promising areas for further research as well. As person identities are defined as a configuration of culturally recognized characteristics internalized by the individual that develops the perception of one's authenticity or uniqueness (Conger, York and Wry, 2012), differences between these characteristics might be expected when SEIs from different cultures participate and the results are compared. In addition, the importance of being unique and authentic might differ according to the extent to which an SEI lives and works in a culture in which being part of a group is more important than being individualistic. Results of these studies could implicate that there are differences in the way person identities shape other identities and provides a better understanding of the person identity.

Fourth, in this study an attempt has been made to bridge two of the three differences between SIT and IT as discussed by Stets and Burke (2000). The third difference, the consequences of

motivational and cognitive processes has not been taken into account. Future research might adopt the photo-elicitation method to study the consequences of identification. The method is implemented over a period of one to two months. The creation of an organization might take longer, and if one wants to study the resulting feelings of implementing behavior that is in line with a certain identity, the timeline of the develop method might need to be extended. Conducting data over a longer period provides the potential to study feelings of authenticity, self-esteem, self-worth and self-efficacy during the process of organizational development, start-up and implementation.

Fifth, the current method is developed to provide in-depth information on identity construction processes. It might be interesting to see whether this methodology can be adapted to incorporate quantitative elements in to the data gathering process. That way, a bridge can be built between the results of the studies on SEIs that are more quantitative by nature, and the qualitative identity studies found in the entrepreneurial identity literature.

Finally, the data gathered in this particular study might be further explored. As mentioned in the methodology section, due to time and resource constraints, the photographs of this study have undergone a basic analysis. From a more psychological perspective, it would be interesting to further analyze the visual data and to gain a better understanding of how SEIs visualize their answers, what representational choices they make and if any patterns can be established. These results could be compared to a group of entrepreneurs that are more commercially-oriented, and with a group of individuals that are employees and do not show entrepreneurial behavior as it might provide insights in the psychology of the entrepreneur.

7 CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to provide a better understanding of the reasons why individuals become self-employed by focusing on the entrepreneurial identity. Instead of adopting either SIT or IT exclusively, an overarching approach to identity was adopted as suggested by Burke (2004). Self-Employed Individuals construct the entrepreneurial identity on the basis of being a role occupant, and on the basis of a sense of belonging to a group of “soft” entrepreneurs. This entrepreneurial identity is at the same time authenticated by their person identity. Identification with the entrepreneurial role incorporates meaning of being ambitious, intuitive, persistent, being able to relax, headstrong and perfectionistic. Belonging to a group of “soft” entrepreneurs incorporates meaning of informality, cooperation, establishing deep

connections and the rejection of a suit culture and striving for profit and self-interest. The entrepreneurial identity is activated and verified in situations where other social and role identities are highly salient as well. It is suggested that, due to the social situations where SEIs work in, other social and role identities are highly salient when the entrepreneurial identity is enacted and this might explain the development of the construction of this entrepreneurial identity. Future research might look into this area, as well as comparing the results of this study in other contexts.

The aim of this study was to: 1) gain a better understanding of why individuals choose to become self-employed; 2) contribute to the development of an overarching identity theory, and; 3) incorporate a visual dimension of meaning construction in entrepreneurship research. Three main contributions have been made to practice and theory. First, this research has provided new insights in self-employment behavior. Second, by adopting an overarching approach to the entrepreneurial identity, this study provides an example of how elements of role characteristics and group formations are included that otherwise might have been neglected. Three, the adoption of a visual approach yielded results that added a new dimension to meaning construction. By developing and implementing the ESM based PEI method, rigorous data was gathered that enabled the establishment of patterns within and between participants. It provides an example of how visual methodologies can be incorporated into entrepreneurship research. It is hoped that this study inspires others to search for innovative ways to incorporate visual methodologies in entrepreneurship research, and take on the challenge of adopting an overarching identity approach that includes role commitments, group commitments and the person identity.

