



*Edited by*

Enrico Baraldi · Simone Guercini · Marcus Lindahl  
Andrea Perna

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# Passion and Entrepreneurship

Contemporary  
Perspectives and New  
Avenues for Research

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ISBN 978-3-030-47932-9      ISBN 978-3-030-47933-6 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-47933-6>

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# Preface

This book is the result of a collaboration that brought together a group of scholars interested in the relationship between passion and entrepreneurship according to several potential paths and viewpoints. It was October 2016 when during a meeting in Uppsala, Sweden, the anthology's editors started talking about the project and decided to organize a first workshop in Florence, which would be followed by others in Uppsala and Milan. This volume is the result of this process, whose details are provided in Chap. 1.

The book contributes on the link between passion and entrepreneurship, introducing new perspectives on this topic. We started from the idea that entrepreneurship was not just based on the search for profit. Instead, entrepreneurial experience incorporates more complex processes, often based on less rational behavior motivated by reasons other than revenue. "Passion" refers both to emotional elements that may fuel an entrepreneurial effort and to something that feeds the business. The link between passion and entrepreneurship is certainly a complex one, visible in the realm of practice and increasingly investigated in scholarship as well. Due to this complexity there is no unitary view of how passion and entrepreneurship relate with each other but, as any entrepreneur would know the world and thrive upon, a bricolage to be picked and assembled according to will and opportunity. As we have seen during this joint research process, there are variants and flavors both of passion and of entrepreneurship.

An overarching aim of this project, the workshops, discussions and eventually this selection of texts that constitute this book, has been to question any simplistic relationship between passion and entrepreneurship whereby the former is positively related with and the basis for the latter. Passion is a source of experimentation; it motivates actions taken in conditions of uncertainty, and it is a fact that can therefore support learning. Passion can have a positive effect on most entrepreneurial activities, as psychological fuel either enabling entrepreneurs to pursue their dreams or making them push forth despite hardship. Some of the book's chapters show how passion can be a motivating factor for the formation of skills and relationships, and this represents an "asset". Other chapters highlight that passion can have "dark sides" and cause non-rational behavior. Irrationality is not per se always negative. People can run businesses for reasons other than profit, and passion can explain this. This is a complex issue which can result in both positive and negative outcomes, depending also on several other intervening factors.

There is a need to be both theoretically and empirically careful when investigating these constellations of passion and entrepreneurship. While positive combinations are important, it is also necessary to assess critically the pro-passion bias of entrepreneurship studies, which may risk diluting the very idea of the linkage passion-entrepreneurship. An important negative facet of this linkage is that passion can also make the actor "blind" with respect to lessons that can derive from experience, reiterating behaviors that may have led to negative outcomes.

Passion focuses on domain rather than performance. While such a focus can create endurance for initiatives stretching over the long term, it can also destroy resources if they remained tied for too long to economically unsustainable initiatives. Instead of enabling, passion can stand in the way of actual success or, even worse, it may prolong business ideas which should have been terminated long ago. As noted in the introduction, passion, entrepreneurship and business performance are three clearly different concepts. The case studies and literature analyses in the book stress that passion is not only an emotionally heightened state of the entrepreneurs but an important construct that shapes entrepreneurial identity. To be an entrepreneur suggests having passion. But how the single entrepreneur relates with passion is very idiosyncratic and can result in very different combinations.

While investigating this complex and emerging topic we also rethink the definition of passion and its function for entrepreneurs. The volume discusses also the main theoretical and practical implications of the connection between passion and entrepreneurship for businesses, from the individual to the community level. The single chapters include case studies from multiple sectors, alongside conceptual frameworks, that we hope can be of interest for scholars working on entrepreneurship as well as for practitioners and policymakers.

One of the key messages of the book concerns the transitions in the connections between passion and entrepreneurship that a single entrepreneur may experience. In their relation with passion, entrepreneurs may go through a metamorphosis, from committed user to emotional business developer, from individual to collective efforts or from aspiring something to acting to get it. Transitions and the unfolding of time raise some intriguing questions: is passion sustainable? Is passionate entrepreneurship sustainable? Can it be? Is it even desirable?

Finally, we would like to thank all coauthors and the universities that hosted the workshops and supported our research. From our part, we can certainly say that the book enterprise has been passionate, and we hope that the reading will be too.

Uppsala, Sweden  
Florence, Italy  
Uppsala, Sweden  
Ancona, Italy

Enrico Baraldi  
Simone Guercini  
Marcus Lindahl  
Andrea Perna

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# 1

## Introducing and Framing the Connections Between Passion and Entrepreneurship

Enrico Baraldi, Simone Guercini, Marcus Lindahl,  
and Andrea Perna

### 1.1 Why Passion and Entrepreneurship?

It is hard to picture a real entrepreneur without passion, that is, as a strictly rational individual driven solely by a calculative pursuit of profit. Iconic entrepreneurs such as Virgin's Richard Branson, Apple's Steve Jobs, IKEA's Ingvar Kamprad, Luxottica's Leonardo del Vecchio or The Body Shop's Anita Roddick all shared a deep passion and a strong emotional engagement not only with their businesses but also with broader societal

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and personal issues, ranging from the environment to living conditions and poverty. But, despite the salience of deep passions in the professional life of so many entrepreneurs, only quite recently has passion surfaced as a core topic in entrepreneurship studies (see, e.g., Cardon et al. 2009; Murnieks et al. 2014; Chen et al. 2015; Guercini and Ceccarelli 2020). Following and expanding this research tradition, this book aims to penetrate into the connections between “passion” and “entrepreneurship”, two phenomena that for long have been treated by separate disciplinary domains, namely philosophy and psychology (e.g., Descartes 1985; Vallerand et al. 2007), on the one hand, and management and economics (e.g., Schumpeter 1934; Kirzner 1973), on the other hand.

While from an empirical point of view, passion is clearly important for real-life entrepreneurs and seems to have concrete consequences for their behavior, it is also important from a theoretical point of view to develop the very concept of passion, its various facets and connections with entrepreneurial behavior. Therefore, this book sets to investigate in a fine-grained manner the very construct of passion and its empirical manifestations across concrete cases of entrepreneurial endeavors. This investigation will help us identify how the notion of passion, in all its various facets and by using different perspectives, can be employed within the academic field of entrepreneurship, while also allowing to progress further this field itself.

This book is the result of the joint efforts of a team of scholars who have been working on the topic of “passion and entrepreneurship” for several years and have met to discuss these issues in three dedicated workshops: in Florence, Italy (2017); in Uppsala, Sweden (2018); and in Milan, Italy (2019). Next to offering a novel perspective on the connections between passion and entrepreneurship, this book also addresses this issue from the perspective of both individuals (Thorgren and Wincent 2015) and communities (Cova and Guercini 2016; Dallago and Tortia 2018).

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While consolidated academic definitions of entrepreneurship are based on the search for profit by rational actors who discover entrepreneurial opportunities thanks to their alertness (Kirzner 1973) or combine resource and activities in innovative ways (Salerno 2008), the reality of entrepreneurship is much more complex. In particular, entrepreneurship seems to be often based on less rational behavior driven by reasons quite different from profit-seeking or even from any form of economic gain. For many entrepreneurs, entrepreneurship goes tightly together with individual passion and a sense of creativity (Cardon et al. 2009). Passion is a concept signaling strong emotional elements and a sense of irrationality, and it can both feed the pursuit of a certain business and be itself enhanced by the entrepreneur's efforts in starting and developing a business (Gielnik et al. 2015).

These kinds of connections between passion and entrepreneurship are an interesting research area, which is still in its infancy (Collewaert et al. 2016). The literature in this emerging area (Cardon et al. 2009, 2012) has identified both the positive and negative aspects of passion, including its “contagiousness” in relation to others such as employees and financiers, and the problem of measurement of passion and its effects. Scholars have identified skills, social relationships and own work experience as important factors influencing both passion and entrepreneurship. Consumption too can be a reservoir of passion and for innovative forms of entrepreneurship (Guercini and Cova 2018; Daskalopoulou and Skandalis 2019). In examining the interface between passion and entrepreneurship the contributions in this book address in particular the following issues: (1) rethinking the definition(s) of passion and its various forms and facets; (2) highlighting the multiple functions of passion for entrepreneurship; and (3) capturing the different analytical levels where passion emerges, such as individuals, teams and communities.

This book provides a conceptual framing as well as empirical case studies on the theme of passion and its roles for entrepreneurship. The cases provide concrete examples from several sectors and contexts such as wine-making, sports equipment, gaming, healthcare, the cultural and non-profit fields. This variety enables investigating passion within heterogeneous settings. This introductory chapter continues with a review of previous studies on the link between passion and entrepreneurship. Then, we define our framework to address this connection: this framework identifies different facets and intensity of passion, the level at which

it appears (individual, team and community) as well as its effects for the entrepreneurial endeavor. Finally, we provide a brief review of the contents of the chapters that make up this volume.

## 1.2 Previous Studies

It is both stimulating and challenging to review the theme of passion and entrepreneurship, which we identified above as a new research area within the field of entrepreneurship. While a comprehensive literature review on this topic would require much more space, we focus here on outlining the key themes and concepts which emerge from the most influential and cited contributions on the links between passion and entrepreneurship. On the one hand, from the most influential studies appear interesting research gaps that deserve further attention, and, on the other hand, through the new interpretation of the connections between passion and entrepreneurship it is also possible to propose a new research agenda.

### **Entrepreneurship and Passion: Introducing the Phenomenon**

It is broadly acknowledged that the research field of entrepreneurship concerns how new businesses are formed (Shane and Venkataraman 2000). The “how” question is certainly very intriguing but complex to address, as nascent businesses emerge from the combination of heterogeneous elements and processes such as technology, the business development process, the entrepreneur’s role and relationships with markets. A large part of entrepreneurship research has focused on understanding the different roles played by the entrepreneur as an individual when new businesses are formed. The entrepreneur is often viewed as the owner and manager of the business (Cooper et al. 1988), the organization builder (Gartner 1988), the founder (Howell 1972; Mescon and Montanari 1981), the actor who combines factors (Lachman 1980), the formal authority in the organization (Hartman 1959) and the one who takes risks in business (Hull et al. 1980; Palmer 1971). Moreover, Gartner (1988: 26–27) proposes that “entrepreneurship is the creation of new organizations” and “what individuals do to enable organization to come into existence”. This corresponds to a functional view of the

entrepreneur, distinct from that of the company owner, who assumes a role with respect to economic development (Schumpeter 1934) and business development (Fazzi 1982). While the above are certainly all important roles of an entrepreneur, especially in relation to a new organizational form, resources to be combined or markets to be created or approached, those definitions do not say much about the degree of engagement and attachment of the entrepreneur to the new business. Introducing passion means looking for non-rational explanations of entrepreneurial process (Hirschman 1997).

At a first look, passion has been often utilized to explain the entrepreneurial process or, more precisely, passion has been studied as a concept suitable for understanding the complexity of entrepreneurial actions (Brännback et al. 2006). It is also worth mentioning that social psychologists (e.g., Sternberg 1986) have brought passion into social sciences as an analytical tool and concept to understand the individual's engagement with such feelings as love and particular activities and behavior such as arts or artistic work. Thus, passion has been utilized as a suitable construct and concept to understand how emotions interact with various daily and professional activities.

Scholars focusing on passion in entrepreneurship often make use of the core concept of “entrepreneurial passion” (EP) elaborated by Cardon et al. (2009). EP appears as a suitable concept to shed light on the complexity of the relation between passion and entrepreneurship, although over time it has received several critiques. Before discussing EP further, we now introduce the works which inspired and are at the origins of the concept of EP.

The work by Vallerand et al. (2003) is a seminal contribution, which started the exploration of the relation between passion and various human activities and which also stimulated the development of the emergent research area of EP. Based on a large empirical study with 900 participants, these authors define passion as a strong inclination toward an activity that people like and find relevant: “a strong inclination toward an activity that people like affective, that they find important cognitive, and in which they invest time and energy behavioural” (Vallerand et al. 2003: 757). The results of this study had the important implication of creating the assumption that passion is likely something *positive* and that is

affecting strongly the entrepreneurial behavior at the individual level. On a similar vein, Baum and Locke (2004) also contributed to the core ideas behind entrepreneurial passion through one longitudinal study conducted within the architectural woodwork sector in the US. More particularly, the main goal of their study was analyzing the correlation between entrepreneurs' personal characteristics and firm performances. In other words, Baum and Locke (2004) utilize passion as a critical factor in understanding cognitive and motivational elements influencing venture growth. In line with Vallerand et al. (2003), Baum and Locke (2004) state that "passion and tenacity affect vision, because values and traits may affect vision through similar processes" (Baum and Locke 2004: 590). Here these authors identify a clear connection between passion—interpreted as something positive—and good entrepreneurial results, which often derive from the "love" for work of motivated and passionate entrepreneurs.

### **Domain Passion and Entrepreneurial Passion**

The work by Chen et al. (2009) also contributed to deepening the understanding of the target-specific nature of passion, following also the literature stream that views passion as a positive force that supports entrepreneurial endeavors. One of the main theoretical contributions by Chen et al. (2009) is the idea that passion is a domain-specific motivational construct because one needs to have a target for passion, and this target is often a specific activity, that is a *domain*, from which one's affective experiences originate. This activity or domain is the target toward which one is motivated to exert a persistent effort, and the base for the emergence of domain passion (DM). This conclusion derives from realizing, following Vallerand et al. (2003), that passion is a motivational construct that contains affective, cognitive and behavioral components: passion is viewed as "an entrepreneur's intense affective state accompanied by cognitive and behavioural manifestations of high personal value" (Chen et al. 2009: 199).

The three works by Vallerand et al. (2003), Baum and Locke (2004) and Chen et al. (2009) brought into the entrepreneurship domain some key standpoints, which would later inspire the concept of EP as further elaborated by Cardon et al. (2009). After understanding its origins, we

can now turn our attention to how Cardon et al. (2009) specifically develop and treat the concept of EP, as well as the limitations of this concept. Focusing on EP is important because this concept has contributed to start an intriguing debate in academia regarding the connections between passion and entrepreneurship (Gielnik et al. 2015), but, on the other hand, it is important to understand its limitations because EP has also stimulated an opposing discussion concerning the efficacy of this concept in capturing the complexity of entrepreneurship. Moreover, the linkage between entrepreneurship and passion assumed by the concept of EP may need to be questioned at its very ground: as we will further explain, it is entirely possible that entrepreneurship and passion do not go well together.

The importance of EP as a construct is proved not only by the number of citations that Cardon and colleagues have received over the last ten years or so but also by the other contexts where EP has been adopted as a concept. Cardon et al.'s (2009) article was the one that opened up an important debate among academics and practitioners too. For instance, the American business magazine *Forbes* featured in November 2019 an article by Geri Stengel titled "Is The Next Big Thing in Venture Capital Human Capital", where venture capitalist Eva de Mol and serial tech entrepreneur and angel investor Janneke Niessen both used the concept of "entrepreneurial passion" to point that "weaknesses" in the human capital of venture capital firms may negatively affect the performance of start-ups. Within academia, the paper presented by Cardon et al. (2005) at the Academy of Management conference and titled "Entrepreneurial Passion: The Nature of Emotions in Entrepreneurship" is a first milestone for studies on the relation between passion and entrepreneurship. This paper combines the more general concept of passion to the specific field of entrepreneurship. Cardon et al. (2005) introduced here what would become then the widely accepted definition of EP, which expresses the idea of attraction toward entrepreneurship because of predominantly positive feelings. Moreover, Cardon et al. (2005) reunite the various streams of research which recognize that most entrepreneurs are driven by emotions, to a point that EP is claimed to be a form of generalized passion for the very pursuit of entrepreneurship. In other words, EP becomes equivalent to a feeling that is embedded in the behaviors of the

most successful entrepreneurs: passion helps entrepreneurs to persist while facing difficulties and keeps in the hearth of the entrepreneurs the enthusiasm to pursue their goals (Cardon et al. 2005).

The conference paper from 2005 would then become published a few years later as the article “The Nature and Experience of Entrepreneurial Passion” (Cardon et al. 2009), which includes a theoretical conceptualization of EP as follows “a consciously accessible, intense positive feelings and ... results from engagement in activities with identity meaning and salience to the entrepreneur” (Cardon et al. 2009: 515). Thus, EP appears as a strong inclination toward enjoyable, important activities related to being an entrepreneur. The central themes that characterize EP can be expressed as follows: (1) passion is an intense positive emotion; (2) whose empirical referents or objects usually involve venture-related opportunities, tasks or activities and (3) that has a motivational effect that stimulates entrepreneurs to overcome obstacles and remain engaged. In this sense, passion clearly links to engagement with certain activities in a broad sense and therefore passion and engagement are inseparable. Moreover, it is implicit in Cardon et al.’s (2009) definition of this concept that those individuals have strong positive feelings simply about the fact of performing entrepreneurial actions or being entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurial passion is the “fire of desire” acting as self-expression that drives entrepreneurial daily efforts and motivates entrepreneurs to persist in the face of obstacles (Cardon et al. 2009).

### **On the Links Between Entrepreneurial Passion and Consumption**

A more recent stream of studies shows that the source of passion for entrepreneurship lies also in consumption. Within studies focusing on consumption, passion is seen as a feeling toward an object that is pleasurable and attracts loves or desires by a subject. As pointed out by Cova and Cova (2002), there is an emerging quest for communities linked together by processes of consumption. This search can impact also the individual behavior in entrepreneurship. While the involvement of consumers in production activities and co-production with businesses has been previously studied, the emergence of entrepreneurship from consumption is a different phenomenon (Martin and Schouten 2014; Cova and Guercini 2016).

In the economic literature, the consumer and the entrepreneur are considered as distinct if not opposing players: neoclassical economics formulated a theory of consumption totally separate from the theory of the firm, with assumptions, models and conclusions very different from each other. However, recently the contribution of consumers in the process of production is being recognized, for instance within studies of consumer behavior (Martin and Schouten 2014) and the marketing literature in general (Daskalopoulou and Skandalis 2019). The consumer crosses the border of the world of production and becomes a “working consumer”. If the consumer is a worker, her opposition to the producing firm posited by Marxist theory is confirmed and reinforced (Cova and Dallı 2009). In fact, if “co-production can occur in collaboration with companies” (p. 323), the working consumer, as a worker, is an object of appropriation of value by the firm, for the full value and not just for the amount exceeding the salary. The theory of “working consumer” does not neglect the possibility for the consumer to “by-pass” the interface with organizations, recovering bargaining power in this way, or getting more independent and gaining market power. This possibility emerges especially in the presence of communities large and powerful enough that can support single consumers entrepreneurs: studies have in fact highlighted the role of communities as key also for developing forms of local entrepreneurship (Guercini and Woodside 2012). In this case “companies have to interact and, sometimes, compete with powerful communities of consumers who avoid companies’ exploitation by protecting the value produced by their members and, in some cases, market it directly” (Cova and Dallı 2009: 334).

### **Lessons Learned: Identifying Relevant Research Gaps**

The aforementioned previous studies on the linkages between passion and entrepreneurship enable us to identify some research gaps that will be addressed in this book. Next to the need for developing new research tools to investigate this subject (see the conclusions chapters and its suggestions for further research area), we have identified two themes which deserve attention.



Firstly, in this literature passion has been considered mostly as a positive feature for entrepreneurial initiatives. However, as pointed by Vallerand et al. (2003) there exists also a dark side of passion: “Yet, because the activity has taken control over the person, obsessive passion would be expected to lead to persistence. Such persistence is rigid because it occurs not only in the absence of positive emotions, but even in the face of important personal costs such as damaged relationships and failed work commitments” (Vallerand et al. 2003: 758). Interestingly, although somebody might consider obsessive passion even a boost to develop entrepreneurial activities—through persistency—Stroe (2017: 31) considers also that “obsessive passion is highly likely to bring about detrimental outcomes for the entrepreneur”. If we take into account the relevance of the dark side of passion and how the dark side would affect entrepreneurial initiatives, several unsolved questions emerge, such as (1) how the dark side of passion influences the development of a new venture, (2) how the dark side of passion clashes with the positive side of passion, (3) how the entrepreneur can cope with the dark side of passion from an individual perspective and (4) how the existence of the dark side of passion affects the fundamentals of EP as elaborated by Cardon et al. (2009). That the problematic role of passion is a key question is confirmed also by the recent call by Spivack and McKelvie (2018), who advocate more efforts in order to understand the dark side of passion in entrepreneurship.

A second theme that seems to be understudied is the so-called consumer entrepreneurship and its links with the domain of passion. The literature on the linkage between passion and entrepreneurship almost neglects the presence of consumer entrepreneurship. For example, the article by Cardon et al. (2009) reviews the literature focusing on affect and passion in entrepreneurship, and among the “object of affect” the 22 papers reviewed mainly highlight the role of such elements as “one’s work”, “opportunities”, “stakeholders” and “venture”. Only in one instance does the role of “favourite hobbies or activities” emerge, which suggests the role of the consumption process in generating entrepreneurial passion (Brännback et al. 2006). The study by Brännback et al. (2006: 3) stresses that one can use “hobbies as a proxy measure for passion along with a broad battery of survey”. Or, as proposed by Bamford and Bruton (2006:

44), “hobbies are those pursuits that an individual does as an avocation. Since the individual does these things as an avocation, typically great passion is associated with them that can help encourage the success of the small business”. In fact “intentions to build a business on something that the person is passionate about—a hobby—becomes the vehicle for studying the role of passion in starting a venture” (Brännback et al. 2006: 5). Finally, Brännback et al. (2006) distinguish between “passion” and “tenacity”. One can make the hypothesis that in consumer entrepreneurship commitment derives from passion rather than tenacity.

### 1.3 Addressing and Framing the Connections Between Passion and Entrepreneurship

How can we address the core issue of the connection between passion and entrepreneurship? This section explains the interpretative framework proposed by this anthology. Our framework emerged from the core ideas discussed by the team of authors in a series of workshops during which earlier versions of the various chapters were presented. This interpretative framework was further developed also while the contributions in the various chapters became finalized, drawing also from the way in which each chapter addresses the linkage between passion and entrepreneurship.

In fact, the connections between passion and entrepreneurship are visible from a few vantage points that are proposed in the various contributions contained in the volume. These vantage points include:

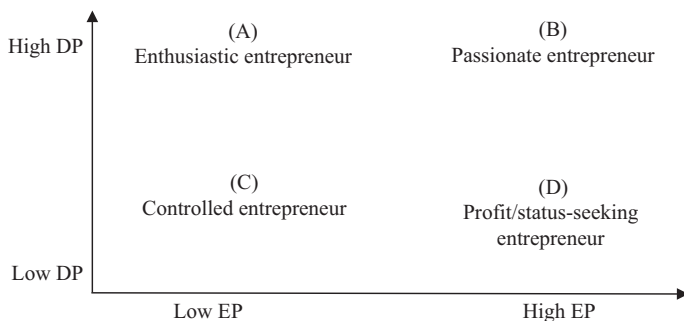
1. The distinction and the relation between domain passion (DP) and entrepreneurial passion (EP), both in theory and in concrete cases
2. The distinction and the relation between positive and negative sides of passion, including their coexistence in the same specific case
3. Different levels of analysis, including the individual entrepreneur, the entrepreneurial team (e.g., inside a single organization), the entrepreneurs in networks and associations, the community level (all the way to the entire society)

### Relation Between Entrepreneurial and Domain Passion: A Typology

Considering the first point, there are different possible combinations between different levels of DP and EP. Simplifying, we can consider the situations in which the two categories assume high and low levels, recognizing four different combinations shown in the matrix of Fig. 1.1. The relationship between entrepreneurship and passion can therefore be configured in different terms depending on the different degree of EP and DP that drive the entrepreneur. Each of the four situations identified in Fig. 1.1 is worth being analyzed in detail as it can create specific dynamics between the two forms of passion, which can support or hinder entrepreneurship.

The various combinations of the levels of EP and DP can be the basis of a typology over the role played by passion and its specific object in the experience of a particular entrepreneur. Each of the four emerging types (A-B-C-D in Fig. 1.1) indicates a different balance between various forms of passion and hence four different types of entrepreneurs.

The first type (A) can be defined as “*enthusiastic entrepreneur*” and is characterized by a high degree of DP and substantially less EP. These are entrepreneurs whose passion is focused on a particular domain (e.g., culture, gastronomy, nature or sports) and starting a company is probably more a means to satisfy this deeply rooted passion than the passion can be a means to pursue a successful business. This pre-existing passion remains dominant even after the creation of the venture, making DP a



**Fig. 1.1** Four combinations of entrepreneurial passion (EP) and domain passion (DP)

central element of motivation and highly influential on the entrepreneur's choices, which may lead to choices clashing with established business logics. The ventures of enthusiastic entrepreneurs would benefit from involving a "surrogate" entrepreneur (Radosevich 1995; Lundqvist 2014), that is, an individual who follows a stricter business logic and is driven by EP. A surrogate entrepreneur would be an important complement because the founder may be reluctant in following business-oriented motivations (represented by a low level of EP), following instead their desire to dedicate themselves fully to their domain passion. This particular combination of DP and EP therefore assumes recognizable characters in the experience of the enthusiastic entrepreneur, thus defining a specific connection between passion and entrepreneurship. This combination of DP and EP corresponds to particular characters described in the literature, in particular lifestyle entrepreneurs or accidental entrepreneurs (Shah and Tripsas 2007; Cova and Guercini 2016). These terms emphasize the prevalence of factors other than the search for economic success in the entrepreneurial path of these individuals. Similarly, this mix of DP and EP can also be recognized in some, but certainly not all, profiles of user entrepreneur and tribal entrepreneur (Shah and Tripsas 2016; Cova and Guercini 2016).

The second type (B) can be defined as "*passionate entrepreneur*", corresponding to the situation in which there is simultaneously a high level of DP and a high level of EP. This combination of EP and DP can characterize user entrepreneurs and tribal entrepreneurs, whenever they reunite a strong drive for their particular domain and also for the pursuit of a business. These would be particular situations because starting a company driven by a high level of DP does not mean that the entrepreneur develops also a strong EP. We have chosen the term "passionate" to highlight that these entrepreneurs burn both for the particular domain in which their venue operates (e.g., specific product, technology, area of consumption or interest) and for an entrepreneurial activity focusing on the pursuit of economic-financial results and market success. In this situation B, passion and entrepreneurship are connected in a way that can express the highest level of motivation: for passionate entrepreneurs there is a synergy between DP and EP, which the literature describes for instance in the area for sports, music or maternity products (Shah and Tripsas

2016). The two objects of passion tend to support each other; but at the same time there can be critical junctures and moments of crisis for the entrepreneurs where being exposed to high levels of both domain and entrepreneurial passion can lead to difficult choices if the two types of passions push in contrasting directions. High levels of DP and EP can enter into conflict with each other in the entrepreneur's experience. Thus "passionate entrepreneurship", like other forms of unconventional entrepreneurship, entails also problematic sides (Guercini and Cova 2018).

The third type (C) is termed "*controlled entrepreneur*" and represents the situation in which an entrepreneur has a low level of both DP and EP. This situation can correspond to a rational entrepreneurial figure, who views being an entrepreneur mostly as a job. The term "controlled" suggests that this type of entrepreneur can control herself and does not follow emotions or passions to the same extent as the other two types previously highlighted. The controlled entrepreneur relies more on rationality than on passion elements (Hirschman 1997). However, this lack or deficit of passion can push this type of entrepreneur more easily than the other two to exit entrepreneurial activity, especially when there are difficulties that require motivation for an additional dose of commitment of time, financial resources and relations and so on.

The fourth and last type highlighted by Fig. 1.1 is the (D) "profit/status-seeking entrepreneur", which characterizes entrepreneurs with a high level of EP and a low-to-moderate level of DP. This situation includes entrepreneurs who start a business while explicitly looking for entrepreneurial opportunities and the passion driving them coincides with the entrepreneurial activity per se, that is, strictly entrepreneurial passion (Cardon et al. 2009). The products and services provided by profit/status-seeking entrepreneurs can be totally detached from their personal interests, for instance as consumers. This type of entrepreneur is certainly attentive to business opportunities, especially if equipped with "alertness" (Kirzner 1973). The success of this type of entrepreneurs would accordingly depend more on the extent to which they are actually gifted with alertness than on other internal motivations. In fact, this kind of entrepreneur is interested more in seizing business opportunities than in enhancing a specific domain through particular products or services. The "profit" dimension is though only one component driving these

entrepreneurs, namely that of economic and financial returns. A high EP associated with a modest DP can appear also in individuals who have a strong drive to create and run an organization because of the social recognition associated to this within a community: we term this component as “status”. In other words, we propose that entrepreneurs characterized by low level of DP and high level of EP seek the profit and status which are typically associated with passionate pursuit of a business activity.

### **The Interface Between Positive and Negative Sides of Passion**

Our second vantage point was the interface between positive and negative sides of passions, considering also how these elements can impact entrepreneurship. In other words, the existence of negative and positive aspects of passion entails clearly different connections between passion and entrepreneurship. Similarly to the combinations between EP and DP, we propose a typology of entrepreneurial situations based on the combination of high and low presence of positive and respectively negative aspects of passion.

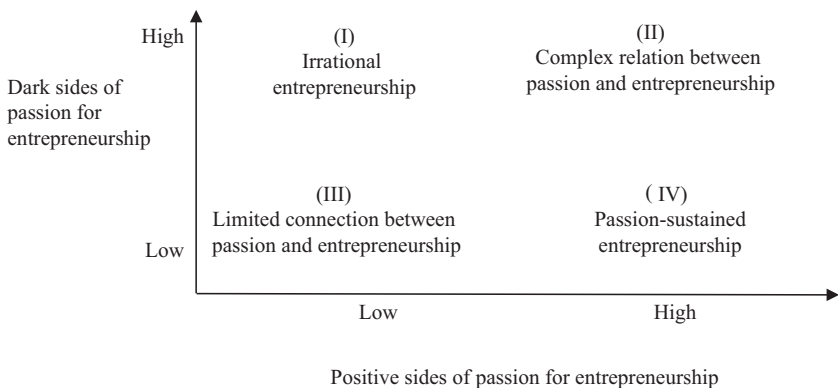
Despite differences in how passion and entrepreneurship can be interpreted, we can formulate a continuum based on the magnitude of emotional charge of a passion. In general terms, passion can be conceptualized as a “strong inclination toward an activity that individuals like (or even love), that they finds important, in which they invest time and energy” (Vallerand et al. 2007: 507). This inclination and desire may stretch from harmonious positive feelings to a point of pathological obsessiveness of religious proportions (Vallerand et al. 2003; Ho and Pollack 2014). As will be noted, our understanding of passion in this anthology, in its ethic as well as emic form, ranges from a modest emotional arousal above some assumed normal state to an off-the scale emotional crisis. We shall see several examples of positions on the passion continuum in this volume.

Further, the linkage between entrepreneurship and passion can be differently grounded with respect to the object of arousal and desire. In other words, we will see entrepreneurs claiming that they are passionate about quite different things. Passion may either be a driving force to become entrepreneurs within a given field or activity, for instance, surf board manufacturing or wine making, or be directed toward the pursuit

of the business activity itself. In the latter case, the entrepreneur would be driven by a particular form of passion, which we already noted is as “entrepreneurial passion”, EP (see Cardon et al. 2009, 2017).