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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9 APPENDIX 1: FEEDBACK SESSION 1: PROTOCOL

| Phase | Construct | Questions |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Fase 1: aankomst | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Aanbieden kopje koffie</i> ❖ <i>Vragen hoe het uitvoeren van de opdracht is bevallen.</i> ❖ <i>De afgelopen week heb je een aantal foto's gemaakt die antwoord geven op de vragen:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Wie ben jij?</i> ○ <i>Wat doet je bedrijf?</i> ○ <i>Wie zijn je klanten?</i> ❖ <i>In totaal heb je (aantal) foto's gemaakt. Zullen we deze bespreken?</i> ❖ <i>Goedkeuring vragen voor opname interview</i> ❖ <i>Zorg dat de omgeving interview en opname geschikt is</i> ❖ <i>Plaats het opname apparaat en de microfoon gericht naar de deelnemer</i> |
| Fase 2: start interview | Basis vragen | <p><i>Dit is de eerste/tweede/derde/etc. foto die je hebt gestuurd.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wat zien we op deze foto? 2. Waar is de foto gemaakt? 3. Waarom heb je deze foto gemaakt? |
| 2.1 Wie ben jij? | Verdere informatievragen | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waarin verschil jij als ondernemer van andere mensen om je heen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waar aan kan je dat merken? |
| 2.2: Wat doet je bedrijf? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hoe kwam je er bij om dit bedrijf op te zetten? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hoe ging dit in z'n werk? 2. Hoe ziet je organisatiemodel er uit? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waarom heb je ervoor gekozen om het zo aan te pakken? |
| 2.3: Wie zijn je klanten? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kun je een omschrijving geven van je klanten? |
| Fase 3: afsluiting | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Dit waren al mijn vragen over je foto's. Bedankt voor alle informatie die je hebt gedeeld. Heb jij vragen of opmerkingen?</i> - <i>Uitzetten van het opname apparaat</i> |
| 3.1 opdracht komende week | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Komende week zal in het teken staan van de komende vragen:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Wat zijn de marktsegmenten waar je je op richt?</i> 2. <i>Wie zijn je concurrenten?</i> ❖ <i>Je hebt een week om 5 tot 10 foto's te maken die antwoord geven op deze vragen. Zullen we een afspraak maken voor feedbacksessie 2?</i> |

10 APPENDIX 2: FEEDBACK SESSION 2: PROTOCOL

| Phase | Construct | Questions |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Fase 1: aankomst | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Aanbieden kopje koffie</i> ❖ <i>Vragen hoe het uitvoeren van de opdracht deze week is bevallen.</i> ❖ <i>De afgelopen week heb je een aantal foto's gemaakt die antwoord geven op de vragen:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Op welke marktsegmenten richt je je?</i> ○ <i>Wie zijn je concurrenten?</i> ❖ <i>In totaal heb je (aantal) foto's gemaakt. Zullen we deze bespreken?</i> ❖ <i>Goedkeuring vragen voor opname interview</i> ❖ <i>Zorg dat de omgeving interview en opname geschikt is</i> ❖ <i>Plaats het opname apparaat en de microfoon gericht naar de deelnemer</i> |
| Fase 2: start interview | Basis vragen | <p><i>Dit is de eerste/tweede/derde/etc. foto die je hebt gestuurd.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wat zien we op deze foto? 2. Waar is de foto gemaakt? 3. Waarom heb je deze foto gemaakt? |
| 2.1 op welk(e) marktsegment(en) richt je je? | Verdere informatievragen | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hoe zou je het marktsegment omschrijven waar je je op richt? 2. Waarom richt je je op dit markt segment? 3. Waarom niet op een ander marktsegment? 4. Wanneer heb je hiervoor gekozen? |
| 2.2: Wie zijn je concurrenten? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waarin verschil je ten opzichte van je concurrenten? 2. Kun je een omschrijving geven van je concurrenten? |
| Fase 3: afsluiting | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Dit waren al mijn vragen over je foto's. Bedankt voor alle informatie die je hebt gedeeld. Heb jij vragen of opmerkingen?</i> - <i>Uitzetten van het opname apparaat</i> |
| 3.1 opdracht komende week | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Komende week zal in het teken staan van de komende vragen:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Welke middelen zijn belangrijk in de werkzaamheden van je organisatie?</i> 2. <i>Welke vaardigheden zijn belangrijk in de werkzaamheden van je organisatie?</i> ❖ <i>Je hebt een week om 5 tot 10 foto's te maken die antwoord geven op deze vragen. Zullen we een afspraak maken voor feedbacksessie 2?</i> |