The negative and positive sides of passion (deriving respectively from madness-like passion and entrepreneurial passion) can also be set against each other as we do in Fig. 1.2: four situations can be identified here (I-II-III-IV). A first situation is that in which the negative aspects outweigh the positive ones in the involved passions, configuring a situation that we have called as (I) “*irrational entrepreneurship*”. In this case, passion leads to a reliance on impulses and emotions at the expense of evaluations of the relationship between actions and effects, in terms of loss of rationality. It should be borne in mind that in this scheme the concept of the “dark side” of passion should be referable both to passion as such and to the effects of its manifestations.

A second situation is one in which the positive and negative aspects of passion are both present in high terms, producing a situation of (II) “*complex relation between passion and entrepreneurship*”, in which the role of passion is found in many aspects of the entrepreneurial experience. The outcome of passion on the entrepreneurial affair is uncertain here because there are at the same time both strongly positive and strongly negative facets of passion involved which can counter-balance each other: for instance, a rational business pursuit driven by strong EP may be



**Fig. 1.2** Four possible connections between passion and entrepreneurship

nullified by an equally strong crude passion for a particular domain that makes the entrepreneur eventually unable to make relevant commercial choices.

A third situation has a limited level of both positive and negative aspects of passion, so we have named this situation as (III) “*limited connection between passion and entrepreneurship*”. It is a situation in which the relationship between passion and entrepreneurship appears in any case weak or less crucial, since the positive and negative effects of passion are not very significant.

We have defined a fourth and final situation as (IV) “*passion-sustained entrepreneurship*”, in which the positive aspects of passion clearly prevail over the negative ones. Therefore, these are entrepreneurial experiences which are fully sustained by passion, because its positive aspects prevailed over what we have defined as the “dark side” of passion.

While situations with predominantly positive sides and effects of passion (IV in Fig. 1.2) have been studied extensively and situations with limited positive and negative effects (III in Fig. 1.2) are less interesting to study, the other two situations in Fig. 1.2 are those most interesting to study. Analyzing them can provide novel insights to the field of entrepreneurship: what can explain situations of entrepreneurship dominated by the negative sides of passion (I in Fig. 1.2), making the entrepreneurial pursuit almost irrational? and how can we make sense of situations with both strongly positive and negative sides, creating a highly complex relation between entrepreneurship and passion, such as when conflicting passions are at play (II in Fig. 1.2).

### **Adding Other Levels of Analysis: Individual and Collective Dimensions**

As for the third vantage point, the one concerning different levels of analysis, we identified across this book’s chapters three levels where the linkage between passion and entrepreneurship can emerge: the individual entrepreneur, an entrepreneurial team and a whole community of entrepreneurs (and possibly others players too). Therefore, this volume considers also broader contexts wherein the role of passion for entrepreneurship becomes visible: not only the isolated entrepreneur but also the

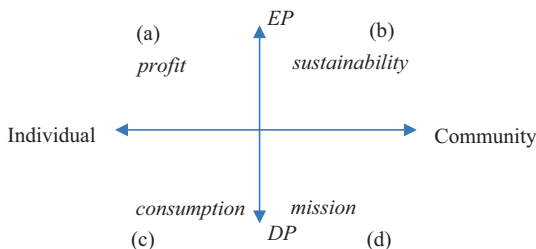


relationships of this key actor with other stakeholders. Adding to the typologies in the graphs of Figs. 1.1 and 1.2, the three levels that we consider now (individual, team, community) define a further dimension of the connection between passion and entrepreneurship, which can be further related with the two elements of entrepreneurial as opposed to domain passion (i.e., EP vs. DP).

In other words, we relate now the various loci of passion and entrepreneurship, as expressed by the three analytical levels of the individual, the team and the community, with the type of passion driving entrepreneurs, that is, EP or DP. The dimension of individuality and of community examines two clearly different categories in the context that embraces the connection between passion and entrepreneurship. Moreover, entrepreneurship involves the individual and the community dimensions both as a source of resources and as markets and, even before starting a company, as a source of motivation. Depending on the type of passion (EP or DP) prevalent in an entrepreneurial experience and the role assumed by the individual or community dimension, a further typology of entrepreneurial situations emerges, as exemplified in Fig. 1.3.

The four quadrants in Fig. 1.3 (a-b-c-d) correspond to as many entrepreneurial situations indicating different connections between entrepreneurship, passion (with two forms shown on the vertical axis) and their locus, moving from individuals and the community (on the horizontal axis).

The first quadrant, (a) “*profit*”, indicates a situation in which the entrepreneur is driven primarily by her individual motivations and a strong



**Fig. 1.3** The relation between types of passion (EP vs. DP) and the individual versus community dimension

entrepreneurial passion (EP), with an explicit emphasis on the pursuit of individual economic success.

In the second quadrant (b), “*sustainability*” suggests a situation in which the actor is driven primarily by motivations linked to the community and a strong entrepreneurial passion (EP), which embraces therefore such societal values as social sustainability in the pursuit of one’s own business.

Turning to the third quadrant, (c), “*consumption*” indicates a situation in which the entrepreneur is driven primarily by individual motivations associated with a passion for some particular domain (DP). We use here the term “consumption” because this kind of entrepreneurship often entails production or service provision guided by the individual’s needs and interests, usually matured in specific consumption experiences.

Finally, the fourth quadrant (d) is termed “*mission*” and captures a situation in which the actor is driven in the first place by motivations related to the community and essentially associated with the passion for some specific domain (DP). The communal dimension means that this passion is shared and cultivated with other individuals and possibly other entrepreneurs, implying that passion is also fueled by sharing processes. The notion of “mission” represents here the role that this kind of entrepreneurs can assume as missionaries who aim to make an impact at the community level.

## 1.4 The Chapters in This Anthology

This book includes nine chapters. This introductory chapter sets the scene for our exploration of the connections between passion and entrepreneurship. The concluding Chap. 9 brings together the pieces of this journey along these linkages and offers the theoretical and practical implications emerging from this exploration as well as avenues for further research. The seven chapters between this introduction and the book’s conclusions (Chap. 9) provide different viewpoints and insights on the connections between passion and entrepreneurship. Table 1.1 offers an overview of these seven chapters in terms of level of analysis, type of research and adopted methodology.

**Table 1.1** Overview of the chapters in this anthology

	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8
Title	Discovering passion through entrepreneurial stories: emerging features from a content analysis	The role of passion(s) in entrepreneurial team evolution	Beyond "entrepreneurial passion": Are there other "deeper" forms of passion involved in entrepreneurial pursuits?	It's not fair!— Passion, play and entrepreneurship	Passion, expert knowledge and community entrepreneurship	Exploring the role of entrepreneurial passion in combining social and business goals. The OTS benefit corporation	Follow your passion. Passion and resilience in the surfing industry
Authors	Ranfagni, Runfola, Milanesi, Guercini	Petrucci, Pagano and Bocconcelli	Baraldi, Lindahl, Perna and Sabatini	Mitchell and Taalas	Lechner	Cantù	Capone
Level of analysis	Individual entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial team	Individual entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial communities	Individual entrepreneurship	Entrepreneurial team	Individual entrepreneur and community
Type of research	Empirical	Empirical	Empirical	Conceptual	Conceptual	Empirical	Empirical
Method	Mixed	Qualitative-case study	Qualitative-case study	Mixed	Literature review	Qualitative-case study	Qualitative-case study

In Chap. 2, Ranfagni, Runfola, Milanese and Guercini identify what passion represents according to the entrepreneurs' views by taking the perspective of *consumers entrepreneurs*. The authors identify six different ways of interpreting passion, which derive from the analysis of the materials collected directly from interviews with entrepreneurs. The results contribute to classifying passion into the following forms: "as life companion", "as targeted action", "in practice", "in organizational context", "in collectivism" and "passion and struggle". To carry out this study mixed methodological tools have been applied. More specifically, in order to identify patterns in the language of the entrepreneurs and find out what is passion for them, the authors have integrated in-depth interviews with content analysis relying on text-mining techniques. This chapter both contributes with an interesting new research method usable to explore passion in entrepreneurship, and findings of particular relevance for consumers entrepreneurs, namely that passion seems permanent and is conceived by entrepreneurs themselves as the motivating force for initiating and developing their business.

Chapter 3 by Petrucci, Pagano and Bocconcelli explores the role of passion in the specific context of a new venture started by an entrepreneurial team. The authors utilize the distinct concepts of "entrepreneurial passion" and "domain passion" in order to shed light on how new ventures are formed as a continuation of initiatives undertaken by an entrepreneurial team. Thus, this chapter embraces the social dimension of entrepreneurship and, importantly, identifies also in this collective setting the important role of strong emotions and joint motivations. The empirical setting is the cultural and creative industry. The analysis of the empirical materials shows that domain and entrepreneurial passions are both relevant to give birth to the company. In this case, the interplay between domain passion and entrepreneurial passion allows the creation and development of the new venture: importantly, the authors show that entrepreneurial and domain passions are both necessary and can support each other by appearing with different depth one from the other in different moments and turning points in the evolution of the entrepreneurial venue.

In Chap. 4, Baraldi, Lindahl, Perna and Sabatini offer a view on the linkage between entrepreneurship and passion which is in contrast with

established and traditional conceptualizations of this linkage. The authors utilize a case study in the wine industry to show the contrast between entrepreneurial passion, in the sense of Cardon and colleagues, and a crudely passionate entrepreneur. In this way, the authors claim that beyond the acknowledged concept of entrepreneurial passion other forms of “deeper” passion may influence the creation and development of new ventures. The case narrative is constructed in order to provide a detailed description of the background and personal traits of the entrepreneur, which constitute the reservoir for his crude passion, and of how the entrepreneur decided about his venture development. The chapter leads to a discussion about the other forms of passion—such as “brutal” passion—which go beyond the traditional notion of entrepreneurial passion and even question if passion and entrepreneurship can work well together.

Chapter 5—written by Mitchell and Taalas—deals with the interplay of passion and entrepreneurship from the viewpoint of affect and game play, and specifically spatiality. This chapter focuses on entrepreneurial communities and their experiences in founding new firms such as startups embedded in tech cultures. Relying on studies about games and culture, the authors apply affect theory to analyze “Werewolf”, a social deduction game popular within tech communities. The chapter uses the game metaphor for understanding entrepreneurial communities and the various roles appearing within them. Moreover, through the game metaphor, the authors highlight the importance of considering passion not as something simply rooted in an individual emotional system, but rather as intensities emerging in between agents and materials. This study concludes that the spatial view of the game “Werewolf” is central and fuels passionate communities of start-up entrepreneurs.

In Chap. 6, Lechner problematizes the concept of entrepreneurial passion starting from an overview of the whole academic field of entrepreneurship. A key point is that entrepreneurial passion is a problematic concept, which leaves several open questions. Through this conceptual paper, the author offers a voyage along different forms of passion, which are related to different forms of perception and behavior. More precisely, Lechner indicates that the transition between the experience gained by cultivating a passion and the role of innovator or entrepreneur is not a simple step. The chapter points that in order to better understand how

passion is related to entrepreneurship, it is essential to consider all facets of passion before investigating the effects of more restricted forms of passion. An important conclusion of this chapter is that *moderate* forms of passion—combined with other dimensions such as the social context of the entrepreneur or his/her expertise—would positively affect the new venture development.

Chapter 7 by Cantù investigates the relation between passion and entrepreneurship within the context of new ventures formed for the pursuit of a social mission, that is, social entrepreneurship. The key research question concerns the implications of entrepreneurial passion for a firm characterized by a social mission. This chapter includes a case study of a start-up company, which provides a digital platform and services for sharing information about no-profit organizations so to improve awareness of donations and philanthropy. The theoretical framework combines social entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial abilities, such as alertness, networking and intuition. A key finding of this study is that, in order to reach socially relevant goals, entrepreneurial passion combined with entrepreneurial skills plays an important role.

In Chap. 8, Capone explores user entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial passion through the experience of a new venture whose founder is a user in the field of surfing, an area where many innovations have been developed by users. This qualitative research is based on a single in-depth case study featuring a sportsman and his development as an entrepreneur, along with his business. This chapter confirms that many different forms of domain passion can lead to entrepreneurship and that entrepreneurial passion—which appears as soon as the entrepreneur steps up into the creation of a new business venture—may help to overcome criticalities and barriers, which occur over the entrepreneurial process. However, expanding the established view on entrepreneurial passion, the chapter shows how passion specifically contributes and offers detailed insights, which are the outcome of particular life experiences of the individual and are driven also by social processes and interactions. Finally, Capone stresses that in the case of user entrepreneurs, communities play a critical role for idea networking, validation and also proof-of-concept.

## 1.5 Preparing Our Journey Across the Connections Between Passion and Entrepreneurship

This book offers a novel perspective and several viewpoints on the linkage between passion and entrepreneurship. The research group behind this anthology started a journey to explore this topic in a kick-off meeting in Florence in 2017, with the broad question “What is passion in entrepreneurship?” This question has then stimulated an intriguing discussion around not only the concept of passion “in” entrepreneurship but about the various facets of passion and especially about the many linkages between the two concepts and practices of passion and entrepreneurship. The participants in this book project often held diverging views on this phenomenon and so the final result is a variegated, multifaceted, but also partly scattered picture of passion and entrepreneurship, and of the linkages between passion and entrepreneurship. Still, this anthology also brings a common message and many of the views were shared and agreed upon. Rethinking the notion of passion and its relation with, or even its function for entrepreneurship, combining multiple views on the linkages between passion and entrepreneurship and discussing these issues across the individual, team and community levels were indeed challenging but intellectually rewarding tasks for the entire group of researchers behind this anthology.

When conceptual discussions became overly convoluted, we could always revert to the many interesting empirical cases and examples, which form an important part of this anthology. In fact, this book includes several cases and illustrations of how passion intervenes and possibly affects the process of creation and development of a new venture. We accordingly consider in-depth empirical studies as a key tool to contribute to the understanding of this emergent theme within entrepreneurship. The final chapter of this book—“Conclusions: Implications and Further Research Avenues for the Connection between Passion and Entrepreneurship”—will conclude our journey and sum up the findings, the results and the lessons learned from the empirical and conceptual analyses in the previous chapters. In addition to empirical and theoretical implications, this final chapter also suggests avenues for further research.

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# 2

## Discovering Passion Through Entrepreneurial Stories: Emerging Features from Content Analysis

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### 2.1 Introduction

Scholars and practitioners in the field of entrepreneurship recognize passion as deeply embedded in the practice of entrepreneurship, and its role in starting a new business and driving entrepreneurial behaviors. Entrepreneurship research has, to date, focused on passion for activities related to the entrepreneurial process, namely the identification of new venture opportunities, the founding of new ventures and new venture development. Such passion is defined “entrepreneurial passion” (Cardon

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et al. 2009; Murnieks and Mosakowski 2006; Murnieks et al. 2014), that is a passion for the entrepreneurial process and the activities it entails, an enthusiasm and “love for one’s work” (Baum and Locke 2004: 588). Entrepreneurial passion involves positive and intense feelings experienced from engagement in activities associated with roles that are meaningful to the self-identity of entrepreneurs (Cardon et al. 2009). However, a recent theoretical and empirical work has highlighted the object of passion by addressing “passion for what” (Cardon et al. 2017). Thus, researchers directed their attention toward the target-specific nature of passion (Chen et al. 2009, 2015; Vallerand et al. 2003; Cardon et al. 2017), converging on the idea that passion is a domain-specific motivational construct because one needs to have a target for passion, and this target is often a specific activity—domain—from which one’s affective experiences originate, that is also the target toward which one is motivated to fulfill a persistent effort. Among other domains, recent literature has explored the sphere of consumption as a source of new forms of entrepreneurship. More specifically, it is discussed that passions, especially when developed across a wide range of leisure or hobby activities, lead to new forms of entrepreneurship in which an entrepreneur’s commitment is fueled by passion linked to personal aptitudes and leisure preferences, not by the rational search for profit. Such passions are located in the domain of consumption that is driven by passion, since individuals consume certain products or brands because of passion, and share their passion with other consumers (Guercini and Cova 2018).

This literature approaches the construct of passion, often starting from the definitions offered by scholars in literature. Although in every research process the ground of the scholar’s interpretation is unavoidable, in this chapter we propose a passion study approach based on materials collected directly by entrepreneurs during interviews and above all by resorting to more articulated analysis methods that make use of tools further than the direct interpretation of the author. Although there are already studies in the literature that deal with the theme of entrepreneurial passion starting from the narrations made by entrepreneurs (Cova and Guercini 2016), the availability of new research methods in marketing and management (Guercini 2014) can offer new possibilities that go beyond the direct interpretation of texts and propose further reading and interpretation possibilities. There is therefore a research gap in the development of the

theme of passion starting from the language used by entrepreneurs that can be explored with the use of new tools that have not been sufficiently addressed. In this regard, we conduct a study on ten entrepreneurs and analyze their stories to explore passion according to their perspective. The chapter is structured as follows. In Sect 2.2, we present the literature on passion, entrepreneurship and consumption with the purpose of analyzing passion from different angles and disciplines up to research on entrepreneurship and recent studies on entrepreneurship driven by passion that lies in the sphere of consumption. We then illustrate the methodology adopted in the present study, namely a mixed methodology that integrates in-depth interviews with content analysis driven by text-mining techniques. In Sect. 2.4 we present the dimensions in which entrepreneurs pursuit passion as they result from a data analysis by means of a co-occurrence analysis that reveal the words that the entrepreneurs associate to passion. The chapter ends with conclusions, limits of the present study and future research agenda.

## 2.2 Passion, Entrepreneurship and Consumption: A Literature Review

It is widely recognized that passion, as a strong inclination toward certain activities, is one of the reasons why some individuals start their own companies (Henricks 2002; Cardon et al. 2005, 2009; Dalborg et al. 2015). Most can agree with the view of passion “as any intense emotion that stirs humans with energy and deep longing to make difference” (Cardon et al. 2009: 515). The concept of passion is complex in nature and the debate around it is powered by scholars belonging to different disciplines such as philosophy, theology and psychology. Thus, its angles of investigation are multiple, as are the underlying dialectics.

### Passion as a Transdisciplinary Concept

The philosophical debate is rich of contributions. Descartes (1989) claims that the body-soul interaction is the key to understanding passions as “agitations of the soul caused by the animal spirit of the body” (p. 122).

Another perspective regards how passion interfaces with reason acting as a “bondage”. In this respect, the position expressed by Spinoza (1883) is unambiguous; for him, passion and reason simply cannot coexist. Similarly, a dialectical opposition concerns passion and emotions: passion encompasses emotions but the two are different. Kant had already made this point by asserting that emotions are typically fleeting in nature, that is, lasting only a moment, whereas passions are more enduring as they relate to something more permanent. These and many other dialectics surrounding passion could be described and investigated. Each of them takes shape by considering the relations human beings have not with everything and everyone, but with specific objects, entities, persons and activities. As such, passion is not simply a trait. Social psychologists have treated passion as a motivational construct that contains affective, cognitive and behavioral components (Chen et al. 2009). For example, Perttula (2003: 15) defines passion as “a psychological state characterized by intense positive emotional arousal, internal drive and full engagement with personally meaningful work activities”. Vallerand et al. (2003: 756) discuss passion as “a strong inclination toward an activity that people like [affective], that they find important [cognitive], and in which they invest time and energy [behavioural]”. The psychological view of passion is compatible with a feeling that is highly intense and positive, similar to excitement and joy, as an energy that gives individuals a sense of pleasure and promise (Rockwell 2002). Such feeling involves consciously experienced changes in the internal affective state that are attributed to external stimuli and that are reflected upon and stored cognitively for later retrieval (Cardon et al. 2009).

### **Passion in Entrepreneurial Studies**

The concept of passion has recently entered the sphere of research on entrepreneurship and consumption. Researchers in the field of entrepreneurship studies agree that it takes passion to start a new business, and that passion and enthusiasm are deeply embedded in the practice of entrepreneurship. Passion has been addressed as a critical factor in understanding cognitive and motivational elements of the entrepreneurial process, such as entrepreneurs’ effort (Gielnik et al. 2015), venture growth

(Baum and Locke 2004), persistence (Murnieks et al. 2014), opportunity recognition and exploitation (Baron 2008). In such literature, passion is also seen as a driver of new venture opportunities, the founding of new ventures and new venture development. In the attempt to provide a definition of passion, scholars share a common emphasis on “entrepreneurial passion”, that is a passion for the entrepreneurial process and the activities it entails. According to Cardon et al. (2009), entrepreneurial passion refers to “consciously accessible intense positive feelings experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities associated with roles that are meaningful and salient to the self-identity of the entrepreneur” (p. 517). Similarly, Chen et al. (2009) define entrepreneurial passion as an entrepreneur’s intense affective state accompanied by cognitive and behavioral manifestations of high personal values. Thus, passion is the “fire of desire” acting as self-expression that drives entrepreneurial daily efforts and motivates them to persist in the face of obstacles (Cardon et al. 2009). Shane et al. (2003) called entrepreneurial passion a “selfish love of work” (2003: 268). Smilor (1997: 342) defined it as the “enthusiasm, joy, and even zeal that come from the energetic and unflagging pursuit of a worthy, challenging, and uplifting purpose”. Passion even acts as a force that drives entrepreneurs in recognizing new information patterns critical to the discovery and exploitation of promising opportunities (Baron 2008), and in gaining competencies, skills and knowledge, which in turn foster innovation (Martin and Schouten 2014). Smilor (1997) suggested that entrepreneurial passion is one of the most observed phenomena in entrepreneurship research. Despite this acknowledgment, the research field still lacks a theory-based definition of the concept. What unites the studies on passion and entrepreneurship is the idea that passion, when it implies self-identification in entrepreneurial activities, positively affects the entrepreneurial outcomes (Cardon et al. 2009). Cardon and Kirk (2015) specify that “when entrepreneurs are passionate about tasks or activities, they enjoy doing them and experience self-identity reinforcement from doing them regardless of the ultimate outcome or success of that task engagement” (p. 16). Self-recognition, pursued by experiencing passion, favors “entrepreneurial efforts”. Seen as the intensity of work on entrepreneurial tasks (Foo et al. 2009), entrepreneurial efforts can be read in terms of persistence and of absorption (Cardon et al. 2009). Absorption



implies “being fully concentrated in one’s work” (Cardon et al. 2009: 520), while persistence is continuity in implementing actions despite failure, impediments and threats. Both of them make entrepreneurs tenacious in pursuing their goals and in having a greater chance of success (Cardon and Kirk 2015).

### **The Origins of Entrepreneurial Passion**

Some authors explore the origin of the entrepreneurial passion (Chen et al. 2009, 2015; Murnieks et al. 2014; Vallerand et al. 2003; Milanesi 2018). In this regard, Chen et al. (2015) identify three core attributes of passion: (a) passion is accompanied by intense positive feelings, (b) passion regulates individual behavioral tendencies and (c) passion is a target-specific construct. Chen et al. (2009) suggest that passion helps direct one’s attention and actions and that it is a domain-specific motivational construct because one needs to have a target for passion, and this target is often a specific activity or a collection of activities that embody certain implicit or explicit values. Thus, the target-specific nature of passion implies the existence of a specific activity—domain—from which one’s affective experiences originate, that is also the target toward which one is motivated to fulfill a persistent effort. Target activities, or domains, that have been studied in passion research include amateur activities such as gambling (Mageau et al. 2005), physical activities (Rousseau and Vallerand 2008), internet and online games (Wang and Chu 2007), employees’ passion for work (Carbonneau et al. 2008; Liu et al. 2011). Domain passion is often initially practiced as a hobby—activities done for intrinsic enjoyment, typically in one’s leisure time. While some hobbies are defined as “casual leisure” (Stebbins 1997) as they require little knowledge or skills and are pursued for purposes of relaxation, regeneration or hedonistic enjoyment, others are pursued as an expression of ability, purpose and identity, involving more effortful engagement, challenge and complexity thus implying more energy and effort, defined as “serious leisure” (Stebbins 2001). Hobby-related entrepreneurship—entrepreneurs who start up a business out of a passion, cultivated in hobbies and leisure time, for the domain of their venture and product or service it provides—is strongly characterized by domain passion as a triggering

factor of the entrepreneurial process. More specifically, there are cases of hobby-related entrepreneurship in which the entrepreneurial passion is initially absent, but it increases during the entrepreneurial process and fuels its development. Thus, it is argued that domain and entrepreneurial passion activate a virtuous circle in which domain passion—which still remains prevalent for hobby-related entrepreneurs—fuels and is fueled by entrepreneurial passion. Such virtuous circle indicates that domain passion triggers the entrepreneurial process, but it is not a sufficient condition to start a business if there is no entrepreneurial passion as well (Milanesi 2018).

### **Entrepreneurial Passion and Consumption**

When discussing other sources of entrepreneurial passion, Cardon et al. (2017) identify six major sources of entrepreneurial passion: passion for growth, passion for people, passion for the product or service, passion for inventing, passion for competition and passion for a social cause. A recent stream of studies shows that the source of entrepreneurial passion lies in consumption. Within the context of consumption, passion is seen as a feeling toward an object that is pleasurable and that one loves or desires. As Belk et al. (2003) argue the desired object “is experienced by our informants as an intense and usually highly positive emotional state best characterized as passion” (p. 333). Moreover, as favorite thing, it reflects personal meaning and attachment (Wallendorf and Arnould 1988). The relation consumers develop with it is unique. This uniqueness does not exclude others. The desired object “is hoped to facilitate social relations joining with idealized others and directing one’s social destiny” (Belk et al. 2003: 337). Passion acting as a motivational power can generate an energetic engagement that can be collective (Sternberg 1997). Lovers of rafting share their passionate experience generating a communion with the natural environment (Arnould and Price 1993). All these experiences do not constitute an end in themselves, but the naturalistic immersion and the sense of *communitas* they foster allow them to be experienced as free contexts where one can express one’s own nature and get to know oneself more deeply. Entrepreneurial passion may originate from a passion cultivated as consumers. We are in front of a passion experienced as

one's way of being (Holt 1995; Belk 2000). It has a long personal history and stems from consumption that is shared and fostered within a community (Cova and Guercini 2016). Ultimately, passion can act as a connecting force between entrepreneurship and consumption (Ranfagni and Runfola 2018): consumer decides to turn his passion into a business activity and becomes an entrepreneur. Recent studies focus on the passion that stems from consumption and explore its influence on the creation of a new venture. One of these is that of Shah and Tripsas (2007). They show how in practicing leisure activities the end-users, that is persons "who have personal experience with a product or service" (p. 124), can become entrepreneurs in the event they decide to satisfy a need they feel and find no adequate response in the market. Gifted with notable skills, the user-entrepreneur is moved by "a passionate desire to share their solution with others" (p. 123). These "others" consist primarily of their community of users. The latter is a platform for sharing but also for experimentation. With its members they can "nurture and create more novel and effective innovations" (p. 132) drawing on their heterogeneous skills and resources. The product-solution, which emerges from this process, serves to optimize a shared passion. Haefliger et al. (2010) stress how passion shared across a community of users plays a fundamental role in developing new competences and testing out new ways of selling. The idea that shared consumption activities may foster new approaches to entrepreneurship (Bogers et al. 2010) is at the base of the study realized by Guercini and Cova (2014). According to them, passion is cultivated by experiencing it within a tribe of people who, as consumers, share it together with similar interests. Thus, Cova and Guercini (2016) focus on the role of consumer tribes and define the "tribal entrepreneur" as an enthusiast of an activity that innovates with and for the tribe he belongs. The tribe is not synonymous with community. It is a network of heterogeneous persons (in terms of age, gender, income, etc.) who, while not bearers of specific competences, are linked by a passion and emotions and are capable of collective actions. Thus, they are advocates more than simple consumers (Cova and Cova 2002). The tribal entrepreneur creates products with and for the tribe. In doing so, the entrepreneur fosters his skills and knowledge. Given his continuous participation in the activities of the tribe, he continues to be also a consumer (Cova and

Guercini 2016). Ultimately, passion in consumption acts as a force that activates processes of entrepreneurship generating a bridge between consumer and entrepreneur.

## 2.3 Research Aim and Methodology

Our research explores the dimensions in which passion may be enacted, according to the entrepreneurial perspective. As we pointed out in the introduction, our choice of methodological approach intends to face a research gap opened by the availability of new tools for analyzing the theme of passion through the language used by the entrepreneurs themselves.

The methodology we use integrates in-depth interviews with content analysis driven by text-mining techniques, placing itself in a path of evolution that has recently characterized marketing and management studies (Guercini 2014). The in-depth interviews involved entrepreneurs of ten companies that have been chosen as emblematic for the aim of the research. In fact, these companies were founded by entrepreneurs who decided to transfer to a business activity: a passion that they had experienced from the time when they were consumers. Their passion is not casual but well-founded. The identification of the entrepreneurs was made possible by consulting available secondary sources, such as interviews and news items, published in national dailies or specialized journals, in both online and offline versions, as well as thematically focused and company websites. Then, in selecting the entrepreneurs to interview, we searched for situations where (a) the business is an expression of a passion that the entrepreneur experienced as consumer and/or in leisure time as a hobby (domain passion), (b) “the passion for” acted as a driver of business creation and (c) the continuity in sharing passion within consumer communities. For reasons of confidentiality, we restrict ourselves to specifying that the entrepreneurs interviewed belong to different sectors: pastry making (Entrepreneur 1—E1), dog accessories manufacturing (Entrepreneur 2—E2), bike components manufacturing (Entrepreneur 3—E3), online fashion retailing (Entrepreneur 4—E4), audio amplifier manufacturing (Entrepreneur 5—E5), motorcycles manufacturing

(Entrepreneur 6—E6), cosmetics production (Entrepreneur 7—E7), furniture production (Entrepreneur 8—E8), wine production (Entrepreneur 9—E9), online electronics retailing (Entrepreneur 10—E10). Their businesses are family businesses animating online and/or offline communities of customers; they are small- to medium-sized in terms of turnover and they are all based in Italy. The data were collected by means of the qualitative face-to-face interview, which is one of the most widely used methods for gathering data in social and business research (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007). The duration of each interview was at least two hours and they were all carried out in Italian. All the interviews were very open, leaving the respondents the freedom to express their opinions freely and spontaneously. In this sense we have not proposed direct questions concerning “passion”. This does not mean, unlike what was claimed by Gioia et al. (2013), that qualitative research in the organizational field can be rigorous only if it avoids sharing its purpose with the interviewees. If this were true, the research would be all the more rigorous the more it asked the interviewee questions on topics far from the research topics, but it is very likely that such an approach will be inconclusive. On the contrary, a deeper context sharing both by the interviewee and by the researcher can produce more robust ethnographical understanding of the investigated phenomena (Guercini 2004). With this premises, we have preferred to ask the entrepreneurs to tell their own business story. Hence the interview guide included very general questions regarding (a) background information about the respondent (such as studies, interests, previous experiences), (b) information about when the company was founded (the reasons behind the decision to found the company and how the entrepreneur found it), (c) the main steps in the company’s development and (d) main markets and future development (main strategies implemented and main difficulties). From this point of view the research was inductive, as suggested by the literature to deal with complex issues (Eisenhardt et al. 2016) such as passion; hence, we started from general statements that emerged from the interviews we then tried to identify dimensions in which passion was enacted by the entrepreneurs. The interviews were recorded and transcribed (Voss et al. 2002). The transcriptions were subjected to an intense stage of analysis using text-mining techniques. The transcribed text (total words 36,490) was

processed using analytical methods and instruments borrowed from the field of corpus linguistics, which exploits software programs to perform automated analyses of relatively large quantities of electronically stored texts (Witten 2005). We adopted the software T-LAB. This is a multi-functional software widespread in international research centers (<http://tlab.it/it/partners.php>). The material gathered was totally processed in Italian to maintain reliability and rigorosity of the research. Only for the aim of presenting in this chapter, the final output of the research (dimensions of passions and words associated) was translated to English. To reach equal meanings (Chidlow et al. 2014) of the terms expressed in Italian to that in English, we followed a “team-based approach” (Douglas and Craig 2007: 33) that considers the contribution of different individuals that interact and cooperate in the translation, and that is a common approach within the literature (Chidlow et al. 2014).