11 APPENDIX 3: FEEDBACK SESSION 3: PROTOCOL

| Phase | Construct | Questions |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Fase 1: aankomst | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Aanbieden kopje koffie</i> ❖ <i>Vragen hoe het uitvoeren van de opdracht deze week is bevallen.</i> ❖ <i>De afgelopen week heb je een aantal foto's gemaakt die antwoord geven op de vragen:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Op welke marktsegmenten richt je je?</i> ○ <i>Wie zijn je concurrenten?</i> ❖ <i>In totaal heb je (aantal) foto's gemaakt. Zullen we deze bespreken?</i> ❖ <i>Goedkeuring vragen voor opname interview</i> ❖ <i>Zorg dat de omgeving interview en opname geschikt is</i> ❖ <i>Plaats het opname apparaat en de microfoon gericht naar de deelnemer</i> |
| Fase 2: start interview | Basis vragen | <p><i>Dit is de eerste/tweede/derde/etc. foto die je hebt gestuurd.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wat zien we op deze foto? 2. Waar is de foto gemaakt? 3. Waarom heb je deze foto gemaakt? |
| 2.1 welke middelen zijn belangrijk in de werkzaamheden van je organisatie? | Verdere informatievragen | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waarom zijn deze middelen belangrijk in de werkzaamheden van je organisatie? 2. Op wat voor manier spelen ze een rol in de werkzaamheden van je organisatie? 3. Waarom zijn deze juist belangrijk? 4. Welke middelen mis je in de werkzaamheden van je organisatie? 5. Op wat voor manier mis je deze middelen? 6. Waarin kun je dat merken? |
| 2.2: Welke vaardigheden zijn belangrijk in de werkzaamheden van je organisatie? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waarom zijn deze vaardigheden belangrijk in de werkzaamheden van je organisatie? 2. Op wat voor manier spelen deze vaardigheden een rol in de werkzaamheden van je organisatie? 3. Waarom zijn deze juist belangrijk? 4. Welke vaardigheden mis je in de werkzaamheden van je organisatie? 5. Op wat voor manier mis je deze vaardigheden? 6. Waarin kun je dat merken? |
| Fase 3: afsluiting | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Dit waren al mijn vragen over je foto's. Bedankt voor alle informatie die je hebt gedeeld. Heb jij vragen of opmerkingen?</i> - <i>Uitzetten van het opname apparaat</i> |
| 3.1 opdracht komende week | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Komende week zal in het teken staan van de komende vragen:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Welke toekomstplannen heb je voor je organisatie?</i> 2. <i>Welke betrokkenen spelen een rol in de realisatie van deze toekomstplannen?</i> ❖ <i>Je hebt een week om 5 tot 10 foto's te maken die antwoord geven op deze vragen. Zullen we een afspraak maken voor feedbacksessie 4?</i> |

12 APPENDIX 4: FEEDBACK SESSION 4: PROTOCOL

| Phase | Construct | Questions |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Fase 1: aankomst | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Aanbieden kopje koffie</i> ❖ <i>Vragen hoe het uitvoeren van de opdracht deze week is befallen.</i> ❖ <i>De afgelopen week heb je een aantal foto's gemaakt die antwoord geven op de vragen:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Welke toekomstplannen heb je voor je organisatie?</i> ○ <i>Welke betrokkenen spelen een rol bij de realisatie van deze toekomstplannen?</i> ❖ <i>In totaal heb je (aantal) foto's gemaakt. Zullen we deze bespreken?</i> ❖ <i>Goedkeuring vragen voor opname interview</i> ❖ <i>Zorg dat de omgeving interview en opname geschikt is</i> ❖ <i>Plaats het opname apparaat en de microfoon gericht naar de deelnemer</i> |
| Fase 2: start interview | Basis vragen | <p><i>Dit is de eerste/tweede/derde/etc. foto die je hebt gestuurd.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wat zien we op deze foto? 2. Waar is de foto gemaakt? 3. Waarom heb je deze foto gemaakt? |
| 2.1 Welke toekomstplannen heb je voor je organisatie? | Verdere informatievragen | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waarom zijn dit je toekomstplannen? 2. Waarom vind je het belangrijk om deze toekomstplannen waar te maken? 3. Hoe ben je van plan deze toekomstplannen te realiseren? 4. Wat belemmert je in de realisatie van deze toekomstplannen? 5. Wat bevordert de realisatie van deze toekomstplannen? |
| 2.2: Welke betrokkenen spelen een rol bij de realisatie van deze toekomstplannen? | | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waarom zijn deze betrokkenen belangrijk bij de realisatie van deze toekomstplannen? 2. Op wat voor manier spelen zij een rol in de realisatie van deze toekomstplannen? |
| Fase 3: afsluiting | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Dit waren al mijn vragen over je foto's. Bedankt voor alle informatie die je hebt gedeeld. Heb jij vragen of opmerkingen?</i> - <i>Uitzetten van het opname apparaat</i> |
| 3.1 Afronding | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>Je hebt nu alle weken afgerond. Ik stel voor om een afspraak te maken voor over 3 weken, waarin we alle bevindingen kunnen bespreken. Lijkt je dat een goed idee?</i> |