The analysis followed several steps. We first subjected the file including all the interviews to a “linguistic normalization” (Salton 1989), which makes it possible to correct ambiguous words (typing errors, slang terms, abbreviations), carry out cleaning actions (e.g. elimination of blank spaces in excess, apostrophe marking and additional spaces after punctuation marks) and convert multi-words into unitary strings. This prepared the ground for the next “lemmatization” (Steinbach et al. 2000), which turned words contained in the textual files into entries corresponding to lemmas. A lemma generally embraces a set of words having the same lexical root (or lexeme) and belonging to the same grammatical category (verb, adjective, etc.). Thus, lemmatization acts by transforming, for example, verb forms into the base form and plural nouns into the singular form. We investigate the dimensions in which passion was enacted by making a co-occurrence analysis of the transcribed text emerging from in-depth interviews. We have restricted our analysis by identifying the single words that entrepreneurs attribute to passion. We have built a kind of conceptual map of passion according to an entrepreneurial prospective. Making a co-occurrence analysis (Doddington 2002), T-LAB identified how many times two lemmas jointly occur in the paragraphs composing the processed file. The lemma whose co-occurrences we investigated is *passion*. The resulting co-occurrences indicate what the respondents associate with *passion*. In addition to indicating how many times

the single co-occurrence is used alone and together with “passion” (in both relative and absolute values), the co-occurrence analysis calculates for each co-occurrence the level of the cosine similarity (Cos\_Sim) and of the Chi<sup>2</sup>. The former is an index of association: the greater its value, the higher the number of textual paragraphs containing the co-occurrence. The latter measures the level of significance of the co-occurrence: the greater its value, the stronger the association with the co-occurrence. The next paragraph will present and discuss the main results of the empirical analysis; in particular, following the academic debate, results will shed light on some dimensions of entrepreneurial passion.

## 2.4 Taxonomy of Dimensions in Which Passion Is Enacted and Pursuit from the Perspective of Entrepreneurship

### 2.4.1 Analysis of Co-occurrences

A first group of co-occurrences includes lemmas such as “life”, “living” and “born”. These are co-occurrences among the most frequent and with a high chi-square (Table 2.1). They designate passion as something that is always carried by those who live it (*passion as life companion*). A second group of co-occurrences concerns the lemmas “success”, “satisfaction” and “create”. They are less frequent than the first group, but they have a high chi-square. They connote passion as something that is finalized in specific objectives (*passion as targeted action*). A third group involves co-occurrences such as “dedicate” and “moment”; they indicate how passion absorbs time and should be practiced in order to preserve it over time (*passion in practice*). Passion in a fourth group of co-occurrences is associated with lemmas such as “work” and “entrepreneur”. Their frequency is high even if the chi-square is low. These explain how passion finds in the organization a fertile ground in which to be experimented and nurtured (*passion in organizational context*). A fifth group identifies the associations between passion and the words “community”, “passionate” and “activity”: passion is nourished by living it in community contexts (*passion in*

Table 2.1 The co-occurrences

Dimensions of passion	Lemmas	Coeff.	C.E.(A)	C.E.(AB)	C.E.(A)/ C.E.(AB) × 100	Chi <sup>2</sup>
<i>Passion as life companion</i>	Life	0.187	13	5	38.46	16.895
	Living	0.174	15	5	33.33	13.534
	Born	0.182	35	8	22.86	11.231
<i>Passion as targeted action</i>	Stay	0.121	20	4	20.00	4.102
	Satisfaction	0.153	7	3	42.86	11.80
	Success	0.122	11	3	27.27	5.72
<i>Passion in practice</i>	Create	0.121	45	6	13.33	1.92
	Dedicate	0.163	11	4	36.36	12.362
	Moment	0.164	17	5	29.41	11
<i>Passion in organizational context</i>	Entrepreneur	0.159	26	6	23.08	8.475
	Entrepreneurial	0.135	9	3	33.33	8.049
	Job	0.143	32	6	18.75	5.369
<i>Passion in collectivism</i>	Company	0.13	69	8	11.59	1.403
	Working	0.11	54	6	11.11	0.808
	Passionate	0.121	20	4	20	4.102
<i>Passion and struggle</i>	Community	0.115	22	4	18.18	3.264
	Activity	0.118	47	6	12.77	1.609
	Difficulty	0.191	8	4	50	19.599
	Road	0.163	11	4	36.36	12.362



*collectivism*). Finally, the last group of co-occurrences indicates the relationship between passion and difficulties in pursuing it (*passion and struggle*). This is a strong relationship as demonstrated by the high levels of chi-square.

Now we concentrate our analysis on the single dimensions of entrepreneurial passion in order to grasp the related conceptual contents.

### **Passion as Life Companion**

It emerges from the interviews that passion has always accompanied the entrepreneurs, and it seems to be positively and emotionally engaged as a personal trait. As they describe their business activities, they speak about passion as a state of mind that contributes to defining even a way of being. It is no coincidence that the word “passion” is associated with expressions like “life”, “live”, “be born” and “remain”. The relative co-occurrences are frequent and are, above all, distinguished by high Chi<sup>2</sup> levels, an indicator of the force of the associations. Passion comes to characterize the individual over time: in the cases under examination, it may be innate or it may develop from personal experiences lived in the family. Such experiences can constitute social spaces in which passion is ignited. The following is an example: “My grandmother is from Emilia, and she’s not a great cook, but all her daughters—there are three of them—cook very well, including my mother ... so anyway, I was born into that school, and I’ve always had a passion for cooking” (E1). Even if passion is innate, however, it may remain latent. It may take time, that is, before it turns into creativity and triggers the development of a business activity. One of the interviewees explains it this way: “At a certain point in my life I said to myself: ‘Ok, let’s see if we can really create something that can bring me closer to my passion workwise’. In fact, that’s what happened. Of course, it took two years of work to get from the initial idea to the first finished product” (E2). In other cases, the passion emerges very earlier, in youth. The following is representative of several entrepreneurs: “Passion is genetic ... as soon as I was able to, I applied it in a business activity” (E3). This is the result of a personal passion, which in turn is part of an individual’s DNA. In this connection, another entrepreneur says this: “From the time I was a girl I knew I wanted to work in the world of fashion, of newspapers, so I knew what I was going to do” (E4). Another told

us this: “Everything started when I was between ten and twelve. The passion for music remained over the years ... it was this passion that led us to create our first garage electronics laboratory” (E5). Ultimately, passion is often a companion that, like a shadow, accompanies the entrepreneur on his business journey, as it defines him personally to the point of leading him to create and develop a commercial activity.

### **Passion as Targeted Action**

Passion for entrepreneurial activity is described as a force, which drives toward targeted actions. More precisely, in the interviews we conducted, passion underlies the attainment of a specific objective. The interviewees, in fact, use the term “passion” together with “success”, “satisfaction” and “create”. The narrations that emerge from the relative co-occurrences suggest that passion is a force that enables the entrepreneur to attain gratifying or at least satisfying economic results. One puts it this way: “Clearly, in our business we have managed to turn this passion into a way of sustaining ourselves” (E6). But there is more. The term “success” in combination with passion acquires a meaning, which is not strictly economic. As one entrepreneur puts it: “I think it’s difficult for many people today to do a job that they like and that stimulates them every day, something that goes beyond going to work to bring home the bread” (E4). Passion, in other words, makes it possible to go beyond the materialism of the economic result. Another entrepreneur told us this: “someone who lives on passion needs satisfactions that go beyond money” (E6). The targeted action driven by passion finds expression in the attainment of economic objectives, but this action seems to be inescapably tied to the quest for personal satisfaction. There is, then, a more intimate dimension of passion that entrepreneurs and their collaborators experience privately. This dimension can become a condition able to foster a certain performance, becoming consequently also an economic dimension. In this connection, one entrepreneur told us: “I try to live with these two figures [i.e. dimensions] and I feed my creative spirit drawing inspiration from the accounts of entrepreneurs who, following their passion, have become successful and have created successful businesses” (E6). Passion is a driving force that produces both economic and non-economic effects. What is more, it

can generate advantages not only for the entrepreneur but also for others. This is how one interviewee put it: “At the end of the day, we manage to help not only those who work in the company to get by but also those involved in the activities connected with our company, that is certain suppliers, large or small, which feed this activity, which is a bit out of the ordinary” (E6). Passion, then, is an internal motor that triggers action by combining the targeting of business objectives with a quest for personal pleasure, the effect of which extends beyond the boundaries of the enterprise.

### **Passion in Practice**

Passion is a state of mind as well as a feeling that needs to be exercised. As our entrepreneurs point out, to remain a driver of company activity over time passion must be lived and above all experienced. It is by practicing passion that it blossoms rather than withering. The word “passion” is often used with “dedicate” and “moment”. The relative co-occurrences are statistically strong. To preserve his passion the entrepreneur must dedicate himself to it. This is what one of our interviewees told us: “I make motorcycles, and when I have some free time I go for a ride, that way I enliven my more creative side, which is what weighs most in my nature” (E6). At times practicing passion must be reconciled with the limited time that a hectic business life makes available. In the words of one entrepreneur: “There’s not much time left over to dedicate to your passion ... but it’s still an outlet, and when you want you can use it” (E5). The time that could be dedicated to one’s passion tends to be eroded by the time occupied by one’s entrepreneurial activity. One entrepreneur said this: “In the beginning, it was just a passion for fashion. Now after a year I’ve had to learn ... to find a balance, since the business puts increasing demands on your time ... as much as I hate calling myself an entrepreneur, if I could choose I’d spend my time buying clothes and taking photographs on sets” (E4). It is clear that the passion underlying the development of an entrepreneurial idea is maintained through personal experimentation. This experimentation, however, requires finding compromises in the tradeoff between the time for passion and the time for business.

### **Passion in Organizational Context**

Passion is nurtured within the organizational context. In fact, in the narratives of the entrepreneurs we interviewed the word passion is used together with the terms “working”, “work”, “entrepreneurial”, “entrepreneur” and “company”. From the analysis of the underlying verbatim, the co-occurrences show how the enterprise is considered as a context in which living and experiencing one’s passion. The company is not only the outcome of the passion, but a context in which passion can be practiced. As an entrepreneur says: “The passion element is the fundamental aspect of my business” (E7). Another entrepreneur adds: “I project, after dinner, on weekends ... so doing I express my passion, I give value to business and development of new ideas” (E5). The passion immerses the entrepreneur in the business context in an all-encompassing way. It absorbs and draws its way of living entrepreneurial activity. If it is true that the company is the result of a passion of the entrepreneur, it becomes essential that this entrepreneurial passion remains alive. Hence, it is advisable to exploit the company as a field of experimentation of the passion. However, as an entrepreneur explains, “there is an entrepreneurial context in which the passion is unleashed but the desire to succeed is not said to be easy to realize” (E4). Therefore, the practice of passion is not always a guarantee of success. The company as an organizational context in which the entrepreneur cultivates his passion also includes employees; the latter can therefore be contaminated by a passion that becomes collective from being individual as noted by an entrepreneur who states how “a large share of the employees shares the same passion” (E10). One interviewee explains that: “There are many people here who feel this company as their own and dedicate themselves body and soul in first person. This is because they are living the passion, I try to convey to them” (E6). Passion ultimately creates entrepreneurial activity and finds in it a space in which to grow and renew itself through collective involvement. It becomes a connective force that makes the company more prepared to external changes.

### **Passion in Collectivism**

The passion comes to be fueled also by personal moments that the entrepreneur lives both outside and inside the company. Passion grows and is

renewed through relationships that entrepreneurs share into consumer environments. In this sense, the passionate entrepreneur wants to relate to individuals that pursue the same “passion for”. The word passion is in fact combined with the terms “community”, “passionate” and “activity”. For some entrepreneurs, the participation in certain communities is considered as a source that animates over time passion. An entrepreneur expresses himself in these terms “a group of enthusiasts who share a common passion and make sharing a pastime related to their activity ... it is something that I frequently experience” (E6). So the community is a space that the entrepreneur lives and the sharing of passion can impact on the business activity. In fact, the entrepreneur immersing himself in the community uses passion as an emotional lever, fueling new energies to be channeled into the management of the business activity that is the result of this passion. As one of the entrepreneurs highlight, in fact “at the moment the competitions ... are more a party, in fact during the competitions ... we are all” friends “because we share a passion. We pass from gazebo to gazebo to have a chat and get to know each other, drink a beer ... because being a small community there is still this part and people are still open and want to know each other and talk” (E2).

### **Passion and Struggle**

Passion once followed, is something that in the people who live it can be a source of many problems. It is in fact associated with the word “difficulty” and “road”. In the interviewed entrepreneurs, their business activity created by passion is not without obstacles. In particular, the entrepreneurs interviewed perceive moments where there is a lack of being able to enact passion and, consequently, struggle emerges in contrast with passion. They are connected to the potential tradeoff inherent in the passion and which cannot be overcome. It is as if the entrepreneurs were to choose between more alternative routes. In some cases, the possible crossroads concern the difficulty of approaching the management of their business according to more “rational” logics connected to pursue performance objectives and according to “emotional” logics linked to the search for personal satisfaction in the passion. As one of the entrepreneurs says, “there is a lack of education to what are the difficulties of the

entrepreneurial life and sometimes these difficulties are those that hold back our passion and the ability to dream. I remained a dreamer, I did not compromise” (E6). In other cases, the obstacles lie in the need to tackle work aspects that take away the time to express their passion: “the management of the activity? It depends, it is good and bad” (E9), as highlighted for example by the following passage “it is better than being in a technical office to make toys as I have done in the past ... in reality, the passion is preserved, so much so that in reality we do this work here, despite the difficulties and everything” (E3). It seems to emerge a potential contraposition between conducting an entrepreneurial activity and following one’s own passion, as it is evident in the words of this entrepreneur: “remember that an entrepreneur without passion will have a simpler way and will reach success before anyone else. This is a fact” (E6). It is also true, however, that passion is the aspect that also allows for many of our entrepreneurs the maintenance of entrepreneurial activity, as is evident from the following passage: “pressure brings you on the other side of the work, it often happens to me that the brain returns to work on the creative part simply by going to see an exhibition of paintings, doing something that is not strictly related to the world of design, or taking a walk in the woods” (E8).

## 2.5 Conclusions

The chapter has investigated the dimensions in which passion is enacted, resulting from narratives by entrepreneurs who have made passion, cultivated as consumers, their business.

Although the subject of passion in entrepreneurship is a subject of increasing attention in the literature, there is still insufficient attention to the possibilities that new methods of analysis can give to the interpretation of the phenomenon. This chapter aims to tackle this gap by offering a key to understand it on the base of the contents of the language used by the entrepreneurs themselves to describe their passion. Of course, even in this chapter we have made extensive use of the interpretation and categories generated by literature (Sect. 2.2) but enhancing the entrepreneurial

language and the elements offered by its analysis through new methodologies (Sect. 2.3) already mentioned in the introduction.

The main results of the present study show that passion is a force that can be permanent. It is something that accompanies entrepreneurs throughout their businesses. As highlighted by Cardon et al. (2009) and Gielnik et al. (2015), it is a motivating force. It is also a spontaneous and inexhaustible force that can exert its force over time. Cardon and Kirk (2015) consider how passion creates involvement by promoting absorption and persistence in entrepreneurial behavior. However, its continuity over time requires its continuous exercise. This can happen in different environments, such as companies or communities of passionate consumers. The company is the place where passion is practiced by experimenting and innovating. Communities are contexts that the entrepreneur lives to feed the emotions that passion can generate. Innovations results from creativity, not as an expression of the community. In this sense, entrepreneurs who make passion a constant motivating force overtime cannot be defined as a user-entrepreneur (Shah and Tripsas 2007). Passion affects company performance (Cardon et al. 2009). It pushes toward specific goals. These, however, contrary to what is highlighted by Cardon, are not only economic but have a very personal and intimate nature. Passion allows entrepreneurs to be performing, motivated, but also to grow and evolve personally through a strengthening of self-identity that finds expression in the passion itself.

Finally, passion generates continuous inner battles. These are not just linked to the possibility of growing by seeking economic resources but are linked to the tradeoff that is generated between the time to devote to the passion and time to devote to the business. This element becomes nodal. Passion is in fact an expression of itself while the business is driven by needs for results. Combining the two is the main challenge to make the growth of an entrepreneurial activity possible, the engine of which is the passion of its founder and of those who manage it.

In our interpretation, practicing passion (*passion in practice*) can be conceived as a strong need for conducting the business by all the entrepreneurs interviewed. Passion is seen as being a traveling companion

(*passion as life companion*), always present, that can be of help in conducting the business. The passion is practiced in two main contexts, the organization (*passion in organizational context*) and the community (*passion in collectivism*). Moreover, passion can generate performances (*passion as targeted action*), economic and non-economic ones. At the same time, passion can propose some potential tradeoff and generate tensions (*passion and struggle*), forcing some difficult choices to the entrepreneurs.

Lastly, we should consider some potential limitations of this study that represent even directions for future research. This study has the merit to propose the study of passion starting from the entrepreneurs' words. Differently from previous study the use of content analysis through text mining lets us to identify six interrelated dimensions connected to the passion construct. However, future research should be aimed at a wider empirical investigation both qualitative and quantitative to verify and identify other potential dimensions and to deeper investigate the interplay among the six dimensions herein identified. Moreover, our research considers non-economic performance as both outcomes to reach with the entrepreneurial activity and engine for growth in their intertwinement with economic performance. In other words, our analysis posits how non-economic performance sustains entrepreneurial passion as well as economic ones. Future research should be aimed at investigating the relationships between entrepreneurial passion and performance. Finally, our study considers ten stories of entrepreneurs whose passion stems from consumption. As it has been pointed out, this empirical context was particularly suitable to uncover entrepreneurial passion, but it regards a specific form of entrepreneurial passion. Future research should be directed toward the study of entrepreneurial stories with different origins in order to create an overall understanding of the dimensions that constitute entrepreneurial passion.

To conclude, this study enriches the theoretical debate on passion in entrepreneurial studies, pointing out how entrepreneurs conceive passion in their activities and how it represents a means for the development of the company.



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# 3

## The Role of Passion(s) in Entrepreneurial Team Evolution

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### 3.1 Introduction

The past few years have seen the emergence of a remarkable number of so-called alternative—or even unconventional (Guercini and Cova 2018)—research streams in the field of entrepreneurship. More than the traditional literature, these streams have contributed to recognize entrepreneurship as a more heterogeneous and complex phenomenon highlighting the necessity for research of going beyond the recognized classical theory of entrepreneurship focused on the figure of the entrepreneur and the notion of “opportunity recognition” that lies at the core of the entrepreneurial process (Guercini and Cova 2018). Drawing on the work of Gartner et al. (1994), for instance, many authors have strongly criticized the idea that the single entrepreneur is the sole responsible actor for the whole process of new venture creation (Gartner 1988). The study of the

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figure and behavior of the entrepreneur, with an analysis of its internal cognitive and emotional features, cannot exhaustively explain such a complex organizing process as that of forming a new venture (Gartner et al. 1994).

Against this background, a number of scholars have recently suggested—from different perspectives—that entrepreneurship should be regarded more as a process of a collective and contextual nature, than suggested by past research (Shah and Tripsas 2007; De Mol et al. 2015; Welter and Gartner 2016; Guercini and Cova 2018). First of all, mostly drawing on the work of Granovetter (1985) these authors argue that the entrepreneurial behavior of an individual is a kind of social behavior situated in, and influenced by, the network of his/her social relationships as well as the broader social, economic, cultural, and institutional contexts in which these relationships are embedded (Welter 2011). It is only interacting through and by social relationships that the potential entrepreneur can fully develop ideas, resources, and co-create opportunities. These relationships embed the entrepreneur into a network of interconnected actors which collectively contribute to the entrepreneurial process. By this embedded perspective, indeed, the entrepreneurial action is not the simple result of mechanisms internal to a single individual; rather it emerges as the result of a “collective action” resulting from interaction of the whole network of actors intervening in the process (Welter and Gartner 2016).

Many entrepreneurial frameworks such as the *social entrepreneurship* (Borzaga and Defourny 2004), the *community entrepreneurship* (Johannisson 1990), and more recently the broader paradigm of the *unconventional entrepreneurship* (Guercini and Cova 2018) have acknowledged, even though from different angles, a “collective dimension” inherent in the entrepreneurial process as opposed to the traditional role of the single entrepreneur (Dufays and Huybrechts 2017). These streams have all contributed to expanding our knowledge on the collective dimension of entrepreneurship especially by focusing on the active role that different communities can play in entrepreneurship. Studies have depicted communities mostly as networks of close relationships and intense activities where members are able to share and develop resources that, sometimes, can be the spark that ignites the launch and growth of new

entrepreneurial projects and activities (Pagano et al. 2018). By this perspective, communities can be seen as potential reservoirs of entrepreneurial ideas, resources, and relationships, as well as “places” where activities and practices are shared and, thus, collectively developed (Guercini and Cova 2018). In this context, empirical research has also demonstrated that because of the embeddedness of the entrepreneurial action into social networks and communities, the individual entrepreneur is often represented by a “collective actor” consisting of a coalition of individuals forming an entrepreneurial team (Dufays and Huybrechts 2016; Emin and Schieb-Bienfait 2011). Scholars have reported evidence that over the 90 percent of new ventures start as teams, not as solo entrepreneurs (Beckman 2006). According to these evidences, authors have suggested the need of framing the focal entrepreneurial actor under the lens of the *entrepreneurial team* (hereafter ET) against the myth of the “lonely hero entrepreneur” (Dufays and Huybrechts 2017).

Despite its proved importance, this collective dimension—as it is concerned with the role of the entrepreneurial team against the figure of the solo entrepreneur and the broader role of communities and social networks in the creation and development of new ventures—has not been adequately addressed by past research. Little is still known about how ETs emerge and develop at an early stage of development of a new venture and how ETs relate to their embedding communities and networks in the organizing of the new venture. Rather, past research has mostly explored teams’ internal characteristics and behaviors in relation to firm performance (Klotz et al. 2014).

The purpose of this chapter is to expand our knowledge of the collective dimension of entrepreneurship by shedding light on the way ETs form and evolve in the context of the development of a new venture, and the way ETs influence, and are influenced by, their surrounding communities and networks in this process. To do this, the chapter investigates a specific context of new venture creation, namely that of a passion-based new venture emerging in the cultural sector. The concept of passion is referred to here as domain passion (hereafter DP) (Guercini and Cova 2018; Milanesi 2018) focusing on new ventures stemming just from the domain of activities connected to people’s personal passions and interests (Milanesi 2018). Passion-based activities have been found to be viable

drivers of collective entrepreneurial projects and initiatives (Cova and Guercini 2016). DP strongly motivates individuals toward experiencing creative and productive activities and allows for the formation of close communities of passionate peers able to self-produce innovations and resources that can pave the way toward new entrepreneurial opportunities. In these contexts, individuals are more likely to get together by forming a team in order to share efforts for the development of projects and initiatives. This is particularly true in cultural and creative industries (CCI) (Scott 2012) as well as in social entrepreneurship (Dufays and Huybrechts 2017). Nowadays, it is normal to see communities of passionate artists and enthusiasts developing non-profit and cooperative organizations establishing and carrying on “hybrid” activities with the ambition on the one hand to create social value together with—and for the benefit of—the surrounding community and on the other hand to be economically self-sustainable.

We argue that passion is not only an appealing setting for studying ETs stemming from passionate community contexts but also that passion represents an important dimension influencing individual’s entrepreneurial behavior and has potential to shed new light on team’s internal features, processes, and dynamics. It is important to highlight that past research has scarcely addressed the topic of the ET in the context of a new venture formation and development process. This chapter aims to capture the relationship between the team and the entire entrepreneurial process emphasizing how the passion-based and non-profit logic guiding the rise of the initiative is progressively confronted with an emerging for-profit business logic inherent in the entrepreneurial process. Passion-based entrepreneurship is typically characterized by a combination of passion-based non-profit logic and business-based for-profit logic (Pagano et al. 2018). This is only obvious if considering that, in order to develop, a new venture has to activate the set of its initial resources and activities into the surrounding business context through developing long-lasting business relationships with external pre-existing business actors, primarily customers, and suppliers (Aaboen et al. 2017). The development of initial business relationships—which are needed to assemble the necessary resources to grow—and the consequent embedding of the new venture into the surrounding business context lead to changes in the



passion-based setting of the beginning. This evolutive dynamic characterizing passion-based initiatives has been scarcely investigated through the lens of the ET.

To achieve the objective of the research, along with DP, another relevant concept is used: the concept of entrepreneurial passion (hereafter EP) (Cardon et al. 2009) indicating the sphere of entrepreneur's feelings on the entrepreneurial activity primarily connected to the achievement of personal success and for-profit goals. We believe these two dimensions of passion (DP and EP) can provide an interesting explanation of the team's dynamics and how these address the development process of the new venture.

An in-depth case study concerning the formation and development of an ET in the context of a "cultural and creative" start-up development process is reported: the case concerns the development of RATATÀ, a contemporary art festival and trade show by a community of passionate friends, artists, and enthusiasts.

The case has thus been chosen in the light of the following characteristics:

- RATATÀ is a venture which belongs to CCI domain and develops within both a broader social/institutional context and a larger community of peer passionates in the city of Macerata, a small/mid-sized town in the center of Italy.
- RATATÀ venture started in 2014 and followed a continuous process of development up to date (five editions of the Festival without interruptions), allowing us to have a sufficient time path of analysis.
- The emergence, since the beginning, of a team of four members in charge of the new venture activities (notably, a proven presence of an ET) sharing a common DP in figurative arts.

The case reports on the formation and development of the team leading the organizing process of the Festival, analyzing team members' internal and external personal and business relationships and roles. The analysis aims to bring to the fore the confrontation process between the DP and the EP emerging in team relationships to understand their role

and impact on the entire new venture entrepreneurial process. The chapter aims at answering the following—interrelated—research questions:

- *How do entrepreneurial teams emerge and evolve in passion-based new ventures?*
- *What is the role of DP and EP in entrepreneurial teams' formation and development in the context of a passion-based new venture?*

## 3.2 Background Literature

### 3.2.1 Passion-Based Entrepreneurship

Passion has recently become a debated topic within entrepreneurship studies (Baron 2008; Cardon et al. 2009, 2017; Shepherd 2015; Cova and Guercini 2016; Guercini and Cova 2018), thus further developing the analysis over the role of emotions in the entrepreneurial process (Cardon et al. 2012). Passion has been regarded as a “positive feeling” acting within the emotional sphere of the entrepreneur (Cardon et al. 2009). As stated above, most relevant contributions highlight two different perspectives leading to key concepts helping in understanding the role of passion in entrepreneurship: EP and DP.

The concept of EP has been defined as “*consciously accessible, intense positive feelings experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities associated with roles that are meaningful and salient to the self-identity of the entrepreneur*” (Cardon et al. 2009: 517). EP has been studied as one of the main drivers of entrepreneurial performance and business outcomes and has been further investigated with respect to different phases of business development (Gielnik et al. 2015; Collewaert et al. 2016; Gielnik et al. 2017). In its initial conceptualization EP has been mainly linked to activities related to the entrepreneurial process itself in terms of achievements, played roles, and degree of control. In later contributions emphasis has been placed on passion related to products/services, interaction with people, social implications (Cardon et al. 2017), and the emotional

contagion of passion toward main stakeholders, such as employees, who might be more motivated and involved in the new venture (Cardon 2008).

Other recent studies have drawn attention on DP defined as *“target-specific passion, that implies the existence of a specific domain that is the origin of one’s affective experiences but also the target toward which one is motivated to fulfill a persistent effort”* (Milanesi 2018: 425). DP refers to the internal feeling of passion for a certain domain or object, which could be related to personal interests such as hobby, sport, culture, and leisure, thus within the consumption context. In the current “liquid” and uncertain social and work environment *“passion has become a refuge for many individuals who no longer find stability or recognition through work”* (Guercini and Cova 2018: 2). Thus DP could concern objects which might be shared within a community of passionate peers, in some cases labeled as “tribes” (Cova and Guercini 2016).

Passion-based entrepreneurship can be thus considered often as the result of a joint effort undertaken by a voluntary coalition of passionate individuals forming a team to support each other in the launch and development of an entrepreneurial initiative. The passage from sharing of a common passion/interest to the establishment of a business-oriented project could prove to be complex and difficult: commercialization goals and actual efforts might negatively affect the involvement of the community of peers in case of limited alignment over objectives and underlying values (Guercini and Cova 2018). Therefore the link between passion—in terms of both EP and DP—and entrepreneurship could be investigated by shifting the focus from the internal emotional dimension of the single entrepreneur toward the collective dimension, in order to explain passion as an emergent and context-dependent feature of the entrepreneurial process. Passion—in its multifaceted nature—could influence the process of setting up the ET, forming business relationships and combining the necessary resources.

### 3.2.2 Entrepreneurial Team Research

While research interest in the relationship between passion and entrepreneurship intensifies, growing attention transpires about understanding

the different nuances that make up the assumed collective nature of passion-based entrepreneurial initiatives (Guercini and Cova 2018).

As already mentioned, past managerial research has regarded passion as a kind of supporting motivational and inspirational feeling “*that keeps entrepreneurs advancing and helps them succeed in the face of the uncertainty, hostility, and stress that characterize the entrepreneurial process*” (Schjoedt and Kraus 2009). Passion has been regarded as a psychological trait pertaining to the emotional sphere of the entrepreneur, but which exerts a great influence on the role and behavior of entrepreneurs (Baron 2008). EP conceptualization is having prominent implications for entrepreneurial research, investigating the inner mechanisms that influence the entrepreneur’s behavior and experience (Stroe 2017). In particular, it is becoming increasingly important for scholars to explain how and why entrepreneurs face and overcome the enormous difficulties and struggles of creating a new venture. The EP construct is supposed to represent a valuable tool to go deep into entrepreneur’s behavior and explain how and why entrepreneurs develop and sustain the necessary energies and motivations to deal with the difficulties of the entrepreneurial process.

It can be clearly seen how this conceptualization of passion comes to be strongly influenced by the traditional idea that a single entrepreneur is responsible for the whole process of venture creation (Gartner et al. 1994). As noted before, most of the traditional theories of entrepreneurship rely on the myth of the lonely hero entrepreneur, described as a single individual able to creatively combine resources into entrepreneurial opportunities and to organize valuable ways to exploit them commercially (Goss 2005). For these reasons, past theories have been mostly focused on describing the figure of the entrepreneur and its internal features.

Against this background, there is growing recognition in the literature that in order to be understood, entrepreneurial behavior needs to be interpreted primarily in the context in which it occurs (Welter and Smallbone 2011). The entrepreneur actor is embedded within a wider context of social, institutional, business structures, and processes which have an impact on entrepreneur’s behavior and action as these contextual conditions set clear opportunities and constraints to the development of the entrepreneurial activity (Welter 2011). This implies that, even though

entrepreneurial ventures can be founded and developed exclusively by lone entrepreneurs (Kamm and Nurick 1993), in the majority of cases new venture development requires the composition of a team of individuals that will be involved in driving the new venture development process (Schjoedt et al. 2013).

In this context, passion has to be considered as related to a complex context of resources, activities, and relationships where people get together to interact and create opportunities pushed by their common passion. By this angle, passion is not limited to the inner sphere of the entrepreneur but is a fertile context where individuals as potential entrepreneurs can turn their passionate activities into promising entrepreneurial initiatives. The acknowledgment of the role of the context embedding the entrepreneur implies that entrepreneurship should be more realistically regarded as a sort of collective phenomenon in which a coalition of interrelated individuals, and not just a single entrepreneur, interact and cooperate to undertake the complex process of creating a new venture. These studies have recognized such a “collective entrepreneur” as inherent in several entrepreneurial contexts by emphasizing the role played by teams, broader groups, or even communities, in the entrepreneurial process. Furthermore, this evidence from the literature perfectly matches with the largely acknowledged fact that ETs, more than single entrepreneurs, establish the majority of new ventures, independently from the context in which they operate (Klotz et al. 2014; Knapp et al. 2015). This means that ETs represent a key component of the entrepreneurial phenomenon, and its collective nature, and should be focused on as the “actual entrepreneur”. This aspect is as empirically evident as counterintuitive for traditional entrepreneurship theories, but it needs to be addressed by scholars as a point of departure for future researches.

Research on the role of teams in entrepreneurship and new venturing has been mostly empirical and conducted from different perspectives; consequently its findings and established knowledge still result sparse and fragmented. Despite this, the field is growing at an amazing rate (see Diakanastasi et al. 2018 for a review), especially due to the emergence of novel streams in the literature investigating the several contexts of entrepreneurship (Welter 2011; Cova and Guercini 2016). Past research on teams has been empirical in nature and mostly focused on characteristics

and actions of large corporations' top management teams in relation to firm performance. Managerial research to date has paid scant attention to the study of team formation and development in entrepreneurial contexts and processes (Diakanastasi et al. 2018).

In particular, the team formation process has been scarcely observed within the early stage development of a new venture, before the new venture is well-established or funded at all. Entrepreneurship scholars have found that in this early stage nascent entrepreneurs interact primarily with their surrounding social networks—such as family, friends, colleagues, or the surrounding community—exploring the closest relationships and contacts to access the necessary resources to start up their entrepreneurial initiative. In this explorative phase, teams are more likely to arise on the basis of a voluntary cooperative process emerging between the nascent entrepreneur and other actors in the surrounding network.

Hence, entrepreneurship researchers have long debated the definition of ET and the way in which they differ from solo entrepreneurs. One of the most widely accepted definition asserts that a team is a group of “*two or more individuals, interacting and interdependent, who have come together to achieve particular objectives*” (Schjoedt and Kraus 2009). Furthermore, in order to be team members, individuals must have a common target and act for the best interest of the new venture and are distinct from other groups such as outside funders of the venture or external boards of advisors who may be involved in activities related to the development of the new venture.

Scholars advance the hypothesis that ETs are more successful than the individual entrepreneur. The main argument for the advantages of teams is based on the positive effects of a combination of individuals with diverse personalities, characteristics, motivations, knowledge, and abilities (Schjoedt et al. 2013). Team's heterogeneity is one of the key traits having interested particularly researchers in this field. For instance, heterogeneity or homogeneity of the founding team with regard to demographic characteristics (Steffens et al. 2012), past organizational affiliation (Beckman 2006), and functions and competencies (Beckman et al. 2007) have each been demonstrated to impact upon a new venture's long-term performance and growth (Diakanastasi et al. 2018). However, these multiple factors have been studied in isolation without considering the way

they influence each other, the way they change over time, or the way they relate to specific contexts (Klotz et al. 2014).

Another important debate in this stream of research is about the processes of ET composition and formation (Dufays and Huybrechts 2017). In this regard, two schools of thought have been pointed out: the strategic and instrumental view versus the socio-psychological dynamic view. Based on resource dependence theory, the former argues that teams are formed in a pragmatic way to acquire the resources and skills that are necessary (Forbes et al. 2006), whereas the latter presumes that entrepreneurs form teams with others they are similar to, because they hire them in their close social network (Ruef et al. 2003). So far, the background of ET composition has mostly been examined through demographic, status, and education or work experience heterogeneity (Klotz et al. 2014).

Given this background, it is appropriate here to explain how passion can add to our knowledge on team formation processes and dynamics. Passion has been found to represent a valuable context of collective entrepreneurial phenomena. However, the emerging literature on passion-based entrepreneurship has gone beyond the internal focus on the emotional sphere of the entrepreneur by expanding the concept of passion to encompass the broader domain of activities, resources, and actors belonging to the complex realm of individual passions: namely the sphere of free-time activities passionate people make massive experience separated from their workplaces (i.e. DP). Furthermore, as previously noted ETs give rise to the majority of new ventures and this is even more evident in the context of CCI where entrepreneurial initiatives are of a more passionate nature than in other contexts. Here entrepreneurial activities, as well as creativity and motivations, are fueled by more passion-related and pro-social goals aiming at something different than the mere profit. In this regard, even though the concept of EP concerns primarily the emotional experience of the entrepreneur and its outcomes, it cannot be separated from the entrepreneur's concrete intention to make a profit from the entrepreneurial activity.

The scholarly work on passion at an individual level has greatly improved our understanding of entrepreneurs and their ventures; however, the research is relatively silent on EP in teams. The idea here is that the team dimension should enlighten how passion is experienced, shared,

interacted, and evolved collectively in the context of a group of individuals developing a new venture. Moreover, in our knowledge, the role of DP, as well as the role of the mutual relationship between EP and DP in ET evolution, has not been faced up to date.

The present chapter is thus interested in tracing the entire path of passion(s) (both EP and DP) from the team's formation to its successive evolutions occurring through the different stages of the entrepreneurial process. Thus passion(s) are not regarded, here, as static constructs focused on internal configurations of the entrepreneur's emotions and cognitions; rather they are addressed as dynamic and mutually dependent constructs, in the context of the interaction of the team members.

### 3.3 RATATÀ Case

RATATÀ case is about the development of a contemporary figurative art festival and trade show by a community of passionates—a group of four friends who have been involved since the first edition, in 2014, and who had the opportunity to realize something they had been thinking about for a long time: to organize a festival of figurative arts in the city of Macerata in order to mobilize and exploit the “hidden” and fragmented—even existing—richness of the city with respect to figurative arts-related resources.

This section aims to trace the RATATÀ ET formation and evolution processes. To this aim a qualitative methodology has been adopted, based on a longitudinal single case study, in the light of the exploratory nature of the research questions (Yin 2003).

The processual perspective—already adopted in studying unconventional entrepreneurship (Cova and Guercini 2016)—has been adopted to understand the features of the evolution of the ET.

The collection of data is based on 13 semi-structured interviews with all 4 members of the small group in charge of planning and managing the Festival—the ET. Notably, four interviews have been performed with Lisa, who had the original idea of organizing a festival in Macerata. Four interviews have been carried out with Nicola, who had been immediately involved by Lisa in the new venture. Three interviews occurred with



Lorenzo a great friend of Lisa and Nicola with whom the idea was immediately shared. Two interviews have been carried out with Enrico, a friend of the three other ET members and an independent editor in Macerata, who has been involved in the project since the beginning. Three additional interviews have been carried out with three persons of the larger organizing committee in charge of relevant activities in order to gain also the perspective of the enlarged community behind the ET (see Table 3.1).

Data have been complemented with secondary sources from the event website and from news articles on the RATATÀ Festival. The semi-structured interviews have dealt with the evolution of the Festival along the five editions between 2014 and 2018 and on the future prospects. Data analysis has followed the adopted methodological approach, that is single longitudinal case study. Data have been classified and structured

**Table 3.1** Interviews information

Name	Job	Number of interviews/(duration of each interview)—interviewer
<i>The entrepreneurial team</i>		
Nicola Alessandrini	Employed as creative graphic designer for a medium-sized Italian company dedicated to the creation of meaningful entertainment products for family and kids worldwide	4/(56') (20') (30') (20') Interviewer A
Lorenzo Bartolucci	Artisan in carpentering/wood restoration	3/(45') (25') (40') Interviewer B
Enrico Fiammelli	Small independent publisher (art books, posters, art projects)	2/(75') (45') Interviewer A
Lisa Gelli	Employed as graphic designer in the marketing office of a medium-sized Italian toys producer company	4/(55') (20') (20') (40') Interviewer B
<i>Additional interviews to other members of the organization</i>		
Michela Pennesi	Shop assistant in an outlet store <i>Responsible for RATATÀ bookshop</i>	1/(55') Interviewer B
Ugo Torresi—NooZ	Ux, web and graphic designer <i>Responsible for RATATÀ website and web/social communication</i>	1/(20') Interviewer A
Marisa Ventura	Shop assistant in a pizzeria restaurant <i>RATATÀ administrative assistant</i>	1/(50') Interviewer B

along different temporal phases following the main turning points of the team evolution (Quintens and Matthyssens 2010). The main passion-related concepts (EP and DP) helped in guiding the investigators in the coding process, based on a continuous comparison between data and concepts (Dubois and Gadde 2002).

### 3.3.1 RATATÀ Festival in Brief

The first idea of developing an art festival in the city of Macerata in Italy came up in 2014 when Lisa, a professional graphic designer, decided to participate, in collaboration with its drama association “Teatro Rebis”, in a regional call for proposals designed to support the development of innovative projects in cultural sectors. When the opportunity to be financed by the regional government turned out, Lisa conceived the idea of realizing within the whole project design—encompassing a lot of different events and activities—an independent art festival in Macerata with Nicola and Lorenzo, two friends of her and amateur artists. The idea of the festival was highly ambitious given the fact that, despite the presence of influential cultural institutions such as the “Accademia di Belle Arti di Macerata” and the “Università degli studi di Macerata”, the town was characterized by a significant lack of dedicated contemporary arts events. When the regional government approved and funded the project, Lisa, Nicola, and Lorenzo worked hard to develop and realize the festival. In this phase they immediately involved Enrico, a friend and professional editor. The first edition of RATATÀ Festival was launched on 11 April 2014. The festival consisted of a rich three-day program of events including the trade fair with about 40 exhibitors, 5 exhibitions, 60 hosted artists, and 10 connected events among workshops, concerts, and entertainment events; all this with an audience of 3000 visitors in three days.

The first edition received an enthusiastic and unexpected response from the public, from the exhibitors, and from the entire local community. The team decided to go on with a second edition of the Festival. This implied the need to develop a quite different and independent event with respect to the previous one. Moreover, Lisa, Nicola, Enrico, and Lorenzo

could not count on the financial support previously obtained through the regional government. However the call for a second edition was welcomed with great enthusiasm by the community and all first-year partnerships reactivated immediately. Finally, the second edition of RATATÀ Festival was launched in April 2015. This edition counted on a wide and varied program of events, building on a larger group of 60 exhibitors, 15 exhibitions, 80 international hosted artists, and almost 25 connected events such as workshops, concerts, and special events; all this with an audience of 4000 visitors in three days.

The third edition can be considered as that of consecration, which made Lisa, Nicola, Lorenzo, and Enrico more focused and resolute to relocate the festival in the city center. In the previous editions, in fact, the main exhibitions and events, as well as the trade fair, were hosted in peripheral locations. Namely Lisa, Enrico, Lorenzo, and Nicola wanted to swarm the city trying to transform RATATÀ as the festival of the city and of the community. The numbers confirmed that they achieved this objective: more than 100 exhibitors at the fair trade from all over Europe, 30 exhibitions, more than 100 international single artists and collectives, almost 40 connected events, and an audience of more than 5000 visitors in four days.

The 2017 edition was known as “the earthquake edition”. The team had to face the difficulty to organize the festival again while dealing with consequences of tragic earthquakes that occurred in central Italy and Macerata in late 2016 and early 2017. This can be considered as a transition edition of the Festival. Even if numbers in terms of participation confirmed the fact that RATATÀ in the previous three years gained a recognized position both at national and international levels, the unexpected event of earthquake forced the entire community to cope with this emergence.

The fifth edition was held in April 2018. The last edition, after the *transition* one of the previous year, obtained a great success with an increasing number of visitors, exhibitions, events, trade fair participants, and a large involvement of the whole city’s community. Fifth edition definitively demonstrated that RATATÀ transformed into more than an annual event organized by a group of passionates within a city, evolving

on the contrary into an *object* with an internationally recognized brand, whose destiny is currently under discussion.

### 3.3.2 RATATÀ Team Evolution

#### Team Formation

Lisa is an experienced and passionate artist who takes part unwearingly in art projects, exhibitions, and festivals; however far from her passions Lisa works as a graphic designer in marketing and communication for a local company producing toys. The regional call for proposals in the cultural field represented an opportunity for Lisa to turn her fervid passion for art into a concrete project: something she has always dreamed of doing. The idea for the festival was ambitious as Lisa sought to introduce new impulses and cultural activities to the local community by inviting artists and editors from the national and international independent *milieu*. This ambition stemmed also from the fact that Lisa is a prominent member of the local art community of friends and artists populating the city. This community is particularly active in organizing cultural initiative and events which are highly popular and regarded among its members.

In this context, Lisa is personally linked to Nicola and Lorenzo, both friends and artists, with whom she shares a stimulating and productive “artistic life” rich of jointly developed initiatives and interests. Nicola is a professional graphic designer, while Lorenzo is the owner of a micro-woodworking business. They have known each other for a long time since they were young students at “Accademia di Belle Arti di Macerata”. Over the years they have accumulated experience in organizing exhibitions and cultural initiatives. Building on this common background, and long friendship, Lisa involved Nicola and Lorenzo in the development of the RATATÀ project.

I was not seeking for people with specific skills or attitudes. At that time, I still did not know exactly what was needed to develop the project successfully. Simply, I wanted to bring my friends into it. I knew they were as

passionate and motivated as me and I trusted their long experience and proved creativity in the field. (Lisa)

The nascent team started working diligently to mobilize resource holders to develop the festival and used particularly the surrounding community network to identify and access all the available resources. Accordingly, the team decided to involve Enrico, a nationally renowned independent small publisher as collaborator to curate the development of a trade show at the festival. Enrico is the owner of “*Stranedizioni*”, an independent micro-publishing house operating in the Macerata area. Due to this activity, Enrico is a known member of the local community and has collaborated with most of its artists including Lorenzo. Not only that but Enrico is in contact with a large network of artists, associations, micro-businesses, and freelancers operating well beyond the close community of Macerata. Enrico’s contacts and relationships resulted crucial in this early stage of development. Enrico is a passionate and competent publisher who embraced totally the idea of creating an independent art festival in Macerata. These elements made Enrico an accepted and effective member of the team.

The leading team of the first edition of the RATATÀ Festival was formed and officially comprised Lisa, Nicola, Lorenzo, and Enrico. Among them, relationships and roles were completely informal as well as all the decisions were discussed and taken collectively.

At the beginning, there was not a formal organization of the work. Roles and responsibilities were flexible and not so clear amongst us. Anyway, this revealed to be a good way to deal with the complexity of the various organisational aspects of the festival. We have always got decisions together; I think this confrontation has led to a positive resolution of the problems. This collective way of taking decisions has emerged spontaneously if considering that we all shared the same motivations and vision of the festival, and pursued the same goals since the very beginning. (Lorenzo)

We were inspired by our interests, passions, and experiences all converging toward the contemporary independent world of graphic design, illustration and comics. We were also aware of the potential support of our surround-

ing community. We knew we were not alone as we could count on a large circle of passionate and expert friends. (Nicola)

### **Team's First Evolution: The RATATÀ Cultural Association**

The first edition of the RATATÀ festival was successful. However, while the first edition scantily involved the municipality of Macerata, the local cultural institutions, and local businesses, the small portion of the community who had taken part in the festival organization was absolutely enthusiastic and encouraged the team to replicate and expand the initiative in order to increase the local engagement. Accordingly, the number of exhibitions, workshops, initiatives, and events progressively increased in the following editions. Along with the organizational evolution of the festival and the growing engagement of the local community, the team was forced to evolve its composition and structure in order to deal with the raising complexity of organizational mechanisms and processes.

The RATATÀ festival was contagious as passion and success spread through the community. Common passion and interest for art activated the will to contribute to the festival. Different actors and entities such as single artists, formal associations, or simply passionate groups mobilized to contact the RATATÀ team and offered their support voluntarily. In this phase the initial team progressively expanded by acquiring new members with the purpose to overcome the organizational issues that emerged during the first edition. Thus a broader configuration of the leading team arose, encompassing an increasing number of close collaborators who took active part in decision processes concerning the artistic direction and organization of the festival. Furthermore, in order to more fruitfully relate with the municipality, other institutional actors, and local businesses, the RATATÀ team decided to establish the "RATATÀ cultural association", thus providing a formal and representative structure to the informal team.

Despite these evolutions the core ET continued to be represented by Lorenzo, Nicola, Lisa, and Enrico, who were designated to make the most important managerial and strategic decisions on the festival organization and development. However, all the members of the leading team

agreed to state that in this phase RATATÀ maintained an informal decisional process, and that all the members of the broader team were called to express themselves on important decisions according to their different views and opinions. In this phase the decisional and organizational processes were entirely fluid. Passion, as well as the wide diffusion of common competences in the art field, seemed to be the common grounds that allowed for the rapid solutions of emerging conflicts and problems. In this context, the festival represented a passion-based object and activity that induced enthusiasms and energies through the entire organizational structure.

Passion was experienced and shared among the team members of the community through a positive and enthusiast organizational environment, common motivations and goals, and the shared idea that the festival represented an independent and self-produced product created by a passionate community of volunteers and peers with the only purpose to produce social and cultural value together with, and for the benefit of, the surrounding community.

There are no hierarchies in our group, everything is discussed publicly and everyone can express his opinions. Members of the team are independent in making decisions about the organisation and management of single parts, or exhibitions, of the festival, as well as they are free to invite artists and advance proposals for workshops or any sort of interesting activity. I think me, Lorenzo, Nicola, and Lisa, we can not be defined the leading team, despite we are a strong point of reference for the others. (Enrico)

The festival grows up rapidly and at its third edition already represents one of the biggest cultural event of the city, as well as an important point of reference for independent graphic arts and illustration in Italy and Europe. (Nicola)

### **Team's Further Evolutions: Consolidation of the Broader Team**

The festival grew rapidly, and at its third edition already represented one of the biggest independent graphic arts and illustration festival in Italy, as well as an important point of reference in Europe for the independent

artistic scene. In this context, the festival's organizational structure and process were becoming increasingly complex and onerous for the four team leaders edition by edition. In fact, while on the one hand the team could count on a close base of more or less regular collaborators supporting the festival, on the other hand the four leaders had to carry out a great deal of work for coordinating the base of all intermittent collaborators which changed at each edition, the growing number of invited artists and activities, as well as managing the relationships with institutions, and solving the major technical problems emerging during the different organization phases. Not only that but, as said before, Nicola, Lorenzo, Lisa, and Enrico worked without any remuneration firstly because the festival was rigorously non-profit and secondly because the festival was developed as a sort of hobby-activity to which they devoted their free time.

However, after the third edition the festival showed potential for rapidly turning into a more business-oriented activity. Beyond the festival event, RATATÀ achieved the status of a brand in the field of independent arts festival and business which was able to generate cultural value and brand awareness. These elements led to the progressive emergence of the idea that the RATATÀ project could be valuably turned into an effective entrepreneurial venture, able to generate profit and create job opportunities for the team members.

We are all aware that RATATÀ could represent a great opportunity for us. Personally I feel committed to turn the festival into a concrete and valuable venture. Yet not everyone agrees on this since, even though we have a common background, we have a different vision on the RATATÀ future. (Lisa)

We are aware about the fact that RATATÀ is an acknowledged brand and format event. Anyway we are a bit afraid to take the risky road to business. Also the festival is already fulfilling the way it is. (Lorenzo)

We are not sure that a business dimension would be perfectly fitting with our interests and aims, as well as with the real nature of the festival. We need the festival to remain a temporary project, both in the organization and production. This formula seems to fit the best with our feelings, at least for now, and probably represents one of the secrets of our success and



enthusiasm. About the future I think it would be important to absorb and represent through the festival the ever changing world of art we live in with our passion. (Enrico)

We are perfectly aware about the opportunity to turn RATATÀ into a viable business. Anyway we are a bit afraid of it. We have so many beautiful ideas, but also we know that we have to face reality. To launch a new business in this territory is not easy. This territory can be an opportunity and a great hindrance at the same time. (Nicola)

Eventually, the discussion within the leading team formally emerged. In particular, it had to be highlighted that very different individual perceptions about both opportunities and constraints on developing a more business-oriented venture were present at that stage.

### **The Organizational Turning Point: About the Future of RATATÀ**

The rapid evolution of the festival and the need to expand the festival further at each edition created pressure toward the idea of organizing the fourth edition, also given the conditions of the city and population, as well as of the RATATÀ community, after the earthquakes. All these elements led to the first important conflict of the RATATÀ team which emerged openly when Lorenzo decided to leave the team after the third edition. Lorenzo was one of the funders and leaders of RATATÀ. The role of Lorenzo, with its duties and load of work, had changed enormously along with the festival evolution. This was due to the fact that as the festival had not been arranged to remunerate its collaborators, the team leaders had assumed growing roles and responsibilities over time. This had put the team members under a growing pressure. Over time, this growing load of work had probably exceeded the initial expectations and range of competencies of the leading team's members.

Nicola, Lisa, and Enrico realized that the figure of Lorenzo was fundamental for the continuity of the festival as he was one of the pillars since the beginning. Moreover, the team realized that the unity of the initial

group was crucial for the festival survival. The four leaders could draw on a base of shared background, passions, goals, and advanced competencies which were essential to provide motivation, cohesion, and direction to the initiative and to the team's work. Consequently the role of Lorenzo was resized according to his needs and reintegrated within the team and organization of the fourth edition of the festival.

There was another element of crisis which started concerning the team after the fourth edition, that is the changing relationship with the government of the city. Despite the enormous success of the festival in terms of visitors, engaged institutions, universities, and local businesses, the municipality did not support adequately the festival reducing its financial efforts and technical support to the organization. Thus, a number of concurring factors, such as the need to increase the use of financial and technical resources, the limited capacity of the team members to develop further their roles and duties, the inability of developing supportive leading figures outside the core team, along with the lack of support from the municipality, pushed the team to accelerate the discussion concerning the future of the festival.

The organization of the fifth edition had finally shown that all these critical factors were undermining the motivational core of the ET which, since the beginning, was based on the pure passion for art for its members. Consequently, the balance among such central dimensions as passion, efforts, and returns (be they financial or emotional) was undoubtedly changing in the ET.

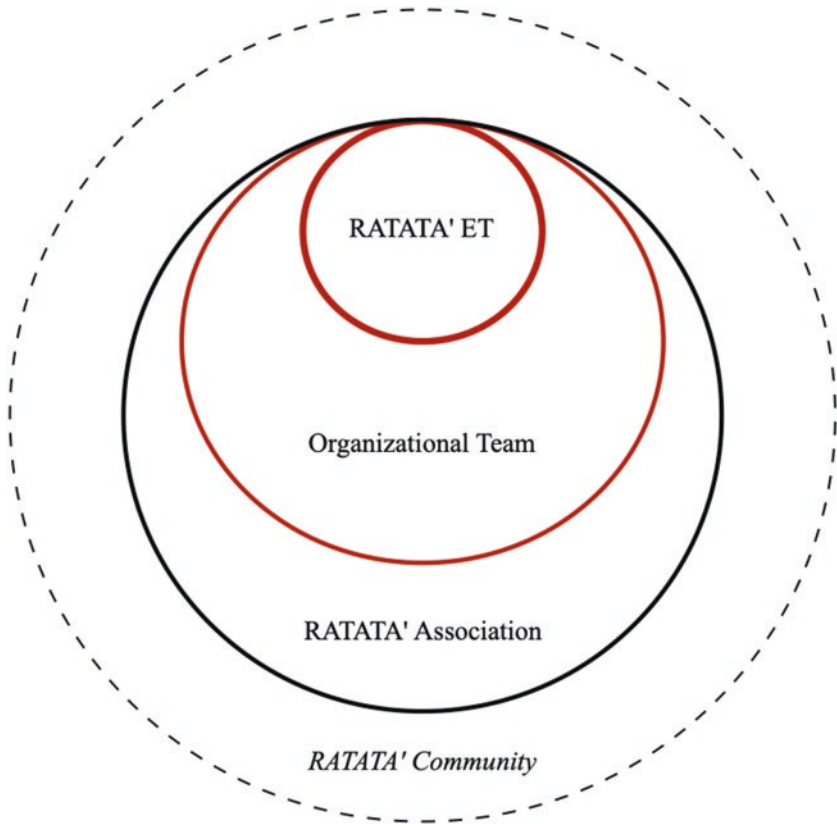
The need for an increased acknowledgment of the value of RATATÀ by the external environment was emerging. This emerging conflict with part of the external environment had made the RATATÀ team more cohesive and targeted toward common goals and future directions. Eventually, in this phase (still undergoing) the ET seems to be trying to cope with different perspectives of the four members with respect to the actual directions to take for RATATÀ venture (start up a business, change location/city, stop the venture, etc.) and a common and shared *feeling* about the essence of their *entrepreneurial object*.

### 3.4 Discussion of Results and Conclusions

The RATATÀ case provides interesting insights over the two research questions outlined in the introduction.

With regard to the main patterns of the emergence and evolution of the ET in passion-based new ventures, four main points could be highlighted. Firstly, since the initial steps the entrepreneurial core is based on the involvement of other members who are linked by friendship and sharing of the same overall DP. Thus the entrepreneurial core gains a collective dimension since the starting of the project/venture (Dufays and Huybrechts 2017). Secondly, the ET maintains over time an informal configuration where roles and responsibilities are diffused and the main decisions are the outcome of interaction and involvement of all key members of the venture. Informality allows for a more “democratic” setting in the management of the venture; however, it slows the development of effective organizational mechanisms able to grasp with the growth of the venture activities over time. Thirdly, the main effort is undertaken by the core ET of the four founders and increasingly by the wider organizing team, which is in close contact with the RATATÀ community. Finally, the boundaries of the core ET and the Organizational Team are often blurred when operational activities are planned and managed (see Fig. 3.1).

With regard to the second research question, the role of DP and EP in the formation and evolution of ETs, the empirical analysis sheds light on each type of passion and on their interaction. Firstly, DP shows a multifaceted nature in the light of the variety of sub-domains related to the RATATÀ venture and of its “content” as a mix of “technical” activities and knowledge and of specific culture, values, and lifestyle, which are typical in cultural entrepreneurship (Klamer 2011). DP plays a key role in the formation phase facilitating the involvement of other passionate peers and their commitment over time to the venture. In this sense DP seems to have promoted stability in the cohesion of the ET across the various editions while facing the difficulties in organizing an event growing in size and complexity.



**Fig. 3.1** RATATA' ET and interactions within the larger “organizational structure”

EP is diffused within the ET and shows different levels of intensity in the various phases of the venture. In the first edition EP in the ET grows, displays a “contagion effect” with newly involved members (Cardon 2008), and is shaped also by the previous background of the founders, which are employed in creative sectors and with entrepreneurial experience. The differences in EP intensity have facilitated the definition of roles—mainly in an informal way—within the core ET and the wider organizing team.

An emerging pattern is the interplay of DP and EP, which seems strictly interconnected (Milanesi 2018). On the one hand shared DP seems to foster EP, in two ways: firstly in promoting and implementing the project idea within a wider community and secondly in providing continuity and stability across the various editions, notwithstanding internal and external difficulties to be faced as the RATATÀ venture grows in size and complexity. On the other hand, the features of DP—mainly its cultural dimension and its underlying values as shared by the community of artists and passionate peers (Klamer 2011)—seem to slow and impair the transformation in a business-oriented venture shaped by a more profit-based logic.

To sum up, this chapter points out the relevance of both DP and EP—and their interaction—in the evolution of the ET and therefore of the entrepreneurial process. The case shows that both types of passion affect the dynamics of the ET and its degree of cohesion (Diakanastasi et al. 2018), thus having an impact on the content, speed, and outcomes of the ET effort. In this respect, passion(s) can be interpreted as playing the role of a kind of “glue”, acting, from one hand, as an organizational mechanism of cohesion, but on the other hand as a “friction” force especially when DP within the team decreases and different levels of EP appear within ET’s individuals.

More research is needed on the nature of both DP and EP under a conceptual and empirical dimension, their interaction processes within the ET (Cardon et al. 2017), and their impact on the entrepreneurial process (Milanesi 2018), in order to gain a better understanding of passion-based entrepreneurship (Cardon et al. 2009; Guercini and Cova 2018).

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# 4

## Beyond “Entrepreneurial Passion”: Are There Other “Deeper” Forms of Passion Involved in Entrepreneurial Pursuits?

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### 4.1 Introduction

There is no doubt that passion and entrepreneurship are somehow connected, at least in such expressions as “entrepreneurial passion” or “passionate entrepreneur”. But there are two key questions concerning these key concepts.

First, before anything else, let us ask ourselves: what do we actually mean by “passion”? This notion seems simultaneously so straightforward

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and so notoriously evasive. To be passionate about something indicates that we are emotionally aroused and have strong or even very strong feelings for or toward the object of our attention. Mostly love but also hate. Who hasn't heard of passionate lovers, steamy crimes of passion or obsessive behavior concerning hobbies or other peculiar things? Probably before but at least since Schumpeter, passion is also firmly associated with business. Passion, according to Schumpeter (1951) is what makes the world go round, at least the entrepreneurial part of it.

More recently, passion and entrepreneurship have started being seen not only as closely connected but also as an integrated, indeed "fused" in the concept of *entrepreneurial passion* (Cardon et al. 2005; Cardon 2008). This new term coined by Cardon et al. (2009) has lately gained considerable impact in the scholarly field of entrepreneurship. Even more than so, they see "the nature of entrepreneurial passion as consciously accessible, intense positive feelings experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities associated with roles that are meaningful and salient to the self-identity of the entrepreneur" (Cardon et al. 2009).

In our view though, this conceptualization of the elusive notion of passion is problematic. The reason for this, we contend, is that the concept of passion becomes basically all-encompassing. Passion then has been diluted by Cardon et al.'s indicator of "intense positive feelings" (Ibid) into a vague placeholder of some heightened emotional activity in general terms. We are not going to review the various contemporary attempts within business studies of conceptualizing passion, but we suggest a different and more emotionally oriented perspective on passion. In short, we need to distinguish passion from any other type of "intense positive feelings" experienced by entrepreneurs and lean instead toward its more extreme manifestations. Therefore, we suggest hooking up with the French philosopher Denis Diderot.