13 APPENDIX 5: INFORMATION LETTER FOR PARTICIPANTS

(left out for privacy purposes)

14 APPENDIX 6: OVERVIEW TRANSLATION OF SAMPLE QUOTATIONS

| Themes | Quotes |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Cooperation and networks | <p><i>“Ik ben niet alleen het middel maar ook de mensen met wie ik samenwerk in dit geval zijn dat twee collega’s van studio –naam- waar ik dan 1 dag in de week werk zij doen ook camerawerk voor mij dus zonder hen kan ik mijn werk ook niet goed doen”</i></p> <p><i>“That is inherent, allemaal uiteindelijk zijn dat wel concurrenten maar ook collega’s. Want je leert ook weer van elkaar. Dus dan zijn het eerder concullega’s”</i></p> <p><i>“Dus dat is wel iets dat in die zin ben ik mezelf de grootste concurrent als het gaat om de voortgang van het bedrijf en niet zozeer de bedrijven die hetzelfde doen als ik. die zie ik meer als collega’s dan als echte concurrenten”</i></p> |
| | <p><i>“I’m not just the means but the people I cooperate with in this case two co-workers from studio –name- where I work 1 day a week. They do also camera work for me so without them I cannot do my job properly”.</i></p> <p><i>“That’s inherent, eventually those are all competitors but colleagues as well. Because you learn from each other. So they’re cooperative competitors”</i></p> <p><i>“So that’s something, in that sense I am my own biggest competitor if it’s about the progress of the company, and not just the companies that do the same. I see them more like colleagues than as real competitors”</i></p> |
| The need to be meaningful | <p><i>“ik zit op dit moment heel erg in een fase dat ik zoiets heb ik pak gewoon aan wat ik tegen kom en daar wil ik van leren en daar groei je persoonlijk en nou het is leuk als mijn financiële situatie daar ook beter van wordt”</i></p> <p><i>“Je verdienmodel is dan ook geld. En dan denk ik ja. Als ik een basis heb aan geld dan kan ik me wel redden en dan vind ik het voor de rest belangrijk dat er toffe dingen gebeuren. Leuke sociale inspirerende, waar je gelukkig van wordt dingen.”</i></p> <p><i>“Maar dat bedrijf is een middel om een stukje leven te kunnen behalen en zo zou het volgens mij ook moeten zijn”</i></p> |
| | <p><i>“I’m currently in a face that I feel like I’ll just do whatever comes my way and I want to learn from it. You grow as as a person and well it’s nice if my financial situation also gets better because of it”</i></p> <p><i>“Your revenue model is money. And then I think. Well. If I have a foundation of earnings, then I’ll get by and for the rest it is important to me that cool things happen. Nice, social, inspiring things, that make you happy”.</i></p> <p><i>“But the organization is a means to achieve a piece of life and that’s how I think it should be”.</i></p> |
| Future plans | <p><i>“Voor mij ligt het best wel open van he wat is voor mij ook de meest passende manier van wat nodig gaat zijn”</i></p> <p><i>“Dat is het avontuur ook een beetje en dat is de reden waarom we geen businessplan schrijven omdat je op dat moment zet je vast wat je over drie jaar wil zijn en dan kun je daar naar toe werken alleen wij veranderen als persoon zijnde zo snel en dat bedrijf hangt om die personen en niet per se om onze activiteiten dus doelen die we dan en dan hebben gezet ja die kunnen zo maar ineens veranderen na drie jaar doorlopen”</i></p> <p><i>“That’s also a bit of the adventure, and that’s the reason why we don’t write a business plan because at that moment it is fixed where you want to be in three years and then you can work accordingly. Only, we change as a person so quickly and the organization is based on the person and not per se on our activities, so goals we have set at that point in time might change all of a sudden”</i></p> |
| | <p><i>“For me it’s quite open, as in what is for me the most appropriate way of what is going to be necessary”</i></p> <p><i>“Ja het niet ondernemen is dan ja ja een beetje passief en gewoon dingen die gewoon gezegd worden gewoon doen en ook minder soort van die dingen uitzoeken dus niet dat eh wat dan ook een</i></p> <p><i>“Het ondernemen is heel erg een Fingerspitzengefühl van he dat moet er dan zo uit zien of dat moet je dan net zo doen”</i></p> |
| The ideal entrepreneur | <p><i>“Heel veel mensen misschien ook juist wel niet ondernemer worden die dan wat meer afwachtend blijven of ook wat meer eh hoe zeg je dat dienstverlenend van oh die willen graag ook horen van he doe</i></p> |

dit en dit maar dan is het goed”