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His notion of passion is not to be equated with a situation of strong emotional arousal in general, but should rather be reserved for a significantly more extreme state. Diderot (1765/1995) writes: “Passions. Penchants, inclinations, desires and aversions carried to a certain degree of intensity, combined with an indistinct sensation of pleasure or pain, occasioned or accompanied by some irregular movement of the blood and animal spirits, are what we call passions. They can be so strong as to inhibit all practice of personal freedom, a state in which the soul is in some sense rendered passive; whence the name passions.”

Diderot does not stop there but continues in the next paragraph to further underline that passion is not to be understood as aroused emotion but rather something of even significantly higher emotional magnitude. Passion, according to Diderot, can be pathological: “This inclination or so-called disposition of the soul, is born of the opinion we hold that a great good or a great evil is contained in an object which in and of itself arouses passion. So that when this inclination is brought into play (and it is present in everything that represents pleasure or pain for us), the soul immediately, as if struck directly by good or evil, unrestrained in its opinion that this object is very important to it, believes it for this reason to be worthy of all its attention; it directs all its faculties to its consideration; forgetting in this contemplation, in this desire or fear nearly all other objects: so it is in the case of a man struck down by an acute illness; he is not at liberty to think about anything unrelated to his pain. It is also in this sense that passions are the diseases of the soul.”

So, in our opinion, understanding passion as a pathological or at least extreme state of obsessive emotion makes it somewhat more stable and analytically distinct from other emotions or feelings, which can intervene during entrepreneurial activities. Following Diderot’s sharp characterization makes passion lose some of its vernacular easiness but it gains as a theoretical construct. This brings us to our next point.

Second, we need to ask a similar question to the one we posed about passion: what is entrepreneurship? The word itself derives from the French (again!) *entrepreneur*, an individual who undertakes to organize and perform a certain activity for the benefit of someone or of a market. Its historical origin is assumed to come from the widespread mercenary business, which was largely the resource and organizational base of the European wars between 1300 and 1700. Kings and emperors had few

troops themselves and it was common to simply hire troops to fill up the army with mercenaries who would fight under the banner of the financier.

Of course, the word's significance has gradually shifted toward a more civil and, above all, commercial content. Today, an entrepreneur is a doer, someone who manages to make a good deal out of something that has not been done before under the exact same conditions. There are many variants of definitions that jockey for the number one position. Generally, common to most definitions of entrepreneurship since the times of Schumpeter (1934) is that they try to capture the character or activity of an individual who manages to identify new market needs (in broad terms), find and organize resources in new ways (technical, economic and social) and to create new forms of offers (business model). Harvard professor Howard Stevenson gives a fairly straightforward and well-functioning definition in "entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity beyond resources controlled" (Eisenmann 2013). This definition is useful insofar as it underlines the entrepreneurial pursuit of opportunities beyond what one already has. In other words, it is not about just doing the same thing with the same things, but in some new ways doing new or old things.

Having established a working definition of passion as well as of entrepreneurship we can finally turn our attention to our point of interest in this chapter, the new venture started by Mr. Gerardo and the involvement of his business consultant Mr. Antonio in a complex game where passion in various forms gets intertwined with the pursuit of business. Mr. Gerardo has grown himself a vineyard and built himself a winery. As will be shown in greater length further down the road in this story, Mr. Gerardo has extremely strong feelings about wines and many other things in life such as food and agriculture. Despite starting up a considerably complex and financially burdensome business, Mr. Gerardo seems less interested in running it, at least not in a "business-like" manner. Aware of his lack of interest and ability to focus on the boring side of enterprising he is more or less compelled to hire a young business consultant, Mr. Antonio, to take care of that side of his business, while he can focus on those elements for which he is truly passionate: wines, food, tractors and good life.

So, what can Mr. Gerardo's and Mr. Antonio's adventures show us of relevance for entrepreneurship theory? We believe that this case provides us with a good foundation to contemplate the difference between the growingly employed construct of *entrepreneurial passion* (Cardon et al.

2005, 2009) and the concept of a *passionate entrepreneur*, that is, an individual driven by some other form of possibly more Diderotian passion than Cardon et al.’s entrepreneurial passion. In particular, we suggest that *entrepreneurial passion* should not be considered as synonymous with any form of passion that drives entrepreneurs in the pursuit of their business, but rather that other, much deeper forms of passion can intervene, for good and for bad, in entrepreneurial pursuits.

In our study of the case of Mr. Gerardo’s winery we explore the following questions:

Which is the nature of the passion driving Mr. Gerardo in the pursuit of his business? Is Mr. Gerardo driven by “entrepreneurial passion” in the sense of Cardon et al.? Or is it passion in Diderot’s more extreme sense that makes him a “passionate entrepreneur”? And, in more general terms, how are passion and entrepreneurship combined in this case?

In presenting this Winery case we will shed more light also on the interactions between Mr. Gerardo, who follows his personal deepest passions around which he happens to start a new venture, and Mr. Antonio, who acts as a business consultant. Understanding this interaction may be beneficial to explore what happens when two types of passion meet with each other, one which is more brutal and detached from business pursuits and one which is so close to business to resemble more a form of rationality expressed by strong commitment to the venture, that is, to what Cardon et al. (2005, 2009) term “entrepreneurial passion”.

The chapter is organized as follows: after a brief discussion on how the notion of passion has so far been treated within entrepreneurship research, we provide details on how we built the case featured in this chapter. Then we present our case and conclude with some reflections on the various forms of passions involved in entrepreneurial pursuits.

## 4.2 Passion in Entrepreneurship

Most organizational and managerial theories are based upon the assumption of individual rationality, even though rationality is meant to assume varying degrees, including an array of bounded forms of rationality. Most of these theories approach decision processes and business outcomes without considering the role of emotions. However, more recent streams

of research in among others entrepreneurship recognize that most entrepreneurs are driven by emotions, to a point that some researchers have identified the already mentioned “entrepreneurial passion”, that is, a form of generalized passion for the very pursuit of entrepreneurship (Cardon et al. 2005). It is in fact implicit in Cardon et al.’s (2009) definition of this concept provided above that those individuals have strong positive feelings simply about the fact of performing entrepreneurial actions or being entrepreneurs, somehow independently from the very content of the venture they are pursuing, which could be a sports outlet as much as a winery.

Analyzing passion in entrepreneurship implies to focus on the entrepreneur and try to understand also the multiple roles played, the different activities performed—in sum, it seems necessary to analyze how the entrepreneur moves within the business context. The entrepreneur is often viewed as the owner and manager of the business (Cooper et al. 1988; Brockhaus 1980), the organization builder (Collins and Moore 1970; Gartner 1988), the founder (Howell 1972; Davids and Bunting 1963; Draheim 1972; Mescon and Montanari 1981; Hornaday and About 1971; Hornaday and Bunker 1970), the actor who combines factors (Ely and Hess 1937; Lachman 1980), the formal authority in the organization (Hartmann 1959), the one who takes risks in business (Hull et al. 1980; Palmer 1971), the one in the organization who is goal oriented (Litzinger 1965) and who exerts leadership (Schumpeter 1934). Gartner (1990) pointed that “in the early days of the new enterprise, the overall enterprise is not viable without the entrepreneur”, thus the commitment of the entrepreneur is crucial in running a business; Venkataraman (1997) added on the previous definitions that “the venture is highly dependent on the entrepreneur”. Moreover, Gartner (1988) proposes that “entrepreneurship is the creation of new business organizations” and “what individuals do to enable organization to come into existence”. While the above are certainly all important roles of an entrepreneur, especially in relation to a new organizational form, resources to be combined or markets to be created or approached, those definitions do not say much about the degree of engagement and attachment of the entrepreneur to the new business. Introducing passion means looking for non-rational explanations of entrepreneurial behavior, but as we contend in

this chapter, the form of passion mostly considered in the literature and termed “entrepreneurial passion” (Cardon et al. 2005) still remains rather rational, just because it is very functional to the pursuit of business.

Schumpeter (1951) was one of the first who explained entrepreneurial behaviors through the concept of passion (Cardon et al. 2009). Since then, many researchers have identified passion as a feeling that is embedded in the behaviors of the most successful entrepreneurs (Bird 1989; Smilor 1997; Cardon et al. 2005, 2009; Cardon 2008). Passion remain nonetheless a relatively underdeveloped concept in management studies and entrepreneurship. Schumpeter may well have recognized that “entrepreneurs need passion in order to have a strong will to overcome difficulties during the process of the creation of a new business”, but there are no conceptualizations that can capture the full breadth and complexity of the nature of the passions involved in entrepreneurship. Looking at the notion of entrepreneurial passion introduced by Cardon et al. (2005, 2009), it becomes quite all-encompassing especially when they consider it as “any intense emotion that stirs the human with energy and deep longing to make a difference” (Cardon et al. 2009). It is in relation to the idea of passion as simply an “intense emotion” that we aim to create a contrast by pointing out forms of passion that are so intense and blind to become almost maniacal, obsessive and painful, and hence much less functional to the pursuit of business, but nonetheless are still accompanying and somehow driving entrepreneurial efforts.

In the extant literature it is possible to find many origins and drivers of passion. The concept is often related to strength and courage (Bierly et al. 2000), to the pursuit of challenging goals (Smilor 1997), to drive, tenacity, willingness to work long hours, initiative and persistence (Bierly et al. 2000; Bird 1989), to the encouragement of creativity and the recognition of new opportunities (Baron 2008). But there is not much in these accounts that help to really separate this lukewarm, quasi-rationalistic notion of passion from simply heightened emotions and greater attachment to any kind of pursuit.

Portraying a somewhat warmer conceptualization of passion is the idea of passion for a business as “entrepreneurial love” (Cardon et al. 2005), which can lead to great achievement, but possibly entails also very dark sides. Passion helps entrepreneurs to persist while facing difficulties and

keeps in the hearth of the entrepreneurs the enthusiasm to pursue their goals (Cardon et al. 2005). Passion can be recognized as the non-monetary reward for the entrepreneurs (Cardon et al. 2005) and as “a central element of the entrepreneurial process” (Cardon 2008). Passion is related to intense feelings that trigger the entrepreneur to be committed with the venture and involves the creation of a deep identity connection with the firm that involves also the finding of a personal meaning for the entrepreneur (Cardon 2009). According to Cardon (2009), an entrepreneur full of passion can also have a positive effect in motivating and obtaining better performance from the organization’s employees. The entrepreneur’s passion for her venture is what creates the bond and the deep commitment to put the venture’s needs on the top (Cardon et al. 2005).

However, passion can also be considered as a potential burden for the entrepreneur and the development of the venture. In fact, entrepreneurial passion may present also dark sides and cognitive biases, which are often associated extreme risk acceptance, persistence despite poor results, extreme devotion to the business, extreme self-sacrifice, delayed gratification and overcontrol of activities (Cardon et al. 2005). Passion may influence the role identity and the activities performed by the entrepreneur: often the entrepreneur tends to engage more with certain activities and disengage from others (Cardon et al. 2009). Thus, the passion for specific activities may catalyze the efforts of entrepreneurs in certain activities that they love more to the detriment of other activities. The deep bonding of the entrepreneur with the venture sometimes becomes an obsession that could result in critical problems for the business, such as failure to delegate, difficulty to let go the dream when the results do not come, obstacles to the development of the firm, personal troubles that could affect the entrepreneur’s social relationships and health (Cardon et al. 2005).

Thus, entrepreneurial passion can be very inspiring and could be seen as a critical factor for the success of the venture, but it could be also dangerous for the entrepreneur and her personal relationships (Cardon et al. 2005; Cardon 2009). In conclusion, to ease the understanding of the concept of entrepreneurial passion, it is possible to take the simply but deep view on entrepreneurial passion of Baum and Locke (2004), Shane et al. (2003) who argue that “entrepreneurial passion is a love for work”.



To conclude, Cardon et al.’s notion of entrepreneurial passion may well embrace a stronger set of emotions, including their dark side, but it is hardly leaning toward the extreme side of an emotional continuum à la Diderot and, importantly, this passion is strictly oriented toward work, the venture and the business, no other passionate elements which can deviate from these economic pursuits. We argue instead that there are other forms of passion that influence entrepreneurs but are not “entrepreneurial” in themselves, as we shall see in the case of Mr. Gerardo.

### 4.3 A Note on Methodology

Our initial interest was to understand how passion and entrepreneurship are connected. One specific question in this regard was: which forms of passions appear during entrepreneurial activities or drive their pursuit? Such a question emerged from our preliminary analysis of the case of an Italian entrepreneur who started a winery, which we simply call “The Winery”, a few years ago. He wanted to become a successful wine producer, recognized as “expert producer of very high quality wine”. However, the behavior and choices of this entrepreneur signaled immediately levels and facets of passion so extreme that suggested to the authors that something more and beyond entrepreneurial passion (Cardon et al. 2009) was at play in this story. We could see from the case also another interesting phenomenon, namely the interplay and contrast between the pure and brutal passion of the founder Gerardo and the functional and more controlled entrepreneurial passion of the business consultant Antonio.

The case has been selected also because of the particularly good access to the empirical data which was granted to the authors. In particular data was collected mostly through face-to-face interviews (Yin 2014; Johnsen and Ford 2007) and participant observations. The authors also had also access to different sources such as accounting and business reports of the entrepreneur’s company, web-sites and social media tools. The data collection has been developed in real time since informal contacts with the entrepreneur begun right after the start of the business. We also enriched the data through informal conversations and participation to business meetings. These close interactions with the entrepreneur provided a deep

insight on his complex psychology and emotional attachments. Recurrent conversations and participation to business meetings were fundamental also to understand why Mr. Gerardo hired the business consultant Antonio and how the relation between them unfolded.

Data analysis focused on identifying and making sense of the major choices and actions of the focal entrepreneur, especially in relation to the social and economic context in which both the entrepreneur and the consultant have been involved and acting. First, the authors have mapped out the key events in the personal and professional biography of the focal entrepreneur, focusing on the key choices he made and how they affected the development of the winery business. To these events we then added also the specific interactions with the business consultant, which enabled us to extract the more extreme features of the passion(s) which animated the focal entrepreneur. Moreover, the entrepreneur's specific actions and decisions which appeared to have an important impact on his way of starting and developing its business, were discussed among the paper's authors in order to understand their nature and connection to the underlying passion of the entrepreneur.

## **4.4 The Case of "The Winery"**

### **4.4.1 The Broader Context: The Wine Sector in Italy and in the Marche Region**

Italy is the second wine exporter in the world after France, and accounts for 20% of global export values with roughly 48 million hectoliters produced in 2018. The US, the UK and Germany are the three major buyers of Italian wine (Federvini 2019). Moreover, Italy is the European leader for certified wines (Unicredit 2019). Italy's worldwide renowned wine sector includes more than 500 varieties of wine, and relies on the favorable climate, environmental resources and deep knowledge of the manufacturing process. A quick look at the wine industry shows that the production of wine is carried out by small firms usually family owned. Despite their small size, these firms perform all essential steps:

winemaking, bottling and sales. Next to a myriad of smaller firms bringing total number to around 350,000 companies, there are a few hundreds of cooperatives and consortiums who have about 50% of the total production in their hands. In 2017, the Italian wine sector contributed with 10% of the GDP in the whole Italian agribusiness. Next to established actors, who have been in the sector for decades, an important recent change is the emergence of plenty micro-producers who have literally “improvised” their business (Giuliani et al. 2015). These new entrants are retired people or young farmers who desire to produce high-quality products for niche markets. The result is that this sector over the years has become even more fragmented and heterogeneity of the actors is now one of the most distinct features (Presenza et al. 2017).

As for the type of wine produced, Italy is characterized by a focus on producing mid-to-high quality wines: 70% of the entire production is labelled as DOC wines (Denomination of Controlled Origin), IGT wines (Geographical Indication) and DOCG (Denomination of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin). The remaining 30% is considered “table-wines”, which means wines without any particular quality certification or denomination.

The winery of our case study is located in the Marche region (1.5 million inhabitants), located in Central Italy and with strong roots in the agricultural business. Marche has been traditionally considered an agricultural region—although only recently the wine sector has attracted attention, also internationally. In fact, Marche has been developing over years high-quality products, as witnessed by several international awards. Marche’s vineyards cover around 60,000 acres (25,000 ha), and produce almost two million hectoliters of wine annually (roughly 4% of the national production). About 200 producers are spread all over this region (Federdoc 2018) and produce mostly “table-wines” (which boast however a good price/quality ratio) or wines certified as IGT Marche (with higher quality and higher prices). Marche region is best known for white wines made from Verdicchio grapes and for red wines based on Montepulciano variety of grapes.

The wine sector in the Marche region is characterized by many small wineries and a few big players. These big players often commercialize wine outside the region and can reach economies of scales. On the

contrary, small wineries are very strong in creating ties with local communities and customers, becoming the “local wine supplier”, but these organizations are not really prepared to scale up their production and sales.

#### 4.4.2 Gerardo and His Family

“The Winery” is one of these small players, founded in 2012 in the “Small Town” in the Marche region, Italy. The company is run by Mr. Gerardo who was born in the 1970s in the “Small Town”. Gerardo is a wine specialist, cook, farmer and he loves enjoying sparkling white wine (the so-called *bollicine*).

Gerardo attended primary schools in a small class composed only by 11 students. He won several edition of a class gardening competition that was organized every year. Every student got a very small piece of land from the school administration with the goal of transforming the garden into a nice spot full of flowers. This was a very nice experience and Gerardo was fascinated by the art of farming—or at least he found for the first time an interesting thing to do beyond learning grammar, maths and so on.

In 1989 Gerardo was enrolled in a special high school program preparing students to work in the world of restaurants and hotels: five years later Gerardo successfully completed his education and could collect his diploma. Why did Gerardo attend that school? The key reason was not so surprising. Since the mid-1970s Gerardo’s mother and father had been running a small restaurant, “The Restaurant”, located nearby Gerardo’s family house and he was the one in pole-position to hold the reins of the restaurant. Gerardo’s sister, instead, wanted more to support the restaurant activity instead of taking the lead. “The Restaurant” was dreams come true for Gerardo’s parents after they had opened in the early 1960s a small kiosk located in a very good spot, half-way to get to one of the beautiful mountains nearby the “Small Town”. It was the only available food court on the way to the mountain.

“The Restaurant” was established with Gerardo’s parents’ own finance: they sold some of their lands and utilized the revenues to open up the new restaurant business, but they kept the family farmland located near

the “The Restaurant”. The idea was to become the biggest restaurant in that area, specialized in organizing and hosting fancy wedding parties. At that time, weddings were usually held in-house and that’s why the investment carried out by Gerardo’s family appeared risky. Locally the restaurant achieved a good success—the peak was hosting 60 wedding parties in one year—although customers showed up mostly during the summer season.

The first years of operations of “The Restaurant” were riddled with problems because no one in the family was really prepared to run a business: somehow Gerardo’s family had to learn and to adapt rather fast to the new circumstances. The investment proved worthwhile and Gerardo’s father was able to grow his family and buy a new house: it was 1981. Gerardo loves to remember “daddy and mummy did a lot of sacrifices for me and for my sister”.

After the degree and the end of the military service, Gerardo spent three months working in a small factory of wood frames, which was not really a thrilling practice for him: Gerardo stepped into the restaurant in the mid-1990s, at the age of 20.

Actually, Gerardo had always been attracted by the restaurant business since childhood: he enjoyed a lot to attend the restaurant’s kitchen and watch how his parents worked with customers and how the business was run. But the parents often got a bit disturbed by the great attraction Gerardo had for restaurant work; they really hoped to see Gerardo doing other things in his life.

The first thing he proposed when he officially entered the family business in the mid-1990s was upgrading the kitchen equipment, renovating and expanding the interior, and planning for building up a swimming pool. Gerardo’s intention had been to become not only specialized in hosting big wedding parties but the dream was to build a more solid presence in the local territory and improve their visibility: “I don’t want just to run a restaurant but I want to be surrounded by nice people who enjoy to eat stunning food, drink the best red wine and lie down on the shadow under my beautiful big maple.”

Pity that Gerardo didn’t get a big green light from his family, instead he got an unexpected reaction by his parents that were pretty against the new things Gerardo wanted to develop and implement. Gerardo explains:

“At that time I was pretty convinced to succeed with my parents, the idea was super good! But they look still radical and conservative at the same time, they are scared out by me and don’t trust me and don’t delegate anything to me...this is awful...nowadays people are looking for different food, we can’t continue to offer always ‘tagliatelle con ragù’ and loose wine.”

Gerardo first task at the restaurant was to attend and serve customers at the tables: he was appointed by his parents as head waiter. In the meantime, Gerardo took over the responsibility of managing the family’s farmland. Like a baby in a candy shop, Gerardo spent most of his free time driving either a red big tractor or a big yellow D10 Caterpillar. This latter machine had been utilized by Gerardo’s grandpa who ran for a while a small construction company and Gerardo liked very much to drive it.

Gerardo’s grandpa had a big influence on him and transmitted his passion for what Gerardo considers the “amazing world of farms and farmers”. Already at the age of nine Gerardo drove the big tractor, but of course hidden from his parents. Gerardo has always been in love with manual labor, staying outside in the farmland, and over the years he also managed to build up a small facility where his tractors are parked and where he can perform maintenance activities on them. According to him, it’s not possible to rest if you are so much in love with nature.

The experience of driving and, if necessary, fixing a tractor made a big impact on Gerardo and helped him rely on himself and built self-confidence.

#### **4.4.3 The Evil “Wine Coop” and the Beginning of “The Winery”**

Gerardo had a natural instinct for farming and particularly for grapes. The family had a very small grapes production located not far from the place where Gerardo grew up: it was Gerardo’s grandpa who, being very interested in grapes and wine production, started in the 1960s a very small production of grapes, which were sold to one of the biggest local wine producer named “Wine Coop”. But the deal was not really good

for the family and they strongly felt that “Wine Coop” had always exploited the very small local grape suppliers.

It was wonderful for Gerardo to talk about grapes with old grandpa, who unfortunately passed away in the end of the 1990s. It was time for Gerardo to take the baton of the small grape production. Gerardo was happy for that, but also deeply affected by the loss of grandpa. He said: “the death of my grandpa was expected but even more painful than an unexpected mourning. I suffered a lot. But a few days after I was again motivated, again ‘happy’ sort to say. I realized I wanted to properly manage my small treasure, the grapes.” So it was really a key event happening on that very year, when Gerardo approached for the first time the partly unknown universe of wine, since he decided to continue the small business left to him by his grandpa. And this was also a good reason to “unplug” from his parents and from the restaurant business. “The restaurant was extremely demanding and boring. I was looking for something different like a different context where to work. I had money, friends...but something was missing, you know? It’s difficult to explain what I was feeling...but I wanted to enjoy more free time, go around, escape from “Small Town” and deal with new people...and talk about grapes and wines and go to fairs.”

One of the first tasks Gerardo took on was to negotiate better conditions with “Wine Coop”. Until this point “Wine Coop” decided on all the aspects regarding grape supply conditions. Small grape producers like Gerardo were not expected to complain about this situation, but Gerardo tried to undermine the authority of “Wine Coop”. Shortly, in the community, Gerardo gained the nick name of “black sheep” because he was the only one complaining against the giant “Wine Coop”.

Somehow the experience of “Wine Coop” triggered the ambition of Gerardo to become more than a simple grape producer. The next step would be to become wine producer. Gerardo pointed out: “I was very ambitious and motivated to overcome the power of “Wine Coop”. I maybe took a very important decision, who knows? What I felt was a big desire to react to “Wine Coop” and to the whole system. I felt like a prisoner in this economic system. I see money that goes around and never creates opportunities, good value... I decided to do in a different way.”

Gerardo's parents, for the second time, disagreed totally with Gerardo's idea to start a new business focused on producing wine. Several discussions and bitter arguments among Gerardo and his family took place. But Gerardo decided to go on and soon stopped updating his family about the progress of his idea. Gerardo took almost one "year of leave" from his family, from the operations, from the territory, from the "Small Town". He needed time to think. During his sabbatical period, Gerardo travelled a lot in order to understand how to set up a good winery; once he came back home it was the right time to start building his winery.

As a first step, Gerardo identified where to build his winery. The chosen area was, according to Gerardo, stunning from the landscape perspective, but the process to get the permissions for building the facility was stressful and very long. The family was not at all supporting Gerardo. He didn't get them informed, and they never asked about the winery.

#### **4.4.4 "The Winery" Takes Shape in the Heart of Gerardo**

In 2010 the construction of the winery started and Gerardo was personally involved. He relied on a local construction company but took many decisions regarding the whole construction process. He also utilized the old D10 Caterpillar to work on the field: for instance he constructed the entire drainage system of his winery. He took also the lead of the construction workers. Gerardo pointed: "I couldn't delegate to strangers important tasks because they were building my future! The winery is my future!"

After more or less two years and a big investment—the total amount to set up the winery was around Euro one million—the winery was successfully inaugurated.

Gerardo was so impressed by the winery: somehow he managed to create from scratch a real winery! But many issues started to arise and Gerardo soon realized how challenging it was to produce and commercialize his own wine. Gerardo was convinced that managing a winery was not too diverse from running a restaurant. But he was wrong. He realized that the wine business requires knowledge—not only about the product



itself, but also the cultural dimension is very important—a set of specific capabilities and a different mindset. And Gerardo started to get worried. He strongly wanted to show he was able to run his own business and somehow to avenge the lack of trust from his family.

Gerardo was very committed in order to succeed in this new experience. He was convinced that the call of his life was to become a capable winemaker and in his perspective wine was more than just a product. This is witnessed by his own words: “Wine is always present when people are happy and want to celebrate. Happy moments and happy memories often deal with a good bottle of wine. It’s part of our lives: where there is a convivial event with celebration, there is wine! Wine for me it’s like the motorbike for Harley-Davidson people, it’s an essential part of my DNA.”

However, Gerardo realized that running the winery meant dealing with many different tasks, some of which were very boring for him, such as administration (invoices, bills etc.), marketing and communication activities, including also talking with potential customers. Moreover, the first year of activity of “The Winery” ended up with a small production of just 1000 wine bottles. By comparison, “Wine Coop” produced and sold about seven millions of bottles yearly in the same period. And Gerardo got almost depressed by this performance. “I don’t really understand. I’ve probably one of the best products in this area that won several prizes, a lovely new production facility, an outstanding set of new French barrels, I always take care of my beautiful grapes...what’s wrong then?...the price? Should I hire the best wine seller in the world? I only want to make my customers happy! I’m not doing this just for my wallet... I don’t really understand.”

Gerardo was disappointed by these results, but he did not give up and the poor performance turned to be an extra stimulus for developing new ideas. Developing the brand was very important as well as conceiving a strategy for his business. He embraced the idea of establishing a Bed and Breakfast and making further investment to extend the production volume to 40,000 bottles per year. But Gerardo also wanted to continue enjoying the work in the vineyard, driving tractors, making experiments with grapes to discover new tastes.

In order to avoid losing too much time and be able to continue focusing on what he really loved, that is, the grapes and the production of the

wine, he decided to engage a young consultant. This decision was also pushed by the fact that Gerardo's parents were seriously considering leaving the restaurant business due to their age.

#### 4.4.5 The Consultant Comes into the Picture

When Gerardo's parents decided a couple of years later to retire, they firmly but kindly asked Gerardo and his sister "to not screw up the restaurant business". A decision was taken: Gerardo and his sister would jointly become restaurant managers. Gerardo took mainly the responsibility of managing customers and suppliers, whereas his sister became responsible for all the administrative tasks. One day Gerardo pointed out: "The nightmare is back. I don't really have enough energy to manage it. I hope that the restaurant will not absorb all my energies, I need to focus only on my winery!"

The only positive thing Gerardo pointed out was that the restaurant would serve as a "testing facility" for his wines, for proposing new ideas and of course for spreading the tale that the "The Winery" brand was not only about a product but also about a family commitment to winemaking. As he pointed out: "Money is not an issue, at all. I need money for developing my winery, that's it. If I have 1 Euro, I usually spend more. I love the risk, although I should say that the bank cannot refuse to support my future plans—I'm one of their best customers. Let's see if the consultant will turn "The Winery" into a good investment." The restaurant soon became also the major sales channel for his winery.

It was in November 2016 that Gerardo and the consultant Antonio started to discuss what to do: they talked for about two hours and sketched the content of their upcoming collaboration. Antonio was introduced to Gerardo by another advisor who was supporting him to manage the purchasing processes and monitor costs. This person contacted Antonio and pointed out the challenges that Gerardo was facing in setting up the venture: developing marketing and communication tools and procedures appeared as urgent issues. After a short period during which Antonio delved into the context and started digging into the numbers of "The Winery", he elaborated a marketing plan, including also a

specific proposal on how to run the winery in the next few years. Antonio got interest in how Gerardo described his story, the business idea, the winery and the grapes. But, on the other hand, Antonio perceived that Gerardo was perhaps not really attracted by his first proposal. "I haven't really got any comment by Gerardo concerning the marketing plan...he was only interested in cost levels and prices... I guess that the great market report of the Italian wine sector which I made and included in the overall business plan is still laying on Gerardo's desk."

Antonio understood that his life there at the winery would not be easy. For instance, Gerardo was not so used to have meetings with business associates. "It happened very often that I set up a meeting with Gerardo in the morning and he came at least half an hour late" "and Gerardo was maybe available to meet me after dinner time!" It was really challenging for Antonio to set up the meetings he considered extremely urgent and important: "Where has the meeting been arranged? Not at the winery but at the restaurant! Gerardo was more comfortable to meet me there instead of at the winery...and of course I have lost time and money to reach him there (about 23 miles far away from the winery)... and Gerardo often got busy at the restaurant, so I have never got his full attention!"

Therefore, as soon as Antonio realized he was to deal with a stubborn and grouchy person, he decided to change his way of doing and focused immediately in building up a sales network. He thought: "If Gerardo wants to spread his product all over the country I must help him in setting a nice sales organization. Therefore I should go back and evaluate how Gerardo had decided the pricing strategy, and how he dealt with the market positioning of his products."

Even if Antonio managed to obtain only very limited information from Gerardo, he came up with some suggestions in order to set up the sales organization. The consultant's suggestion was that it would be beneficial for the winery to focus on one or two products, which meant to delimit its wide product portfolio, and create then a value offering different from the other small producers.

#### 4.4.6 Dealing with Gut Feeling

One day Antonio pointed out: “This story doesn’t sound very likely.” Building up a sales organization caused disappointment and stress. The “The Winery” brand was almost unknown, but nonetheless Gerardo would never concede discounts or lower prices to any of the potential distributors or restaurants interested in buying his products. Moreover, Antonio received negative feedback from some distributors he interviewed and all of them claimed that they could not rely on Gerardo—he looked more like “an improviser” than a serious entrepreneur. Some of those distributors stated: “Gerardo looks like a small child who pretend to have the best wine ever...and making business with him is extremely difficult.”

Antonio spent considerable time in understanding Gerardo as a person, and often he asked himself why he was dealing with such a complicated person. For instance, Gerardo was totally uninterested in the use of new technologies such as CRM systems and social media, which Antonio considered as fundamental to develop the business of “The Winery”. Gerardo was not keen on using even emails as a promotional channel! Antonio pushed anyway himself in order to deal with Gerardo’s desire of running his business. And after a while Antonio was happy to share with Gerardo a positive result: the company’s turnover increased by 45% in just six months since his arrival. But Gerardo always pointed: “we are not growing enough!”

According to Antonio, the attempt of providing the winery with marketing and communication tools, business strategies and so on was neutralized by the brutal attitude of Gerardo. Soon, Gerardo started taking decisions without involving Antonio and he seemed to prefer tips and suggestions provided by his closest friends than those coming from the consultant he had just hired. “Gerardo was apparently interested in listening to me while talking about his winery. But then often he juxtaposes his friends opinions or his own opinion...sometimes he trusted much more the ‘rumors’ derived from the local wine producers than my suggestions...it looked like Gerardo wanted to protect himself and his comfort zone” “It became clear that Gerardo did not trust me too much when I

realized he followed an unknown logic to define the price level of his products.”

Interestingly, whenever Antonio tried to initiate a professional relationship with Gerardo, the latter was “busy” with something else. As reported by Antonio: “many times I tried to let Gerardo understand how important it is to engage with our customers but he always replied that the ‘fortune favors the bold’.” And in another occasion, it seemed that Gerardo was next to scream out Antonio’s head off: “I have struggled to convince Gerardo that a marketing plan would help him to get fresh information concerning products, competition, distribution...marketing and sales should talk to each other! You know what? When I managed to realize parts of the plan, his mood changed and he got very angry!”

#### 4.4.7 Epilogue

After a while, Antonio got tired and in agreement with Gerardo left. The most controversial aspect of his collaboration was the lack of support from Gerardo himself. “Gerardo just ‘goes ahead’ in the wine business without sharing any view with me! Even worst, he pretends I have to accept positively what he says and put in practice his ideas! Am I a threat or a consultant?” Even if Gerardo was paying Antonio for his service, the latter concluded that “I got the impression that I was his toy, he was only happy to block my initiatives. He wanted to demonstrate that I was wrong and he was right.” In fact, Gerardo did not like to review the material provided by Antonio: for instance, one of the first report Antonio delivered laid on his table for more than one year. Moreover, Gerardo did not like to sit around a table and discuss business-related topics. Although Antonio contributed substantially to increase the company’s turnover, he never received any acknowledgement from Gerardo. On the contrary, on one occasion, Gerardo claimed that Antonio’s compensation was too high! In 2019 Gerardo’s business was still running. According to the company’s website Gerardo was taking part in some national wine exhibitions. Gerardo was still continuing developing his business with persistence and he had recently refused to sell his company to an investor who offered about Euro two million to take it over. From a production and

sales point of view, the winery did not reach the results that Gerardo was hoping for. Although the turnover of the company has been increasing until 2019 and has reached about 130,000 Euro and the produced volumes increased from 20,000 bottles in 2016 to almost 30,000 in 2019, the costs are still higher and entail losses for the winery. As for sales management, the company is still facing troubles: Gerardo decided to develop more and more wine for long-term storage in order to avoid the extra costs for bottling. But this decision does not seem to result in increased sales. It would instead be enough to collect orders in advance, before bottling, to sell the wine in stock, as Antonio suggested many times.

## 4.5 Discussion: Which Passion Drives the Entrepreneurial Pursuit of “The Winery”?

This section discusses the issue of passion appearing in the case of “The Winery” and addresses the two research questions outlined in the introduction. Namely, the questions concerning whether Mr. Gerardo is a “passionate entrepreneur” and the nature of the passion driving him. We are particularly interested in whether Gerardo is driven by “entrepreneurial passion” in the sense of Cardon et al. (2009) or by some other kind of passion.

In the case of “The Winery”, and Gerardo in particular, passion assumes some quite specific and distinctive features, which also entail several manifestations of passion: there is clearly a strong element of self-fulfillment about the construction of the winery where Gerardo personally participated, and even an element of anger when he chose to cope with “Wine Coop”. These facets of passions are clearly difficult to capture by utilizing the notion of “entrepreneurial passion” of Cardon et al. (2009).

The literature points that running a company requires a set of capabilities, skills and knowledge, including analytical and practical abilities to deal with internal as well as external forces in order to develop the business. At the same time, there is evidence that entrepreneurs may ignore the general business practices such as the use of formal documents and

procedures (business plans, etc.) in order to run their business. In these cases, entrepreneurs follow their own logic, constituting a messy path filled by arbitrary decisions. These seem to be the features that characterize also Gerardo’s pursuit of his winery, with the caveat that they assume even extreme contours in the case featured above. Gerardo’s entrepreneurship can be termed “unconventional” to say the least, and unfolds through the interaction between two opposite but perhaps complementary characters: the dreamer, Gerardo, and the business consultant, Antonio.

Therefore, as for the passion driving Mr. Gerardo, he seems to be animated by a great deal of pure and brutal passion in the Diderotian sense, to a point that his passion for winemaking, food and the nature *takes over* his business pursuit in many ways. Mr. Gerardo only barely matches the established definitions of an entrepreneur, and this is only due to the fact that he established a new business and was willing to assume considerable entrepreneurial risks in doing it. Thus, in relation to our first question, Gerardo seems to be clearly more “passionate” than a classical entrepreneur.

But can an unconventional passionate entrepreneur still follow Cardon’s entrepreneurial passion? In the case of Gerardo it appears clear that he may have started a new business, but he seems to be unable and or maybe even unwilling to manage and develop it. Therefore, we can conclude that Mr. Gerardo lacks “entrepreneurial passion” in the sense of Cardon et al. (2005, 2009). An important contribution of this case is accordingly showing *a very clear separation, if not possibly even a conflict within the same individual, between the lukewarm and quasi-rational passion entailed by “entrepreneurial passion” and the brutal and fully emotional passion which animates certain entrepreneurs.*

The business consultant Mr. Antonio, who was involved by Gerardo to orchestrate some activities to materialize his dream of “The Winery”, comes in as the temporary manager. Antonio embodies some elements of “entrepreneurial passion”, even without being himself an entrepreneur in relation to “The Winery”. Moreover, Antonio seems to be in difficulty when it comes to influencing Gerardo’s choices and vision: Gerardo is in some ways blinded by his own gut-feeling and personal passion and refuses to consider the more analytical approach suggested by the consultant. Due to the disciplined and functional contents of “entrepreneurial

passion”, any encounter between this sort of passion and brutal passion suggests a conflict going on within Gerardo, like a meeting between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Moreover, the story testifies that any potential fruitful interaction between the two forms of passion is hindered by the selfish, stubborn, unfocussed and introvert nature that accompany Gerardo’s brutal passion.

All in all, the entrepreneur’s apparent lack of interest in running the business suggests that he lacks “entrepreneurial passion”. He is purely and brutally passionate about winemaking, and for him the enterprise is just a means to cultivating his passion. Therefore, he needs someone else like the business consultant to take care of the business and the many tasks he considers as boring and disconnected from his pure passion for winemaking.

## **4.6 Conclusions: Beyond or Without “Entrepreneurial Passion”**

The case analyzed in this chapter shows two loci of entrepreneurial action and emotional drive: firstly, the individual driven purely by deep passion for his object of desire (wine making), who is formally the founder and owner of the start-up, but basically does not perform the business management tasks typical of an entrepreneur; and secondly, the individual who is actually trying to run the business through the owner’s mandate and does so driven by a more functionally oriented form of passion for entrepreneurship, even if he remains an hired consultant.

Passion in its more extreme form, in Diderot’s characterization, and also the dark side of entrepreneurial passion, in Cardon et al.’s notion, entails a tendency by the entrepreneur to focus only on the activities that are fully rewarding, generate pleasure and identify with her personality. Consequently, individuals exclusively driven by this kind of dark and extreme passions would not carry out at all those activities which are less pleasant or regard areas of the business that do not match their identity (Cardon et al. 2009).



All in all, the entrepreneur’s apparent lack of interest in running the business suggests that he lacks “entrepreneurial passion”. Rather, he is passionate about winemaking and being a winemaker, and for him the enterprise itself acts as means to cultivating his passion. Therefore, as previously noted, he acknowledges the need for someone else like the business consultant to take care of the business and the many tasks he considers as boring and disconnected from his pure passion for winemaking. The two “entrepreneurs” ideas of the wine, winemaking and of being a winemaker do not align with each other. Actually, this is not an uncommon outcome in many start-ups where passionate inventors are hooked up with venture capital’s management wizards.

So, what other conclusions and thoughts may be drawn and stimulated then?

Our case may seem a bit of an outlier: a not very successful new business in a very traditional market, driven by a very reluctant entrepreneur. At center stage is a man who wants to be in the business of wine, but does not want to pursue it as a business, at least not according to standard frames of how to run a business. A man who wants to be an entrepreneur, but not to commit to entrepreneurial activities, at least not in a business perspective. Who is this character then? Is he just a committed hobbyist aspiring to transform into an entrepreneur, but the idea of wine and of being a passionate winemaker of his region actually hinders entrepreneurship in proper terms?

Can it be that we have a case of entrepreneurial show and pretention, that is, a “fake” entrepreneur, who pretends to be an entrepreneur by hiring business consultants? Or, are we actually discerning something else beyond the veil of traditional perspectives? Maybe Gerardo is an “alternative” entrepreneur—more of an activist and symbolist—maybe a brand entrepreneur—not of the wine as a product but of Gerardo as a brand: he is obviously a man of the Marche region, a bon viveur, and defender of the terroir.

An important conclusion of our study is that passion, entrepreneurship and business do not necessarily go well together. It is possibly so that their harmonious interplay is a much more unusual event than we would anticipate. We dare even venture a heretical thought: “entrepreneurial passion” is probably a special case in itself, the true outlier among the

flora of all possible combinations “passion-entrepreneurship” that can emerge when lust and desire merge with business aspirations.

Therefore, another actor such as a business consultant or even a surrogate entrepreneur—that is, a person engaged to establish and manage a venture typically to compensate for the original entrepreneur’s missing competence, time or commitment (Lundqvist 2014)—may only under very special conditions fill the gap in the activities purposefully left aside by individuals only partly acting as entrepreneurs due to their extremely passion-driven approach. This other actor would contribute more functional entrepreneurial and managerial skills.

On this note, we may end our investigation by contemplating our previous, ad hoc and counter-intuitive interpretations of our passionate entrepreneur as a warning against uncritically resorting to ready-made constructs. For instance, applying the ready-made “entrepreneurial passion” construct may, instead of shedding more light on the passion-entrepreneurship link, actually reduce it into a black-box that further rationalizes both entrepreneurship and passion. The complex link between passion and entrepreneurship then becomes diluted into a functional relation whereby passion is just a property that ought to be added, balanced and structured to smoothly support the functioning of a business enterprise.

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# 5

## 'It's Not Fair!': Game and Affective Communities of Entrepreneurship

Laura Mitchell and Saara L. Taalas

### 5.1 Introduction

'Werewolf' is a social deduction game where minority players ('werewolves') aim to survive and ultimately win over majority players ('villagers') who attempt to identify through negotiation who the werewolves are and kill them, before they get the villagers one by one. Over the last decade, the game has become a popular and reoccurring feature among many high tech start-up conferences and sparring programs. Werewolf is a social game with relatively simple rules to learn that can be modified and played without much paraphernalia at almost any location with large groups of people. The basic game involves dividing the crowd into a

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group of villagers with a set number of werewolves among them: without the participants knowing the identities of one another. The game play is divided into day and night cycles. At night, the werewolves act together to eliminate one of the villagers. During the day, the villagers try to figure out who the wolves are among them and vote to eliminate wolves without killing innocent fellow villagers by mistake. Through its simple reductive rules, the most obvious game strategy is to attack a fellow player passionately with an accusation, based on even the flimsiest reasons. Wired Magazine (Robertson 2010) reports one such all night game session from 2008 Foo Camp—a yearly hacker event hosted by O’Reilly Media—between Google Chicago head of engineering Brian Fitzpatrick, O’Reilly Media’s author Rich Gibson and Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales:

*Tempers have frayed, and language has descended into the gutter. Wales is making wild accusations. Fitzpatrick is begging and pleading. Gibson, overwhelmed by the pressure, lets out a scream and starts pelting the others with pretzels. No one is drunk or under any narcotic influence, and yet all three men are moments away from what Fitzpatrick will later describe as “a mindfuck”. (Robertson 2010)*

In this example, werewolf game play has turned intense, with passionate emotion on active display. This may not be entirely due to the game alone; social pressures can demand all night playing between long conference days. Yet reports of all night werewolf sessions result regularly in tales of passions running high and of having a transformative and memorable affect, much like in the above game between Fitzpatrick, O’Reilly and Gibson:

*A year on, Gibson concurs. “It left me with the sense that one of my basic anchors on reality had been ripped loose,” he recalls. Wales still talks about the all-nighter with reverent awe: “It was amazing. It was a work of art. It was a thing of beauty”. (Ibid)*

In the literature linking passion and entrepreneurship, passion is most commonly allocated to individual effort and/or the psychological attributes of a particular individual (Cardon et al. 2009; Collewaert et al.

2016; Gielnik et al. 2015). This interpretation of entrepreneurship, as located in the traits of single individuals, has been contested by researchers focusing on processes of creating organization and the becoming nature of entrepreneurial agency (Gartner 1988; Steyaert 1995). Western thought on entrepreneurship still largely builds on the idea of reason located in a deliberate economic mindset for action in the core of the entrepreneur; where passions have very little role beyond drawing attention away from the deliberating mindset of cold calculation. In our reading, the notion of singularity of reason connects to philosophical roots, namely in the Hegelian body and mind divide. Building on Spinoza's and later Deleuze and Guattari's philosophies, this has been problematized in recent entrepreneurship research, arguing for entrepreneurship as embodied becoming (e.g. Hjorth 2007; Poldner et al. 2019; Steyaert 1998). They argue a view of entrepreneurship as embodied, and passions discovered in the process of becoming an entrepreneur (Hjorth 2007) as an alternative to the calculative approach to entrepreneurship as internal cognition; taming and containing passions by intellect or social norms. In this 'becoming' approach to entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship emerges as a kind of ethic (Poldner et al. 2019). In our discussion here, we also build on entrepreneurship as the networked and ordinary organization of interests (Bill et al. 2010; Rehn and Taalas 2004). This latter approach rests on cultural theory where the entrepreneur is considered *already belonging*; to her socio-cultural ties and connections in her spatial and local settings. In this view, an entrepreneur discovers her passions in the interplay with the networked opportunities of becoming an entrepreneur.

In this chapter we will take a look at the interplay of passion and entrepreneurship from the perspective of affect and game play (Anable 2018), specifically from the perspective of spatiality. In this approach, the playing of games is not separate to entrepreneurship practice, nor is it analogous via strategic and calculated logical practice. Rather, it is a practice which transforms the embodied *feeling* of (continually) becoming an entrepreneur. Such affective learning is not unique to entrepreneurial communities, but is evident in a range of organizational spaces (see Vitry et al. 2020). However, the centrality of game playing is particular to high tech start-up entrepreneurship. The game affects effect entrepreneurial



identities; there is no dispassionate entrepreneurship in sight. This does not identify passion as simply rooted in an individual emotional system; we explore passions as intensities in-between materials and agents (Brennan 2004; Michels 2015). To exemplify this move, we explore examples of werewolf game play to demonstrate how passion is evoked in the intersection of social game play, in the oscillation between calculative game design and affect, making no distinction between the mind and the materialities of the body. We are particularly interested in how the start-up community sees the roles of the werewolf game play out.

One such example is TechStars, a Colorado (US)-based seed entrepreneurship accelerator program that has, since 2011, been building a global network of start-up accelerators. It sees werewolf as a good way to get to know network participants, and articulates this as a means to train entrepreneurial skills while building a start-up community.

What's cool is that the skills demanded by Werewolf are the same as those developed in TechStars. The teams are overwhelmed with data from customer interviews and mentor meetings. They're required to pitch their business repeatedly, even if it's not solid yet. And so on. (Girdley 2013)

A key element of the werewolf game lies in the fundamental lack of information and high level of uncertainty regarding the information available. Girdley's talk of 'skills' here, suggests the very analogy between gameplay and entrepreneurship which we discount. Yet a deeper reading identifies these 'skills' and the accompanying 'overwhelm' as an affective uncertainty to be tamed rather than an intellectual or cognitive difficulty to be calculated. Understanding game play as affective—through bodily felt intensities—opens the entrepreneurial process to view as complex social spaces where boundaries between entrepreneuring agents, affective responses and material resources intertwine and become blurred with open-ended intensities. To make our move, we understand game as a ritual practice (Marshall 2002) that in anthropology has been analyzed as community building, where the symbolic and cultural aspects ritual, rather than the economical or cognitive, are emphasized (Van Gennep 1909; Turner 1974). A ritual is most commonly outside everyday experience. With potentially uncertain outcomes, most rituals are, arguably,

carefully scripted (e.g. those around birth, marriage and funerals), and even if the outcome is uncertain, the ceremonies are typically repetitive and cyclical in progression. That is, the participants follow the 'rules of the game' and contribute to the upholding of the ritual practice and community building.

By examining the role of werewolf game play from an interpretivist perspective as a ritual practice (Marshall 2002), we see passions as ignited, echoed and contagiously transmitted in-between materials and agents. The ritual practices of game play reveal the social spatialities of the entrepreneurial process and the inherent gamble of entrepreneurship (Appadurai 2011). Further, we trace the repetitive and culture-producing aspects of gaming as central to producing tech start-up communities. Through exploration of the repetitive game cycle, we highlight the progression of such games as werewolf that present opportunities for the normalization of affective responses and emergence of entrepreneurial as becoming. Furthermore, we find that passion is evoked in the game play as response to the werewolf game design: failure is common, information is unequal, and power imbalances are clearly present. In werewolf game-play, passion disrupts the educational models of entrepreneurship which perpetuate balanced models of opportunities and success as an outcome of rational strategizing in conventional business settings.

This chapter is structured as follows: in the first section, we outline our understanding of entrepreneurship in relation to passion; entrepreneurship and affect from the perspective of spatiality and production of communities. Drawing on Appadurai (2011) we discuss how feeling has been a key part of theorizing relationship of markets to entrepreneurs since Weber. Our discussion concentrates on entrepreneurial performativity to understand how passion has been introduced and internalized as a key element of becoming an entrepreneur. We challenge the commonly held view that passions are restrained through self-discipline and calculative action as this has been largely unexplored by studies of entrepreneurs. In the second section of our chapter, we draw on studies in games and culture to apply affect theory to an analysis of Werewolf. In this view we consider the game as an example of how the emerging ritual of game play works as means to organize start-up spaces outside everyday and train entrepreneurial bodies to control emerging passions, yet work to ignite

them. We then proceed to discussing the role playing such games has in start-up tech cultures and tech companies. In the end of the chapter we discuss entrepreneurial community building and applying a spatial lens to passion and entrepreneurship.

## 5.2 Becoming Passionate—Affective Communities of Entrepreneurship

What is passion? Psychological studies of entrepreneurial passion (Cardon et al. 2009: 513–514) tend to assume a priori that passion represents a process of discovering individual drive and motivation, fueling a constant persistence and grit for entrepreneurship. This process is based on a desensitized ‘reasoning’ behavior that builds on the positive ‘self-regulation of mind states’ (Cardon et al. 2009: 518). Taking a critical departure from the definition of passion as *merely* an embodied affective response (Vallerand et al. 2003), we contend that passion understood as cognitive drive to attach to activities and goals leaves out two important aspects of passion; namely the embodied ability to feel and sustain pleasurable passions over time, and the connection to interaction with others. The processes of discovering passions never take place in a vacuum. The first is connected to understanding the sustained creativity and ease identified by studies of entrepreneurship as ‘flow’, alias the pleasurable ease experienced in connecting activity and engagement with the entrepreneurial networks, fueling connection with the entrepreneurial venture (Brännback et al. 2006). The second is connected to the cultural practices of becoming members of such networks in the first place. Instead of focusing on passions as individual resources, motivations or goals, we prefer to pose the question: what kinds of social and cultural practices are individuals participating in to discover passions and how are passions controlled and contained? To be successful in the building of ventures in markets and to become a member of the community of successful entrepreneurs, passions are evoked as responses to the gamble of market uncertainty (Appadurai 2011; Appadurai and Alexander 2019). This alternative approach takes its inspiration from the cultural study of passions as being

discovered in social processes of becoming a member of a community and developing a sense of belonging (Marshall 2002). When directing our interest toward the passions arising in social interaction, the role of moderating and controlling passions becomes a question of cultural norms and morals (Appadurai 2011). In the end of this section we look at werewolf gaming from this perspective; of the sense of belonging within an affective community of 'attraction, identification, and cohesion' that ritualistic play facilitates (Marshall 2002).

Weber's classic argument that the Calvinistic ethic forms the mobilizing dynamic and animating force in capitalism is applied by Appadurai (2011; Appadurai and Alexander 2019). In Calvinism, a key idea is that salvation is predetermined, and therefore cannot be earned. According to Weber, the only way for market actors to alleviate the uncertainty of not knowing their status within their faith (being saved or not) is to passionately believe that one belongs to the group of the chosen ones. Following the Calvinist ethic, this group will display 'grace'; an irresistible draw to follow the rule of God and will be saved since they are already intrinsically worth being saved. This places high demands for performativity on the group among their peers. Following Weber, Appadurai argues this 'spirit' of capitalism is the animating force of the workings of the markets, but that this is tied to the entrepreneurial agents within the market system. Concentrating on the mobilizing power of financial controlling devices like capital resources, book-keeping and financial planning, Appadurai's argument is that market agents do not simply calculate risk and act dispassionately. Appadurai argues with Weber that the passionate *gamble* in the face of God lies at the heart of monetary capitalism (2011).

Appadurai's analysis lends us a new perspective on affective belonging and on creativity as these apply to entrepreneurs. Instead of looking at capitalism's animating spirit as ideological, Appadurai opens up its relationship to Weber's ethos as the sensibilities of belonging to a group of chosen people (2011: 512). From this perspective he proposes an approach to markets as not driven by mechanistic calculation and profit making but by less formal forces of animation such as faith and belonging. The entrepreneur is drawn by a sense of belonging to a particular community in terms of dispositions and morals akin to a 'calling' (2011: 512). In the face of not knowing who are the pre-chosen to succeed

entrepreneurs are always alone and anxious. To alleviate this anxiety of imperfect information and loneliness, market players are drawn to entrepreneurial community to engage in activities in the 'spirit' of capitalism. The belonging to a community would be felt in the pre-personal body as affective intensities of becoming entrepreneur (Poldner et al. 2019). A closer reading on how creativity has been recently conceived as part of the entrepreneuring process seems to support a similar role for community-building as a necessity for the success of entrepreneur 'the main attribute to entrepreneurial process seem to be the ability to engage in affective exchange with resources and others in ways that allows for flow and creativity of discovery of goals together with financiers, backers, and others rather than goals existing fixed in identities and identifications of individuals' (Brännback et al. 2006).

The risk of entrepreneurship *is* primarily calculative, yet the social value attributed to entrepreneurial rewards relies upon the affective impact of risk. Approaching passion from the perspective of cultural processes positions passions firmly on the outside of individuals, in the risk and opportunity-filled dynamics of capitalist markets. Instead of focusing on individuals, Appadurai (2011) sets the 'machinery of risk' as central stage in a cultural analysis. Originally designed to control uncertainty through calculative controls of 'measuring, modeling, managing, predicting, commoditizing, and exploiting risk' (p. 522), operations have become central features in the capitalist markets; and this is increasingly accomplished through algorithmic devices and technologies, software and automated operations. Calculative devices encode risk-taking into the machines and technology of financial markets and in tech industries, the calculable interests and assumptions animate this machinery of risk. Passions of individuals are evoked as affective responses to interests in mechanical and largely digital forms. Passions become, therefore, the felt intensities animated by market systems' calculative devices in the affective spirit of capitalism.

The psychological study of entrepreneurial passion largely proposes passion as a positive force for entrepreneurial opportunity seeking and exploitation as an *individual* venture. While passion is cast in positive light, the inner drives of passion are also connected to negative effects of spinning out of proportion or misdirecting attention and affect toward

fueling cognitive biases (Baron 2008; Branzei and Zietsma 2003). Even positive passions can lead to cognitive bias in recognizing opportunities and even errors of judgment relating to business ventures. Alas, self-regulation is suggested to remedy such negative effects (eg. Carver and Scheier 2001; Martin and Stoner 1996) regarding not only the entrepre-  
neuring agent's mental states but extending to the business venture itself that can be put in jeopardy if passions are not kept in check. Self-regulation theory allied to entrepreneurship proposes entrepreneurial goals and interests as normalized and autonomous, rooted in the limited sets of identities of founders, innovators and managers. These normalized roles incorporate goals dispassionately and provide automatic 'direction and clarity to entrepreneurial efforts' (Cardon et al. 2009: 518).

Yet there is strong evidence against such claims. The risks involved in the inner workings of calculative machinery are largely internal to it and out of the control of any given entrepreneuring individual, no matter how courageous or optimistic. While entrepreneurial passion discourse concentrates on positive entrepreneurial drives and motivations (Cardon et al. 2009: 513–514), this does not explain the role the community plays in relating to passions. While the community may control and moderate passions through norms, social conventions such as modesty or shared interests set limits. Subservience to rationality as a valued quality, however, is conflicted in contemporary entrepreneurial discourse. Appadurai (2011) has very little trust in the idea of self-regulating market actors driven by Weberian modesty to effectively enforce prudence and the controlling of individual drives by larger social interests. Quite the contrary, in discussion of the global financial crises of 2008 he states, 'these heroes of the financial imaginary are precisely not about the taming of the "passions" by the "interests" (in Hirschman's 1977 famous formulation) but rather are about the animation of the interests by the passions' (Appadurai 2011: 524).

On the one hand it seems that to succeed in markets, entrepreneurs need to commit to the careful control and calculation of resources and capabilities: from material to financial, and from individual skills to socially networked capabilities. On the other, entrepreneurs answer to the 'calling' of the market by joining the entrepreneuring community. The existing regimes of calculative technology, in parts controlled by

automatic and real-time apparatuses are already largely in place and amplified by digital spaces extending beyond physical time and place in the context of international financial transactions. However, these chance calculations do not solve or diminish the personal risks of the gamble of not knowing one's predestined belonging to the community of successful winners or failed sinners. Passions animated by the game dynamics of multiple interests and uncertain outcomes envelope entrepreneurial agents. How passions are controlled and regulated, including to promote calculative projects of acquiring and securing resources for the venture, becomes central.

The distinctive feature of such entrepreneurial passions is that they arise as an affective response to the workings of the calculative technologies and algorithmic operations in contemporary capitalistic markets. Affect is here defined as the bodies' ability to affect and be affected by others through felt intensities (Massumi 2002). While existing studies propose an understanding of entrepreneurial passion as lived-in subjective perception enhancing effectiveness (Cardon et al. 2009), we pick our starting point from the distinction between affect rooted inside cognition of agents (Vallerand et al. 2003) and the capability for sensing affect understood as a 'pouring of feeling spatially' (Massumi 2002) that is socially constructed. Thus we reject the merely analytical distinction between passion as cognitive, and affect as bodies' ability to be affected. Individuals do not differentiate passions as cognitive and affective responses as internally obsessive or which are evoked as responses to environments and people they are interacting with (c.f. Vallerand et al. 2003; Ahmed 2004). We do not aim to explore this differentiation that seems to correspond with the body and mind divide. What is of interest from the perspective of our current argument is passions as socially transmitted and circulated as the 'stickiness' between bodies (Ahmed 2004). From this perspective the affective responses are evoked as relational to other bodies and transmitted between bodies as intensities. From the perspective of affect, passion can be understood as inhabiting relational and communal spaces among the entrepreneuring community, responding to intensities in spatial terms.

We seek to explore how participation in a werewolf game in tech start-up communities facilitates transmitting passions through intensities

between participants. In the next section of the chapter, we look at social gameplay as a rule-driven calculative activity that evokes passions in its dynamics. The purpose of our analysis is to show how passions can be part of the affectual design of building an entrepreneurial community.

### 5.3 Game Affects Beyond the Play-Space

Entrepreneurial learning is increasingly embracing games and play, including 'serious games' in explicit learning environments (Fox et al. 2018). Play generally has had a role in contemporary work organization for some time, featuring as a publicly acknowledged motivating component of company culture for technology firms such as Google and more obviously in the games and entertainment industry (e.g. Lego). Serious games are a distinct category of games, broadly defined as game activities which do not frame enjoyment as their primary purpose, but instead utilizing game or 'gamified' practices for 'serious' outcomes such as skills training (Michael and Chen 2006; Ritterfeld et al. 2009). This definition presents a direct contradiction to Huizinga's (1955) explicit definition of games as 'non-serious' and set within the fixed jurisdictional boundaries of a play space. Andersen (2009) identifies the appeal of games to organization as a mechanism for working on the self and upon the transformation of existing social relations as part of the adoption of play as a power technology. Play, he argues, has begun to be applied to organizations in order to extend their jurisdiction, offer freedom from their own restrictive processes and obfuscate the logic of power (Andersen 2009: 10). Those who design games for organizations therefore often market their appeal in terms of the production of the psychological 'flow' state whereby serious work activity is freed from the coercive power of employment relations. Their use is advertised as a mechanism for unlocking innovation and creativity; we suggest this attempts to invite participants to recalibrate the productive self through the opportunity to engage in the different performative frame of 'play'.

Unlike free play, games establish rules and success criteria which are pre-agreed by participants, though these can take time to learn correctly. Even when acknowledged as activities held separate from 'ordinary life',



games and sport are identified by a range of anthropologists as incorporating substantial affect accompanying their performance and results; from suffering agony, exhilaration and joy in the game space. Such affect has been the source of multiple moral panics over the promotion of aggression and addiction with respect to games and sport; from football hooliganism to video game violence. Such panics highlight concern over the ability of affective gameplay to remain within the ritual sphere of the game; by transgressing this boundary in the body or psychology of the player, play becomes identified as a route to social transgression. Yet the processes by which such affect promotes emotional or behavioral change of concern is more frequently linked to repetition or familiarity, and often detached from the representational narratives in the game unless these narratives provide a basis for establishing group solidarity (Barlett et al. 2009; Hartmann and Vorderer 2010). Anable (2018) shows how by conceiving of games as affective systems, rather than as mere stimuli, we can take a more nuanced approach to games that focuses on the embodied, contextual, social and symbolic dimensions of play. In taking this approach, we can understand the affective element not as a transformation of the player or transference of narrative norms, but embedded in the social practice of play.

## 5.4 Werewolf: An Affective Game Played Repetitively in Entrepreneurial Space

Werewolf is a social game that has become an increasingly common feature in the tech start-up community, particularly in the organization of conference spaces. This simple game of pretending to be something one is not and trying to detect the liars has become a staple in many tech start-up conferences where media content ‘geeks’ and technology ‘nerds’ explore the latest crossover developments in tech industries (Robertson 2010). These conferences, like start-up accelerators and co-working hubs, are an example of both a social and physical space for entrepreneurship. Anthropologist Michel de Certeau makes the point that places are rendered as spatial through living elements in motion: ‘Space is composed of

intersections of mobile elements ... Space is a practiced place' (De Certeau 1984: 117). Here we concentrate on a few such arrangements of werewolf games that facilitate an emerging community of players who take risks.