“A lot of people maybe do not become an entrepreneur, who are a bit more passive, of a little bit more, how do you say, service oriented. They would like to hear: hey do this and this and then it’s okay”

Being authentic as an entrepreneur

“Nou dat is soms een héle grote stap die je moet maken en als je me dan vraagt wie ben ik dan, ehh of ik dan ook zo pluk de dag, of of op het moment zijnde ben, ehh als ondernemer, ja dat denk ik wel. Zeker in mijn werk”.

“Well it’s a very big step you sometimes have to make and if you ask me who am I, and if I am still sort of seize the day or being in the moment, as an entrepreneur yes I think so. Especially in my work”

Experienced conflicts

“Ja ook dat eh dat enthousiaste enthousiasmeren verbindingen maken ook als ik met de een spreek dan heb ik bij wijze van spreken al iemand anders in mijn hoofd waarvan ik denk he die moeten eens met elkaar gaan praten he dus die verbindingen leggen doe ik heel erg eh ja dat ja dat het enthousiasme en dan gewoon gaan en dan pas denken oh ja ik was ook nog ondernemer ik moet ook nog zakelijk blijven weet je haha”

“To enthuse people, make connections. If I speak to one person I directly have as a matter of speaking another person in my mind as in hey! They have to go talk to each other. SO making those connections I do a lot and the enthusiasm and just go. And afterwards I’m thinking oh yes I’m also an entrepreneur I have to remain business-like”

vaardigheid is maar wat niet in die foto maar wat een beetje aansturen is ja je wordt gewoon aangestuurd nou ja je hebt toch een beetje die zelf verantwoordelijk”

“Yes not participating in entrepreneurship is a bit passive and just do things as you are told and also not figuring stuff out as much. What is also a skill but what is not in the photograph. A bit of managing, you’re just being controlled and well yes you kind of have the responsibility yourself”

“Dit vond ik heel erg wie ik ben en daar heb ik een paar aspecten los van die foto die ik heb toegevoegd dat ben ik en dat is ook wel echt wie ik ben wat ik net al zei wie ik ben als ondernemer maar ook als persoon heel erg optimistisch ik zie het mooie van het leven in de mogelijkheden en niet de obstakels”

“I felt this really represented who I am, and I have some aspects of it, independent from the photographs I have added, which is who I really am as an entrepreneur but also as a person. Very optimistic, I see all the good in life and the possibilities and I don’t think in terms of obstacles”

“Ik ben een beetje dat zijn mijn klanten en dan ook wel wat ik zelf prettig vind ik ben ook wel een beetje de softe ondernemer niet de keiharde commerciële kant dus”

“I’m a bit, those are my customers and also what I am comfortable with. I am also a bit the soft entrepreneur. So not the hardcore commercial side”

“Entrepreneurship is very much an intuitive feeling, as in hey this has to look a certain way and that needs to be done in a certain way”

“Ik denk de gemiddelde ondernemer minder tijd neemt dan ik voor het zorgen voor het personeel. Ik was te goed met mijn werknemers, ik was te aardig. Ehm ik gaf iedere werknemer heel veel ruimte. Tegelijkertijd grote opdrachten maar heel veel ruimte om die opdrachten af te maken”

“I think the average entrepreneur takes less time than me in taking care of the staff. I was too good with my employees, I was too kind. I gave every employee too much space. At the same time big assignments but a lot of room to finish them”

“Ik wil ook graag een band met iemand opbouwen zo dat ik weet hoe de manier van denken is en daar goed mee uit de voeten te kunnen voor het project een stukje ik hoeft niet per se mensen in een strak pak om mij heen”

“I want to build a relationship with someone so I’ll know how their way of thinking is and being able to deal with it for the project. It’s a bit as in I don’t really need people in a tight suit around me”