Games, as mentioned earlier in the chapter, are comprised of a structure of rules and an engaging narrative. Some social rules of repetitive ritual behavior are foundational to establishing a game as a game (Huizinga 1955). Others are specific to the underlying logic of the specific game being played. In werewolf play, this relates to the actions available to different player roles. The calculative or logical component (ludology) has a history of being studied as distinct from the narrative or thematic component (narratology), yet the social rules are also fundamental to the spatial practice of play. It is no accident that werewolf play takes place typically in conferences and network events. The features of the game rules based on ignorance resemble those of the entrepreneurial start-up experience. However, there is a more significant relevance of the ludology in the lived experience of the social game. The ability of game design to organize lived experience and scenic materials in game play is a particular aspect of game play, either as ludological rule following activity or game play as narrative culture-making (Olaison and Taalas 2017). Playing a game as a routine practice transforms not only the playing space in 'everyday spatial becoming' (Beyes and Steyaert 2011: 47), but in ritual form establishes a new community of players in which the material game and the participants can transform, explore, or reject social, narrative and ludological rules.

One such example of organizing community through werewolf game play is a small technology and news journalism focused conference Newsgeist. This conference is explicitly organized as an unconference; an event with no or minimal structure or agenda. Instead of a program, Newsgeist curates participants. Newsgeist is a strictly invitation-only industry conference between tech companies, journalists, news editors and policy makers. In our participant observation of the Newsgeist unconference in 2016, werewolf game play was used to organize the conference and community in several ways: as a passionate community and as an engaging conference space.

Participants make their agenda on the first night of the conference, and like in the werewolf game and entrepreneurship more generally, the participants find themselves in a situation of incomplete information regarding the participants, agenda and therefore of the purpose of the conference. The inviting organizers describe the purpose as follows:

Newsgeist is a community of news media professionals—journalists, educators, entrepreneurs, and advocates—passionate about news journalism. Regardless of role or experience, members come together as peers to share experiences, debate challenges, and posit new ideas. (Newsgeist 2019)

The only item in the Newsgeist program before the start of the conference is werewolf; that is to be played after the conference hours on both conference nights. In the absence of other program items, werewolf game playing becomes the central program item. In this reading, the rules of playing become a purposeful ‘staging of atmospheres’ (Bille et al. 2015) for the conference.

The Newsgeist example highlights a ritual experience ‘outside’ of everyday life, since conferences are outside of everyday activity. Meanwhile, playing a game as a central program item makes the game a central ‘calculative device’ (Appadurai 2011) or dynamic motor to turn the conference into lived-space through participation in the entrepreneurial culture of game play. The game of werewolf, played in multiple repeated rounds every night, works as ritual practice in the creation of belonging to a group that is the Newsgeist media industry community where playing the game provides social integration and a sense of unity among a diverse and curated group of participants (Michaels 2002). The playing, as experienced by the researcher, was certainly affective. In the first round, cast as a villager, the researcher was ‘killed’ and dramatically expunged from the community. This led to intense personal reflections on belonging; was an academic identity incompatible with the Newsgeist community? Did she lack the ruthlessness to succeed in this market? Was her passion misplaced?

Parviainen and Kortelainen (2019) highlight the role of affective practices in tech industry organization. In their analysis of mindfulness practices they analyze the tech industry community-building at the

intersection of 'hippy' designers and techno-enthusiasts. This emerges in what they call the 'Silicon Valley ethos', a combination of hard cognitive pressures and competition in combination of liberal values and bohemian pop-cultures 'to adapt to an atomised and accelerated sphere of start-up culture' and succeed as a tech start-up entrepreneur (p. 359). Google is a substantial proponent of the ethos, and as curators of the Newsgeist conference they influence this approach. Yet, community building through affective play of werewolf is not only limited to the organization of the unconference.

Werewolf builds on cyclical play to produce a build-up of intensities. The game is usually adjudicated by a facilitative 'narrator' who supports player's roles, though in some versions of the game this role is delegated to an audio recording mobile application run on a smartphone. Werewolf relies upon memory and communication, as well as misdirection and deception between players. Allocation of villager or werewolf roles is done randomly and secretly at the start of the game using cards or tokens. Gameplay then proceeds in rounds of 'night' and 'day' cycles. During the 'night' cycle, participants allocated as werewolves collaborate to eliminate other players from the game by 'killing a villager', while during the 'day' cycles the combined player community confer to attempt to uncover the werewolves' secret identity and eliminate them from the game by 'executing a suspect'. Some players on the villager team are allocated roles with additional abilities so that they can acquire information on potential werewolves during the 'night' cycle or have additional actions during the 'day' cycle. Play proceeds until all 'werewolves' are executed or all 'villagers' are killed.

Returning to our first example from 2008, the game atmosphere gains its spatial effect from the felt affective intensities. Werewolf is a logic game where deduction of the internal threat is based on incomplete information among the players, and attempts to identify (and eliminate) the culprit rely on consensus agreement. As the game progresses the odds of success decrease on the principle that the number of players is decreasing through elimination from the game leaving the rogue players with a greater influence over the negotiation. Yet it is in the narrative theme that participants can safely accuse their fellow players of duplicity; of 'being a wolf'. When we find our three players in the room it is this spatial aspect

of gaming to mobilize elements that gives game its visceral thrust where passions flare beyond mere cognitive activity.

Wales is making wild accusations. Fitzpatrick is begging and pleading. Gibson, overwhelmed by the pressure, lets out a scream and starts pelting the others with pretzels. (Robertson 2010)

This retrospective highlights how the intensity of werewolf game is felt more acutely and passions heightened by the purposeful design arrangements of repetition. Yet such affects develop not because the existence of the game rules themselves but because of the felt spatial consequences of repetitive execution. Playing werewolf does not inculcate an entrepreneurial ethic. Yet the ritual repetition of werewolf games by Silicon Valley pioneers, at entrepreneurship network gatherings or conferences combines the game affect with the practice of entrepreneurship in a symbolic way. This aspect of repetition of cyclical aspect of game play is of importance to ritual practices—repetitions and intensifying experience of closeness and belonging to a chosen group or community of players in a game space out of everyday life (Marshall 2002). More importantly, the entrepreneurial identity-roles assumed to regulate entrepreneurial goalsetting and interests (Baron 2008) begin to unravel and become loose, connecting to networked opportunities akin to ‘flow’ states (Brännback et al. 2006). While winning a game is clearly an individual goal, the narrative of the game builds on a new cycle for development, each killing is followed by new killing, and being killed off is of common experience. However, there is always the opportunity for a new game. Players are ‘called’ to repeat game participation and to come back to play again—regardless of winning or losing—which facilitates a networked entrepreneurial community, a *communitas* (Turner 1974). This aspect is clearly highlighted in the stories of being indoctrinated into an entrepreneurial community with connections extending outside the game spaces:

it’s the most exclusive and productive way to spend an evening at a conference or expo. It’s your best bet of finding the most interesting people and of emerging the next morning with a couple of intriguing job offers. Rather than spend a fortune on funky business cards or hours memorising people’s

blog posts, the most effective way to connect in the tech industry may instead be to kill and eat them. (Robertson 2010)

These ritualistic practices of werewolf play have supported the organization of conference space to establish communities of belonging, and the intense passions developed through repetitive gameplay challenge conventional calculative roles. During the play cycles ordinary rules of behavior are replaced by the more fluid game-community membership norms where players engage and respond passionately to the game's cyclical developments. We will now turn to a more detailed examination of the calculative features of the game as part of the return of 'radical uncertainty' (Appadurai 2011).

Appadurai (2011) outlines radical uncertainty as a returning feature, or atmosphere, animating contemporary markets. We would suggest that this is an affective atmosphere (Michels 2015) emerging from the interactions of both human and non-human components. Beyes and Steyaert (2011) describe how everyday activities can transform spatial expectations through affective intervention, in their analysis of artistic performances in unusual places. We extend this approach to the performative play of werewolf as a purposeful design feature of contemporary entrepreneurship practice. In our specific case, the game components and a ludology which relies upon incomplete and asymmetrical information contribute to the rise of passions which are atmospherically transmitted in entrepreneurial space.

As a social game, the play of werewolf incorporates more abductive logic and interpretation of individual's behaviors or presentation than is apparent from the rule mechanics. Mathematical analysis of the werewolf game highlights these mechanics as statistically fair when the correct distribution of werewolves to villagers is observed, such that communication of limited information in play offers an equal level of probability for either team to win (Migdał 2013). While specialized game roles may identify information about other player's alliances, communicating this information is fraught. Other clues may emerge from faults or cheating in gameplay, such as a sense of the movement or directionality of the narrator's voice when addressing werewolves, moved cards or tokens, or players responding incorrectly to night-time cues to 'awake' and look

around for a kill. Primarily, however, the social communication aspect of the game rules dictate that verbal attack of an accusation is the basic mechanism to collect information, and to direct interest away from one player to another. As the play cycles progress, verbal accusations and defensive responses become important. The physical telling signs of cognitive bias, the connections between saying and doing, become central:

If you want to play Werewolf well, you have to draw on a wide skill-set. First comes memory. It's not always easy—particularly at 2am—to remember who accused whom and how everyone voted, but this is crucial for spotting patterns. And you need meticulous observational skills; note someone drumming their fingers or fiddling with their collar, and you have the “evidence” to back up whatever theory you're selling. Then there are concrete observational cues—who's making eye contact with whom? Has somebody slipped up by saying a werewolf has been lynched, when only a fellow werewolf could know that? (Robertson 2010)

This quotation highlights how the only information deemed important is based on ‘reading’ the players. In the development of the play any self-regulation behaviors of involved players might be interpreted as suspicious; when any physical twitch becomes interpreted as a sign of cognitive dissonance and lying. The lack of performed passion becomes interpreted as a source of evidence. The ability to sense intensities that lead to alliances and ability to produce trustworthiness in the face of uncertainty, become central to playing the game. In this sense judgments do not rely on complete information or on deductive logic based on truthful statements by participants, rather the ability to build alliances and networks in the game become central to successful play. In repetitive game cycles, this becomes a more prominent feature than winning single votes.

Werewolf incorporates in its rules a permanent and radical uncertainty of goals for each single movement in playing the game. While the rules are simple they need continuous reinterpretation of shifting alliances in spatial arrangements. As the play progresses through multiple day and night cycles with mostly random repetitive killings, the risks of being killed as collateral damage facilitated by the rules is bigger than any

chances of winning. This risk is not, then, an object to be managed, but presents an opportunity to be exploited with a declaration of its management or denouncement of the source of risk. Failure to progress in the game is not a personal failure but a repetitive feature in the game that is to be accepted (Appadurai and Alexander 2019). This repetitive failure, of not progressing in the game, evokes strong passions from the participants. In our participatory observations of *Newsgeist*, being killed in the course of the game was an affectual pleasure interrupted and frustrations of it 'not being fair' was common. While the central feature was clearly that there would always be a new game for those who are called to play, and the failure only increased the 'affective investment' in the game akin to learning community rules in tech cultures (Parviainen and Kortelainen 2019).

## 5.5 Conclusions

In this chapter we have taken a cultural interpretative perspective on passion and entrepreneurship to explore how passions are discovered in becoming an embodied entrepreneur as part of community of market players. Becoming an embodied entrepreneur is never a private affair but always accomplished in interactions with other bodies (Hjorth 2007; Basso et al. 2010). Taking the view that an entrepreneur is always already part of her social networks, passions emerge as an affective response to radical market uncertainties.

In our analysis we traced the repetitive and culture-producing aspects of ritualistic game play of werewolf as building tech start-up community cultures. Through exploration of the repetitive game cycles, we highlighted the role of the game in facilitating a spatial arrangement of conferences and networks as lived-spaces for becoming entrepreneurs through which a community emerges. The progression of werewolf gaming cycles present opportunities for the normalization of affective responses and offer alternatives to the calculative or self-regulating role of the conventional strategic risk-taker roles. Furthermore, we find that passions emerge in the game play as response to game design itself rather than are directed



by the single goal of winning: failure is common while seldom forever and information is always unequal.

Based on our exploratory reading we would suggest further attention is given to the exploration of unconventional spaces and embodied practices in start-up communities. The study of passion and entrepreneurship communities as spatial affective networks might provide useful insight into a range of aspects, some of which we outline below.

First, community arrangements may be composed and designed employing ludologic motors like games mirroring entrepreneurial market conditions. Through paying attention to passions as a response to market conditions and not arising from goals but rather from affective ties and connections makes it possible to study the politics of entrepreneurship relating to bodies in the spatial arrangements of becoming-entrepreneur (Hjorth 2007; Poldner et al. 2019). This would link entrepreneurship to economies of emotion (Ahmed 2004) and emerging ethics (Poldner et al. 2019). Simple questions such as who is 'killed' in start-up community games and in which order, could tell us something about the make-up of start-up community affective ties, passionate responses and resulting entrepreneurial networks beyond calculative interests.

Further, approaching passions and entrepreneurship from the methodological view of spatio-materiality seems to indicate that the psychological study of passions and entrepreneurship might benefit from going beyond a focus on mind-states and cognitive behaviors to incorporate studies of the embodied becoming of entrepreneurship; as networked and felt in the body adding a more nuanced process view of passions as social, cultural and physiologically enabled (Steyaert 1998; Hjorth 2007; Basso et al. 2010).

Finally, analysis of affective atmospheres lends to the empirical study of entrepreneurship a perspective on everyday arrangements as always culturally enveloped, fuelled and saturated. Affective atmospheres and a focus on in-between human and non-human components allows us to see entrepreneurial subjectivities not so much rooted in identities but as something that pungent game motors and spaces of play spin into existence. Exploring practices of naturalizing risk-taking subjectivities that are rooted in game rules—villagers, werewolves, multiple specialist roles and game hosts—highlights the role of repetitive ritual practice (Marshall

2002) in identification and community building in tech entrepreneurship. Perceiving game play through this spatial lens opens up the culture-producing and reproducing impact of game play, instead of considering it outside of everyday life. This might be a helpful mechanism for seeing the roles of network meetings and conferences in facilitating diverse communities of entrepreneurship. Applying a spatial lens also seems to indicate that passions arise in affective intensities, but such simple goals as winning or losing a single game become a contested motivational ground. Identifying game play in its social context indicates that there is always another round, another game and a new network conference for those that are members of the entrepreneurial community, allowing discoveries of longer term networked opportunities and passions to emerge. The spatial view on the werewolf game applied here has identified its practice as a motor for affective intensities that connect materialities of bodies with the sociality of players; fuelling passionate communities of start-up entrepreneurship.

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# 6

## Passion, Expert Knowledge, and Community Entrepreneurship

Christian Lechner

### 6.1 Introduction

The field of entrepreneurship is concerned with “the scholarly examination of how, by whom, and with what effects opportunities to create future goods and services are discovered, evaluated, and exploited”, including the study of “the sources of opportunities; the processes of discovery, evaluation, and exploitation of opportunities; and the set of individuals who discover, evaluate, and exploit them”, as defined by Shane and Venkataraman (2000: 218). The question of who and why someone seizes entrepreneurial opportunities, how someone seizes opportunities, and what the effects of these actions are is at the heart of entrepreneurship (Stevenson and Jarillo 1990). Despite efforts to widen the application of entrepreneurship, I will stick in this chapter to Shane’s and Venkataraman’s definition of entrepreneurship but restricted to the emergence of new firms (Gartner 1985).

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Most research on passion in entrepreneurship focuses on entrepreneurial passion, exploring how entrepreneurial passion fuels entrepreneurial effort or vice versa. This research has led to a consistent body of scholarly articles. Entrepreneurial passion combines the more general concept of passion to the more specific field of entrepreneurship (Cardon et al. 2005; Cardon 2008). Entrepreneurial passion is understood as “consciously accessible, intense positive feelings experienced by engagement in entrepreneurial activities associated with roles that are meaningful and salient to the self-identity of the entrepreneur” (Cardon et al. 2009). The areas of entrepreneurial passion are inventing, founding firms, and developing (Cardon et al. 2012). This very conception of entrepreneurial passion is problematic if we consider the field of entrepreneurship.

First, if we want to understand why people found firms, then this very restricted definition of entrepreneurial passion leads to an almost tautological relationship. If entrepreneurial passion is “engagement in entrepreneurial activities”, then entrepreneurial passion is already entrepreneurship.

Second, entrepreneurship happens when an individual or group of individuals and an opportunity come together (Shane and Venkataraman 2000). Entrepreneurial passion framed in the narrow sense puts the will to launch a venture first and the search for an opportunity second. However, since entrepreneurship research deals with the question of who and why individuals found companies and thus develop entrepreneurial intent, the entrepreneurial passion approach overlooks individuals who perceive first an opportunity and only in a second step develop entrepreneurial intent (and not necessarily entrepreneurial passion).

If we only consider the case of user-entrepreneurs (Shah 2003; Shah and Tripsas 2007; Capone 2008), it becomes clear that many different forms of domain passion can lead to entrepreneurship (see also Capone in this volume). More troublesome in this regard is research about what passions entrepreneurs actually have: in an inductive qualitative study (Cardon et al. 2017), passion for people and passion for products and services were emerging important themes. Passion for founding or running a business, one of the three pillars of the entrepreneurial passion construct and the most directly related to entrepreneurship did not even emerge as a theme!

Third, the current research on entrepreneurial passion might be subject to self-selection bias and restricted range as this research studies how entrepreneurial passion influences entrepreneurial intent or starting firms or the performance of start-ups (Cardon et al. 2009). Entrepreneurs with entrepreneurial passion are studied and at best compared with entrepreneurs with low levels of entrepreneurial passion. However, in order to study a non-trivial relationship between entrepreneurial passion and entrepreneurship, we would also need to understand why some individuals with entrepreneurial passion do not create new ventures.

Fourth, the definition of entrepreneurial passion focuses on positive feelings toward entrepreneurial activities. This one-sided focus, which could be conceived as a form of harmonious passion, disregards the other (darker) side of passion: obsessive passion (Vallerand et al. 2003). Considering the possibility that habitual entrepreneurs have developed some form of entrepreneurship addiction (Spivack et al. 2013) and thus having developed an obsessive passion, opens new routes for inquiry: habitual entrepreneurs are important drivers of the economy (Gompers et al. 2010) and if habitual entrepreneurship is driven by some form of obsessive passion, then we would expect positive economic effects deriving from obsessive passion.

Therefore, in order to better understand how passion is related to entrepreneurship, it is essential to consider all facets of passion before investigating the effects of more restricted forms. Different forms of passion are related to different forms of perceptions and behaviors (Vallerand et al. 2003). Starting from passions for domains that are distinct from entrepreneurship leads to a non-trivial relationship with entrepreneurship and might eventually inform why even people with entrepreneurial passion might not start new ventures.

As passion is related to engagement in activities, it is also related to the development of expertise (Mageau et al. 2009). If expertise is a potential outcome of passion, then we can derive two important implications. First, expertise might be a pre-condition to see opportunities but not necessarily to act on them nor to succeed in these activities (Linder et al. 2019). Second, there should be a continuous feedback cycle between passion and activity engagement; however, if passion influences the degree of engagement with the activity and if the degree of engagement reinforces



passion, then it will be challenging to separate passion from engagement, leading possibly to endogeneity issues in research. Following this argument, as the typical nascent entrepreneur will never have engaged sufficiently in entrepreneurial activities in order to develop expertise (since he has not yet started a firm), and since engagement and passion are closely interrelated, the entrepreneurial passion of a nascent entrepreneur could only be considered as a presentiment: it points to the paradox that the entrepreneur somehow believes to have entrepreneurial passion but the objective lack of engagement with entrepreneurial activities (besides some gestation activities) means that she cannot have yet developed fully entrepreneurial passion. Moreover, research suggests that entrepreneurial passion fades over time once started the firm (Collewaert et al. 2016).

I will develop a theoretical framework on how passion is related to entrepreneurship by linking domain passion to domain expertise, domain expertise to opportunity recognition, and pursuit, also considering other contextual factors that lead to a positive impact of passion on entrepreneurship understood as new firm emergence. This approach is relevant for entrepreneurship as it breaks up the simplistic relationship between passion and entrepreneurship (entrepreneurship is passion and vice versa) This should allow for a more nuanced understanding of the role of passion in entrepreneurship and open up to meaningful future routes of scientific inquiry. The chapter is organized in seven sections (including this introduction). In the next section, entrepreneurial passion, passion in more general terms, and related concepts are discussed in order to understand the potential effects of these constructs better. I will then explore in the subsequent section the relationship between domain passion and expertise before I investigate—in Sect. 6.4—the role of expertise for opportunity recognition. In Sect. 6.5, I will discuss in general the relationship between passion and entrepreneurship and then explore how domain expertise, conformism (i.e., behavior according to usual practices or standards of a group or society), idea networking, and social capital influence actual entrepreneurial behavior before I will discuss the impact of the resulting entrepreneurial intent on founding new ventures and venture performance. In the final section, I draw overall conclusions and develop directions for future research.

## 6.2 Conceptual Background: Entrepreneurial Passion, Passion, and Related Concepts

Vallerand et al. (2003) define passion as a strong inclination toward an activity that people like and find relevant. Building on this definition in the entrepreneurial realm, Cardon et al. (2009) conceptualize entrepreneurial passion as consciously accessible, intense positive feelings related to the entrepreneurial activities that are meaningful and salient to the self-identity of the entrepreneur. As such entrepreneurial passion can be defined as a strong inclination toward enjoyable, important activities related to being an entrepreneur. Three main themes frame entrepreneurial passion: (1) the content of passion is an intense positive emotion; (2) whose empirical referents or objects usually involve venture-related opportunities, tasks, or activities; and (3) that has a motivational effect that stimulates entrepreneurs to overcome obstacles and remain engaged.

In this definition, passion is expressed through engagement with these activities: passion and engagement are inseparable (e.g., you cannot have a passion for running if you are not running). The restriction to only positive feelings appears to be a significant shortcoming of the entrepreneurial passion definition. Moreover, in the qualitative inductive studies of passions of entrepreneurs (Cardon et al. 2017) emerged that passion for growth and competition are essential drivers for entrepreneurs. Competitive focus is related to harmonious or obsessive passion (Dweck 2006) with very distinct effects on the behavior of individuals. Moreover, the focus on only positive feelings departs from the existence of a relationship between suffering and passion (Frankl et al. 1946).

Therefore, let us take a step back and consider how passion, in general, is framed. Passion encompasses engagement toward an activity, emotional attachment toward this activity, and relevant valuing of this activity (Vallerand et al. 2003). Relevant valuing of an activity means that the activity is perceived as important compared to other activities, as meaningful or as central to the person's identity. Domains are fields of activities. Passion emerges within the field of a specific activity (Curran et al. 2015). Thus, passion is domain-specific and therefore allows for specialization in a domain through sustained engagement (Mageau et al. 2009).

Passion can take two different forms: harmonious and obsessive (Vallerand et al. 2003).

On the one hand, harmonious passion is associated with autonomous behavioral regulation, that is, perceived self-determination, positive affect, and flow. According to self-regulation theory (Deci and Ryan 1985, 2000), in order to experience self-determination, individuals need to integrate external behavioral regulations in an environment that enables autonomy and competence development instead of controlling and over-demanding. Harmonious passion is considered as the result of the autonomous internalization of behavioral regulations (Vallerand et al. 2003). Harmonious passion is not related to conflicts with other life domains. It is a flexible form of activity engagement that leads to the persistence of the activity only in case of positive return expectations (Mageau et al. 2009).

On the other hand, obsessive passion is related to negative affect if one is deprived of the activity. “Yet, because the activity has taken control over the person, OP would be expected to lead to persistence. Such persistence is rigid because it occurs not only in the absence of positive emotions, but even in the face of important personal costs such as damaged relationships and failed work commitments” (Vallerand et al. 2003). This rigid persistence is more associated with conflict with other life domains. The estimated higher divorce rate of entrepreneurs, especially for immigrant entrepreneurs (Bonacich 1988) could be related to obsessive passion. While with harmonious passion, the activity appears to match an identity, with obsessive passion, the individual instead perceives that the activity determines the identity and that the lack of activity, therefore, threatens the identity. From this perspective, obsessive passion can increase stress but also the willingness to sacrifice other life domains leading to conflicts. Given the broader definition of passion compared to entrepreneurial passion, we can state that entrepreneurial passion might be considered a particular form of domain passion. As such, it is reasonable to refer to the more general concept of passion for understanding its outcome. Moreover, as the more general concept allows for both positive and negative feelings, it takes off the entrepreneurial passion definition an unnecessary constraint.

There are similar concepts worthwhile of notice; one of them is the concept of callings. Based on Wrzesniewski et al. (1997), callings are defined as “as an occupation that an individual (1) feels drawn to pursue, (2) expects to be intrinsically enjoyable and meaningful, and (3) sees as a central part of his or her identity” (Berg et al. 2010). Occupational callings are related generally to passion (Vallerand et al. 2003). However, it is also possible that people are unable to follow their calling (Berg et al. 2010). Unanswered callings might lead to frustration (Scheier and Carver 1988), disappointment (Bell 1985), or regret (Gilovich and Medvec 1995). Unanswered callings can be defined as “as an occupation that an individual (1) feels drawn to pursue, (2) expects to be intrinsically enjoyable and meaningful, and (3) sees as a central part of his or her identity, but (4) is not formally experiencing in a work role” (Berg et al. 2010: 974).

Therefore, we can understand callings as a form of passion in the sense of Vallerand and colleagues without necessarily the (full) engagement with the concerned activity. Finally, a distinction can exist between a job or career orientation, where people find a fulfillment (or not) in a given job without being passionate about the particular job. From this perspective, an answered calling corresponds to an activity related passion, and an unanswered calling as the impossibility to fully live one’s passion.

Another concept related to passion is grit; it is defined as “the tendency to pursue challenging long-term goals with perseverance and passion” (Duckworth et al. 2011: 175) or “trait-level perseverance and passion for long-term goals” (Duckworth and Quinn 2009: 166; Duckworth et al. 2007). As such, grit already incorporates passion and is related to the consistency of interests and perseverance of effort. The relationship between passion and grit appears to be problematic as some studies concluded that passion would lead to grit; however, if grit already includes passion, then this relationship is tautological. What sets grit apart from other concepts is that grit is mainly considered a dispositional personality trait. It could be shown that for individual performance, grit is generally more important than other factors such as IQ (Duckworth et al. 2007).

The concept of initiative shares the long-term focus, goal direction, perseverance in the face of barriers, and set-back with Grit. Initiative is defined as task-related efforts beyond generally expected levels (Grant and Berry 2011). As such, it contains elements of self-starting

(anticipating to do more than expected) and proactiveness. Therefore, initiative concerns as well as passion and grit, efforts, and engagement beyond normal expectation without considering affect while adding the notion of proactiveness and self-determination.

Passion, calling, grit, and initiative are partially overlapping, partially distinct concepts that are often related to each other in research. The empirical relations risk to be tautological since the correlations could mainly express what the concepts share and have in common. After having delineated the differing, related concepts, we will now draw attention to the role of domain passion and expertise.

### 6.3 Domain Passion and Expertise

Expertise means having the skill of an expert and thus being an expert. An expert is one with the special skill or knowledge representing mastery of a particular subject or domain: expertise is characterized by superior performance in representative situations within the domain (Ericsson 2006). A domain is a field in which specialization is possible through work, education, practice, hobbies, traditions, or life experiences (Johansson 2004).

Experts excel mainly in their chosen domain: they have superior pattern recognition, they solve problems faster with fewer errors, they have better short-term and long-term memory, they see problems at a deeper level (novice have superficial problem understanding) in their specific domain, and they have strong self-monitoring skills, that is, they are more aware of their strength and constraints (Chi et al. 1988). Domain expertise is thus a domain-specific experience that requires specialization (Ericsson 2006). It could be shown that experience alone is not sufficient for reaching the expert level. In many different domains, it appears to require about 10,000 hours of deliberate practice (Ericsson et al. 1993): therefore, effort constraints (the time and energy available) and motivational constraints are significant barriers to develop expertise.

As defined, passion encompasses engagement toward an activity, emotional attachment toward this activity, and relevant valuing of this activity (Vallerand et al. 2003). If we frame the process for becoming an expert

from the novice to an intermediate and finally to the expert level, we might distinguish between different influences that passion can have. At the novice stage, both harmoniously and obsessively passionate individuals have a preference for domain specialization. At intermediate stage, however, when individuals have reached an advanced level requiring more engagement for this activity, possibly at the expense of other activities that obsessive passion favors further advancement (Mageau et al. 2009).

At this point, we can conclude that, first, expertise requires domain specialization, and that passion leads to domain specialization. Second, passion leads to engagement, and expertise requires a high level of engagement through deliberate practice.

Third, passion favors also deliberate practice (Ericsson and Charness 1994). Both forms of passion have positive associations with deliberate practice and behavioral engagement (Curran et al. 2015). The strong association between becoming an expert and passion has been confirmed by research: while at the beginning stage only 36% were passionate individuals, at the advanced stage they were 92% and at the expert level 100%! Expertise equals passion (Mageau et al. 2009).

Two explanations appear appropriate. One, during the process toward expertise, non-passionate individuals drop out because they do not want to sustain the required engagement. Two, there is a unique passion-activity interface as passion increases engagement in a virtuous cycle. It appears that a feedback cycle exists between passion and engagement, that is passion leads to increased engagement, which leads to increased passion and so forth (Gielnik et al. 2015). In this sense, passion comes together with grit. Grit is understood as perseverance with passion; grit is a general better predictor of achievement than IQ or other related factors (Duckworth et al. 2011). This consistency of interest leads again to domain specialization and sustained activity engagement.

There is ample evidence that passion and becoming an expert are strongly related. Passion drives domain-specific expertise through domain specialization, consistent domain-specific interest leading to deliberate practice, and sustained effort. However, while we can claim that non-passionate people drop out on their way to expertise, we cannot claim that passion always leads to expertise. Besides the process triggered by

expertise, the presence of other factors is also important as, for instance, the age of the individuals when starting an activity (Ericsson et al. 1993). While passion might overcome motivational constraints, it has no relation with effort constraints (Ericsson et al. 1993).

Moreover, resource constraints mean that an individual does not have the necessary resources to engage in sufficient deliberate practice. For instance, an individual might not have reasonable access to training facilities (or imagine that parents are not able to drive their kid to a distant training facility every day), or simply can not afford the cost (imagine a surfer who as not a sponsor or a family that back up to cover costs for material and traveling and is thus required to work and relegate the passion to a reduced hobby). Indeed, research on callings deals with this kind of issue. As callings are defined as domains that an individual finds attractive, expected to be meaningful and enjoyable and central to one's identity (Wrzesniewski et al. 1997), we can understand passion as answered callings (Vallerand et al. 2003) but cannot exclude that unanswered callings exist. Indeed varying coping mechanisms have been discovered as well as the resulting regret of not being able to follow the calling (Berg et al. 2010).

Individuals might not be fully available to follow their calling. Therefore, not only not-passionate individuals but also passionate individuals will drop out on their way to expertise. What remains is that passion is a driver of intentions, that intentions are the best predictor for subsequent behavior (Edelman 2010). The stronger the passion, the stronger the intention to engagement, and the more likely its performance according to the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991). Thus, passion acts through intentions, consistent behavior, and leads potentially to the development of domain expertise. Domain expertise is strongly related to domain passion.

## 6.4 Domain Expertise and Opportunity Recognition

The subjectivist theory of entrepreneurship (STE) understands entrepreneurial behavior as a function of differences in knowledge, resources, opportunity costs, and expectations between founders (Kor et al. 2007). STE argues that a founder will detect and act on opportunities in a subjective way (Shepherd et al. 2007). Therefore, individuals create firms because they subjectively detect an opportunity and consider the opportunity to be a good fit for themselves. The founder's personality, human capital, mindset, and judgment, all lead to the discovery or framing of an opportunity (Foss et al. 2008) and, subsequently, to the conviction to have identified an opportunity that is specific to that person (first-person opportunity) (Shepherd et al. 2007). Therefore, the path to a new venture (involving exploration) is mostly subjective and driven by idiosyncratic insights and convictions (Buenstorf 2007).

The STE focuses on the individual's knowledge and resources, sees them as a function of an individual's experience, and examines their role in opportunity pursuit (Kor et al. 2007). According to this theory, the decision to explore a specific opportunity for productive use is reliant on the founder's subjective preferences, knowledge, expectations, and insights (i.e., perceptions). Shane's (2003) definition of entrepreneurship focused on opportunity identification and exploitation reflects this position: entrepreneurs perceive opportunities subjectively and convince themselves that a particular opportunity is specific to themselves (i.e., first-person opportunity). According to Kirzner (1973), entrepreneurs are characterized by their alertness toward so far largely unnoticed opportunities, which, as a consequence, are largely uncontested (Gavetti 2012).

Alertness enhances the identification and continuous screening of opportunities. Affect, emotions, and passion strongly influence this alertness: passion increases alertness toward opportunities (Baron 2008). A second element is that the identification of unnoticed and thus less contested opportunities depends on imperfect knowledge and/or asymmetric knowledge distribution (Kirzner 1997). The subjective skills and knowledge accumulated through training or experiences, understood as human



capital (Becker et al. 1964), is therefore functional for discovering opportunities and for acting on them. Human capital theory predicts that higher levels of knowledge, skills, and other competencies are associated with better performance outcomes (Ployhart and Moliterno 2011). The development of human capital is, by definition, intertwined with the person. The founder's human capital should, therefore, influence what opportunities are subjectively identified.

In the previous section, I explored how passion through engagement can lead to expertise. Expertise gives deep and particular insights within a given domain. It increases the knowledge asymmetry between experts and non-experts. Expertise enhances pattern recognition capacity necessary to recognize opportunities (Baron 2007). One of the exciting findings of research on experts is that on their way to expertise, non-passionate individuals dropped out so that the expert populations are entirely made of passionate individuals (Mageau et al. 2009). Therefore, expertise should lead to differential opportunity identification and interpretation (Shane 2000). The subjective development of expertise will lead to subjective insights for opportunity identification and a subjective capacity to exploit an opportunity. Based on the STE, domain passion should enable individuals to identify less contested opportunities (Richardson 1960) through emotional attachment and increased alertness, and thus potentially more valuable opportunities because of limited competition (Gavetti 2012).

In essence, domain passion should enhance alertness toward opportunities. Combined with expertise, it should give subjective insights about opportunities within specific domains. So while passion is essential for alertness, I argue that for the recognition of opportunities, passion is largely mediated by expertise. Expertise is the key to identifying largely uncontested opportunities in a subjectivist way. However, one important question arises: if expertise increases the capacity for opportunity recognition, does it also increase the capacity and probability of opportunity pursuit? In other words, does seeing an opportunity almost automatically lead to acting on the opportunity. Do passion and expertise lead to entrepreneurial action?

We can think of different ways of how individuals aim to pursue potential opportunities, and entrepreneurship through new venturing is

one of them. Jeff Hawkins, among others, one of the founders of Palm coined the phrase: “Entrepreneurship is the last exit”, meaning that an individual who has detected an opportunity, should understand if the resulting project could be best exploited within an existing private organization or public institution and only as a last option through a new venture. Entrepreneurship appears in this sense related to braking away from conventional options, and therefore, we need to understand how domain passion and domain expertise is related to setting up a new venture. I will turn to this question in the next two sections.

## 6.5 The Non-trivial Relationship Between Passion, Entrepreneurial Intent and Action

The STE argues that there might be a gap between seeing an opportunity and acting on it (Linder et al. 2019). I have argued in the previous section that domain expertise would facilitate to see subjectively, less contested opportunities. The question arises if domain expertise is a sufficient condition to act on an opportunity. This question comprises two sub-questions: the willingness to act on it and the ability to act on it, shifting the perspective to the desirability and ability to move into entrepreneurship.

Domain expertise is developed through persistent engagement and specialization. It is strongly associated with passion and can lead to particular insights into opportunities. If, eventually, passion with other factors leads to expertise, then the remaining issue is what is the relationship between domain expertise and entrepreneurship? Experts excel in a given domain. Their performance is driven by superior pattern recognition, faster problem-solving ability, lower error variance, better short-term and long-term memory related to the specific domain, deeper problem understanding, and strong self-monitoring skills (Chi et al. 1988). Experts are outliers in their specific domain: they excel in their specific domains. What characterizes an expert is hardly transferable to another field; it is limited to the domain (Vicente and Wang 1998).

However, experts do not perceive better meaningful patterns outside their domain of expertise (Chi et al. 1988). Although experts have strong self-monitoring skills, they generally exhibit over-confidence (Chi 2006). Moreover, experts' conclusions are context dependent and again not transferable to other domains; moreover, experts tend to be more inflexible and adapt less well to relevant changes within their domain (Sternberg and Frensch 1992). So, experts are somehow fixed to their domains (Chi 2006). For instance, a great knee surgeon does not necessarily make a great hospital manager.

Concerning changes, it appears that experts have a perception of the degree of changes that are "acceptable" within their specific domain (Sternberg and Frensch 1992). They follow mostly pre-determined and interiorized role perceptions (e.g., what a scientist does or does not do). Research on passionate child prodigies who become experts gives interesting insights: it appears that those individuals master their duties by default (Winner 2014). It should be noted that expertise is measured through the variance of repeatable performance; an expert becomes excellent in fulfilling a predefined role (Deresiewicz 2014).

As Winner put it, in order to innovate, these individuals would need to make the transition from an individual "who learns rapidly and effortlessly in an established domain" to become someone "who ultimately remakes a domain" (Winner 2014). However, only a few make this transition. In addition, the transition can be hindered by achievement motivation. It appears that engagement through passion and achievement motivation accelerates the way to expertise. People high in achievement motivation tend to sacrifice innovation to conformism (Sternberg and Lubart 2002).

Innovation as a driver of uniqueness would require proactive behavior (Blumentritt and Danis 2006). Proactivity is one of the dimensions of entrepreneurial orientation (Lumpkin and Dess 1996); it concerns the anticipation and acting upon the external environment in a self-determined fashion for effective outcomes (Aragón-Correa 1998). Instead of only reacting to changes, proactivity is seen as essential for entrepreneurship, which is characterized mainly by uncertainty. Entrepreneurs need to be proactive. It appears, however, that experts who have a high individual task proficiency (which requires role clarity) are less likely to

engage in proactive behavior (Griffin et al. 2007). Proactive behavior as anticipatory action to impact themselves and/or their environments (Grant and Ashford 2008) is expressed by individuals through actively adapting to new environments (Ashford and Black 1996; Kim et al. 2005; Saks and Ashforth 1996; Wanberg and Kammeyer-Mueller 2000), taking charge (Morrison and Phelps 1999), expanding roles (Nicholson 1984; Parker et al. 1997), revising tasks (Staw and Boettger 1990), breaking rules (Morrison 2006), implementing ideas and solving problems (Parker et al. 2006).

Proactive behavior is thus directed toward the future by acting in advance, especially in uncertain environments (Grant and Ashford 2008). This typically entrepreneurial behavior is, however, in sharp contrast with the image of experts as the research delivers it. Experts tend to be mostly conformist (Winner 2014) with a tendency to justify the existing system, a tendency, which is most likely reinforced by achievement motivation that ties personal outcomes

to stereotypes for justification of the status quo (Jost and Hunyady 2005) and prevents experts to break out of the system (Jost et al. 2004).

So far, we can summarize that experts driven by domain passion tend to be domain specialists that prefer clear roles, lack innovation, and interdisciplinarity, try to avoid uncertainty, and are least likely to act proactively. Expertise and entrepreneurship appear to be at opposite ends. A study on habitual entrepreneurs shows that habitual entrepreneurs that create more projects in a given industry are characterized by breadth of experience and not depth of experience (Lechner and Kirschenhofer 2006). Lazear (2005) suggests that entrepreneurs should be generalists, while those who work for others should be specialists.

Individuals might become entrepreneurs because of their ability to master a variety of tasks, or because of purposeful investment in more diverse and broad human capital than individuals who invest in the depth of human capital in order to become a specialist (Åstebro and Thompson 2011). This assumption could be confirmed for Stanford MBA entering into entrepreneurship (Lazear 2005) but also for a representative German sample (Wagner 2006) as well as for Italy (Silva 2007).

As a consequence, passion as a driver of consistent, specialized engagement has a non-trivial relationship with entrepreneurship. As passion

alone does not lead to action, it acts through engagement. Domain-specific engagement through specialization puts individuals on a track toward expertise. From this track, individuals drop out because of other constraints leading to unanswered callings, or because they might not make it to the expert stage.

There is, however, a research stream that at the surface, appears to suggest the contrary: the literature on user entrepreneurship. User entrepreneurship has two components: one, users innovate, they develop first products or services, and, two, commercialize them through their own venture (Shah and Tripsas 2007). This research is rooted in the literature on user innovation (Von Hippel 1978). As Capone illustrates in this volume, many innovations in the sporting goods industry had been developed by users. The question appears to be trivial whether these individuals were passionate about their products or services or whether they were experts. However, Shah and Tripsas (2007: 123) in their groundbreaking article about user entrepreneurship start with the invention of the dishwasher by Josephine Cochrane, founder of KitchenAid: “A prominent socialite, she had grown tired of her servants’ tendency to break her 17th-century fine china and began to wash the dishes herself. If nobody else is going to invent a dishwashing machine, I’ll do it myself”. Should we conclude from this that she was passionate about dishwashing or an expert in dishwashing? Most likely not. Was she an experienced engineer? Definitely not.

As it appears user entrepreneurship falls in two categories: user unsatisfied with the current product offers, who are not particularly passionate about the products or the activity and passionate users (Shah and Tripsas 2007): Both have in common that the users’ needs are unmet, which drives them toward invention. They generally work on an improvised solution before they refine them by themselves or together with existing manufacturers (Shah 2003). Experimentation and play is crucial since, in most cases, the domain is not fully established. Shah and Tripsas (2007: 124) note that “professional-user entrepreneurs are different from employee entrepreneurs in that they generally develop products in a completely different industry from their prior employer”. For user entrepreneurs, specialization does not happen through employment but through coping mechanisms for unanswered callings (Berg et al. 2010),

leading to constraint engagement and, therefore only modest forms of passion and at best intermediate levels of expertise.

Passion does not necessarily exist to drive user entrepreneurship nor expertise. Reducing pain (e.g., the dishwasher), making apprenticeship easier (how to easier learn an instrument?) are most likely not directly related to passion and expertise. User entrepreneurs also tend to describe themselves as generalists (Shah 2003). However, the impression persists that passionate experts are somehow driving at least a part of user entrepreneurship. Two interpretations are possible. First, passion and expertise require specialization and engagement. In nascent industries, however, specialization and the development of expertise is constrained by the current state of the domain characterized by rudimentary products, services, infrastructure, context. This means, on the one hand, that user entrepreneurs have not yet developed full expertise; on the other hand, that passion is only mildly developed, as engagement with the activity is still modest. Second, research exhibits a strong selection bias. Research on user entrepreneurs finds, on one side, that a large part of innovations in some fields is driven by users, but rarely put them into perspective.

What we need to understand is if there is a general relationship between passion, expertise, and user entrepreneurship or if the outcome of user entrepreneurship is related to outliers. Capone, in this volume, focuses on a surfer as user entrepreneur. If we consider the number of surfers (about 30 million) and put them into the relationship with the numbers of surfers as entrepreneurs, then we see that the empirical relationship is lower than between the population in general and entrepreneurship. (Note: the entrepreneurship rate in different countries has a minimum level of about 2%, user entrepreneurship in this sense, is well below this level.) As Shah (2003) shows in her analysis, the number of user inventors in given categories is at best a handful, and in most cases, only one person!

Therefore, even in the case of user entrepreneurship, we do not derive a strong relationship between passion and entrepreneurship. First, because logically, there is no nomic necessity for user entrepreneurship to be caused by passion or expertise. Empirically, it appears that, if any, it is an outlier phenomenon where only an empirically insignificant fraction of individuals create an over-proportionally relevant outcome. Altogether,

there is at best weak and not obvious link between passion, its mediators, and entrepreneurship, given that passion leads to specialization in a specific domain, which is strongly related also to conformism. In the next section, we will explore how passion might be transformed into entrepreneurship, that is what other factors need to fall into place in order to enable entrepreneurship.

## 6.6 Passion, Domain Expertise, Conformism, and Idea Networking

The proactive, innovative, passionate expert who becomes an entrepreneur (independent of context) appears to be an exceptional case. It is more likely that experts are specialized conformists with high levels of uncertainty avoidance. Therefore, we need to understand what drives people with domains passion to develop, first, entrepreneurial intent, and, second, toward entrepreneurial action by starting a new venture.

Entrepreneurship and development of novel ideas do not happen in isolation but through idea communities (Felin and Zenger 2009). A critical step toward validating one's own ideas and understanding if an opportunity detected could be an opportunity for oneself is participation in communities. In more general terms user communities, tech communities, or entrepreneurs communities are essential for entrepreneurship (Guercini and Cova 2014). There are no indications that experts, in general, are particularly a-social. I argue that almost naturally domain passion will push passionate people toward domain communities (they are no isolates). These communities can take various forms, including also professional or industry associations. Engineers with a passion of additive manufacturing will find themselves drawn to the 3D community. Within the domain community, there might be a sub-community of nascent entrepreneurs who consider starting their own firm or the domain is embedded in a wider entrepreneurial ecosystem. While the subjectivist conviction to have identified an opportunity is specific to that person, that is, first-person opportunity (Shepherd et al. 2007), it is generally validated by social interaction processes in idea networking communities

(Felin and Zenger 2009). Moreover, the subjectivist view assumes that these specific insights are the outcome of different life experiences of the individual that are driven by social processes and interactions. In the case of user-entrepreneurship, communities play a critical role for idea networking, validation, and also proofs-of-concept (Shah and Tripsas 2007; Capone in this volume).

I had discussed previously that expertise can lead to particular insights and thus potentially to the identification of attractive opportunities. If conformism legitimates expert status in a given domain (by excelling compared to some agreed standard), we can assume that proactivity and non-conformism might be a factor for legitimacy in entrepreneurial communities. Thus, the typical conformist expert will, generally, not be the driver of entrepreneurial activities.

In order to develop entrepreneurial intention, these experts will most likely be “drawn” into entrepreneurial activities by others. This can be the case because, one, other individuals with entrepreneurial intention seek experts to complement the team (but in this case the expert will not be the lead entrepreneur); two, membership in the community might change the behavior and perception of the expert in order to make the difficult transition to proactiveness (Winner 2014). In the more likely case of non-proactive experts, the probability of developing entrepreneurial intent becomes mostly a function of the composition of the community. Domain experts need new role models. Therefore, the proportion of proactive individuals in communities will have a substantial effect on the development of entrepreneurial intention; the diversity of the members of the community will additionally influence the availability of complementary competencies necessary for a passionate expert to be able to make the transitions toward entrepreneurship. The diversity within the community will also influence positively the likelihood of finding a sufficient number of bridging ties (McEvily and Zaheer 1999) in order to access entrepreneurial eco-systems to launch a new venture successfully. Therefore, to make the difficult transition from expert to innovator (Winner 2014), the entrepreneurship literature tends to suggest that social embeddedness through communities helps to overcome constraints.



However, if the role of entrepreneurial communities is vital for the emergence of entrepreneurship, the question is who within the community will turn to entrepreneurship, given that the domain community will be much larger than the number of entrepreneurs emerging from it (Pervaiz and Lechner 2019). While the composition of the community will influence the number of entrepreneurs emerging as I argued above, the question is, who is most likely to become an entrepreneur? The availability hypothesis (McAdam 1986) gives interesting insights. Developed in sociology for explaining participation in social movements, it has been applied to entrepreneurship (Pervaiz and Lechner 2019). Availability refers to the absence of personal constraints and time pressures, which otherwise would increase costs or risks of participation in given activities (McAdam 1986). We can imagine that a domain expert is highly valuable for the domain community. However, given her/his lack of proactivity but also because of potential employment status, experts might not be fully available for entrepreneurship. Domain experts reach their status because of specialization within the field, they are validated within the field (Suchman 1995): a likely minimum requirement is employment. For instance, being considered an expert in quantum computing is more likely for an individual employed as a researcher at the university or at Google rather than by being unemployed.

Interestingly, user entrepreneurship has been related to low opportunity costs (Amit et al. 1995). Again, Shah and Tripsas (2007: 134) note: “the users of many juvenile products are parents who have stopped working to stay at home after the birth of a child. Lacking alternative employment, their opportunity costs for starting a business, especially if it is launched in their home, are quite low. In contrast, many medical device innovations are made by practicing physicians who face high opportunity costs when they consider leaving a private practice or academic position to found a firm (Chatterji and Fabrizio 2007). As a result, we would expect to see these innovations commercialized by established firms or potentially by start-up teams in which the physician-innovator plays a relatively small role”.

Nevertheless, it is not only the question of opportunity costs. As communities gather individuals with loosely coupled shared interests, there is also variance in the level of participation. Universities may dedicate part

of their research to new technology and collaborate with some firms, a tech magazine may stage a conference, women in tech might showcase some female entrepreneurs, etc. The level of participation is summarized under the availability hypothesis (Pervaiz and Lechner 2019). Journalists have their job, and they might be only part-time available. A researcher will remain within the university system. While entrepreneurship research has focused on opportunity costs, the concept of availability makes a more straightforward and more compelling claim (Pervaiz and Lechner 2019). For example, a married woman with two kids in elementary school and a full-time job might simply not be available to participate in a 72-hour hackathon (independent of opportunity costs).

In essence, the emergence of new firms could be explained in variations of personal goals and availability. However, if availability is a relevant driver of entrepreneurship, then the likelihood of a passionate expert, becoming an entrepreneur is relatively thin. If domain expertise is granted through recognized specialization within the domain (think about an expert pianist whose expert status is validated by being a member of a world-class orchestra), then these experts fair low in availability. Experts will be highly embedded in the domain community but less in the more specific entrepreneurship community.

On the other hand, highly passionate individuals that have developed a form of non-validated expertise might be available (the “unrecognized genius”). These individuals might be highly available and participate strongly in the entrepreneurship community (e.g., people who want to start a firm related to 3D-printing). Therefore, availability and non-conformism would suggest that outliers, in the sense of individuals outside the standard social system or marginalized in their expert domain but not necessarily in the entrepreneurship community, are more likely to emerge as entrepreneurs. Similar has been found for the role of outsiders for radical innovation (Cattani et al. 2017). It is also likely to speculate that these individuals have developed a form of obsessive passion, given their status.

In conclusion, the passionate individual will make the transition toward entrepreneurship through involvement in the entrepreneurship community. The likelihood of entrepreneurship, in general, is thus related to the composition of the community and subjectively more likely for

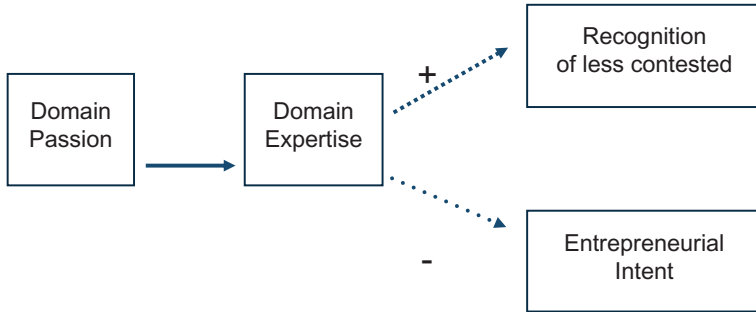
proactive outliers. That said, passion, expertise, and entrepreneurship exhibit a non-systematic, non-linear relationship favoring outliers where the outcome of their actions will show a high variance and increase the likelihood for extreme positive but also negative outcomes (Crawford et al. 2015).

## 6.7 Passion and Entrepreneurship: Conclusions and Future Research Directions

There has been an increasing interest in the popular press, entrepreneurs' accounts, and scientific research about the role of entrepreneurial passion and outcomes in entrepreneurship. This interest has led to a substantial body of research that, however, suffers from three main inconsistencies: an extremely narrow definition of entrepreneurial passion, confusion with similar concepts, the lack of control groups.

Cardon et al. (2005) introduced the most widely accepted definition of entrepreneurial passion, which expresses the idea of attraction toward entrepreneurship because of (only) positive feelings. I have argued that—one—this view is almost tautological, and—two—it is too narrow, given that empirical research could show that most entrepreneurs do not experience passion for founding a firm. Three, by enlarging the study of entrepreneurial passion to passion in general, we need to acknowledge that we arrive at a paradox: passion is essential for developing into a rather conformist specialist expert, which is at opposite ends with the generalist, proactive image of the entrepreneur.

From this journey through different streams of research, we can draw a few interesting insights. First, we can derive a theoretical framework that leads to the entrepreneurial paradox of domain experts (see Fig. 6.1). Domain passion and the development of domain expertise are closely linked through increasing activity engagement in a positive feedback cycle. On one hand, domain expertise is achieved through specialization. This deep experience will give the expert particular insights inside the domain and should allow experts to detect less contested and thus more



**Fig. 6.1** The entrepreneurial paradox of domain expertise

attractive opportunities that are specific to the person. On the other hand, the way to expertise through path dependent engagement is a way of specialization and conformism (excelling at agreed standards), which makes the development of entrepreneurial intent less likely.

Second, if we take seriously what existing research tells us, then only moderate forms of passion and intermediate level of expertise combined with a proactive and anti-conformist personality would increase the likelihood of entrepreneurship. This insight modifies largely what research on passion and entrepreneurship suggests. Taking into account non-linear relationships in future research would give further insights into the matter.

Third, if passion is mediated through expertise, entrepreneurship becomes less likely, unless this person has particular personality traits, which appear to make the road to expertise less likely. Expertise rimes with conformism, system justification, specialization, and low availability. Entrepreneurship appears the road less traveled by passionate experts. Eventually, the role of non-experts in entrepreneurship would open up a new field of inquiry for entrepreneurship. A related question is when do individuals effectively develop passion?

Fourth, context is highly important. First, the type of background of a passionate individual will strongly influence the development of obsessive or harmonious passion. Parents' involvement, for example, is crucial for developing expertise; however, over-involvement can lead to the development of obsessive passion with a reduced perceived autonomy

and thus reduced self-determination (Vallerand et al. 2003). This mechanism reduces creativity.

On the other side, obsessive passion leads individuals to accept more likely conflicts with other life domains. If we apply, the latter also to entrepreneurial passion, we get interesting insights. Research on the influence of parents who are or have been entrepreneurs is mostly inconclusive. While positive effects proposed include role modeling, knowledge spillovers, and constant feedback, less is known about the negative side. Configuration analysis could show that entrepreneur parents are prominent both in survival and in failure configurations (Linder et al. 2019). As the involvement of parents will have an influence on the development of (harmonious) entrepreneurial passion but also obsessive entrepreneurial passion, it should influence survival probability. Obsessive passion leading to controlled support can put individuals in a role where they rather try to please expectations (of the parents) than to concentrate on crucial activities (Vallerand et al. 2003). This form of passion should lower the survival probability for the specific venture. This form of passion does not exclude the possibility of addictive habitual entrepreneurship (Spivack et al. 2013), which might lead eventually to spectacular success given the single-minded, conflict accepting focus of the entrepreneur. Disentangling harmonious and obsessive passion for outcomes appears to be a fruitful road for future inquiry.

Fifth, context provides the space for idea networking, proofs-of-concept, but also isomorphism. The community, in which an expert is embedded in, might help to make the difficult transitions from expert to entrepreneur. This community would need to be rich in proactive and anti-conformist individuals that could somehow "teach" the expert the road less traveled. The latter insight could influence the way how entrepreneurship is taught to experts in order to become more effective. To understand how non-dispositional personality factors can be changed would require substantially future research.

Sixth, given the necessary availability for entering into entrepreneurship, becoming an entrepreneur appears to be more likely for outliers: those who are markedly different from the norm. Moreover, these outliers could be part of the (least likely) fraction of anti-conformist, proactive experts because they are marginalized in their domain, or because they

are characterized by extremely high-risk propensity (again very unlikely). In the latter case, they would make themselves available for entrepreneurship, accepting conflicts with other life domains (which appears to be more likely for obsessive passion). To understand what personality traits are related to outliers could be investigated in future research.

Seventh, expertise is an unlikely road to entrepreneurship. On the way to expertise, non-passionate individuals tend to drop out. Therefore, experts tend to be already some kind of outliers (they are very few). Only a tiny fraction of them will make the transition to entrepreneurship. Therefore, passionate entrepreneurs are the outliers of the outliers (they do not represent the category of experts). Outlier input is related to extreme outcomes both on the negative side and on the positive side by increasing the variance of outcome (Crawford et al. 2015). More in-depth investigation of the behavior of outliers is needed, but also the existing research on passion and entrepreneurship needs to be seen in a different light. While we are inclined to relate passion to entrepreneurial outcomes in a systematic and normalized fashion, that is, we interfere from the study of passionate entrepreneurs that passion is the path to entrepreneurship, we would better frame them as outlier outcomes with all of its consequences.

Eighth, research on entrepreneurial passion neglects that entrepreneurship is mostly a team effort (Schjoedt et al. 2009). As I argued for community composition, the same applies to team composition. Therefore, passionate experts can well be part of an entrepreneurial team, even if their role within the venture might be strongly limited to their domain of expertise.

In essence, the relationship between passion and entrepreneurship is more subtle and complex than both popular accounts and research would suggest.

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# 7

## Exploring the Role of Entrepreneurial Passion in Combining Social and Business Goals: The OTS Benefit Company

Chiara Cantù

### 7.1 Introduction

Global Entrepreneurship Euromonitor (2018) found that only 3%–4% of new ventures worldwide have declared their social mission—twice the amount from ten years earlier. Social startups deal with innovative projects dedicated to a social welfare community and are oriented to promote social cohesion.

The traditional point of view presents a different perspective between classic/commercial entrepreneurship and social entrepreneurship as the value proposition is financial in classic entrepreneurship but social in social entrepreneurship (Martin and Osberg 2007). Yet both types of entrepreneurship present common factors, such as risk, creativity, and persistence (Palacio Marques et al. 2019).

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The author wishes to thank the founders of Open Terzo Settore company for their support for this chapter.

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Social entrepreneurship is defined as the search for social value creation by means of economic activity (Palacio Marques et al. 2019). Common across all definitions of social entrepreneurship is the creation of social value rather than personal wealth. Meanwhile, traditional entrepreneurial efforts are generally defined in terms of the recognition and exploitation of business opportunities, notably through the founding of new ventures (Venkataraman 1997). Opportunities do not always exist objectively but they can be created by entrepreneurial action (Alvarez and Barney 2007).

In social entrepreneurship research on opportunity identification is still in the early stages (Gonzalez et al. 2017). Some social opportunities are the outcome of a combination of discovery and creation, as opportunity identification and opportunity creation can be present in the same entrepreneur (Gonzalez et al. 2017). According to Corner and Ho (2010: 645), opportunities are “neither purely created nor purely discovered.”

The recognition of information for the discovery and the exploitation of opportunities (Baron 2008) is influenced by passion as a central element of entrepreneurial efforts (Cardon et al. 2009). In a wider perspective, passion is defined as a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy (Vallerand et al. 2003). Chen et al. (2015) identified three core attributes of passion: passion is accompanied by intense positive feelings; passion regulates individual behavioral tendencies; and passion is a target-specific construct (Milanesi 2018). Passion and interactions with other passionate people as well as the environment lead to the generation of potential opportunities (Cova and Guercini 2016). In terms of entrepreneurial passion, it is defined as “an entrepreneur’s intense affective state accompanied by cognitive and behavioral manifestations of high personal value” (Chen et al. 2009: 199). As some scholars have asserted, a founder can become more passionate about inventing, founding, and developing firms thanks to entrepreneurial self-efficacy (Cardon and Kirk 2015).

What are the main implications of entrepreneurial passion for a firm characterized by a social mission? This chapter investigates the relationship between passion and motivation and its impact on the process related to the pursuit of social innovation outcome. The chapter describes a case study related to an emblematic Italian innovative startup with a

social vocation transformed into a benefit company. The Italian startup provides a digital platform and professional services to sustain the sharing of data and information related to non-profit organizations and aimed to improve awareness of donations and strategic philanthropy. The benefit company is founded on a revenue model oriented to social aims.

The paper is structured as follows. After discussing the theoretical framework, the methodology and the case study are described. Then empirical evidences and findings are presented, followed by conclusions.

## 7.2 Social Entrepreneurship

The main purpose of social entrepreneurship is to create social value by adopting a mission to change society (Austin et al. 2006a). In fact, social entrepreneurship, or entrepreneurial activity with an embedded social purpose, relates to innovative activity with a social objective in either the for-profit sector, such as social-purpose commercial ventures (Dees and Anderson 2006), or corporate social entrepreneurship (Austin et al. 2006b). In addition, social entrepreneurship concerns the non-profit sector, or extends across sectors, through hybrid structural forms that combine for-profit and non-profit approaches (Dees 1998). Social entrepreneurs aim to solve social problems, achieving a social change by employing entrepreneurial principles and processes.

Entrepreneurship is generally considered as a process that begins with the recognition of an entrepreneurial opportunity and is followed by the development of an idea for how to pursue that opportunity. The main domains of the entrepreneurial process are inventing new products or services and founding and developing new organizations (Cardon et al. 2009; Ulhoi 2005). In this context, the commercial entrepreneurship aims to create profitable operations resulting in private gain. Yet social entrepreneurship can also be defined as the ability to recognize opportunities in order to create social value.

The process of social entrepreneurship is the construction, evaluation, and pursuit of opportunities to achieve social change (Palacio Marques et al. 2019). The social entrepreneurship stages start with opportunity recognition (social problems, unmet needs) and follow with concept



development, resource requirements, and activity management. Starting from the economic system of the United States, social entrepreneurship's main orientation is a profitable result. Social entrepreneurship differs from socio entrepreneurship that emerged from Europe's economic system, focusing its efforts on creating social improvement (Lisetchi and Brancu 2014).

### **7.2.1 The Role of Entrepreneurs' Attributes in Social Entrepreneurship: Passion, Motivation, and Inspiration**

Entrepreneurs' attributes influence the entrepreneurial process and entrepreneurial success. Progress in the entrepreneurship process could be associated with persistence, self-regulation, and controlled efforts according to motivation theory (Baum et al. 2001). The motivational state that compels individuals to bring ideas to fruition is especially relevant for entrepreneurship (Wartiovaara et al. 2018). Motivational differences influence the entrepreneurial process as entrepreneurs may make different decisions when confronted with similar opportunities (Shane and Eckhardt 2003). Entrepreneurs' motivations could be task specific or general, but in both cases entrepreneurship is considered a choice that requires significant willpower. Task-specific motivations are made up by the goal setting and self-efficacy (Shane and Eckhardt 2003), whereas general motivations involve the need for achievement, a locus of control, vision, a desire for independence and passion.

There are two ways to view motivation in entrepreneurship. The first relates to the motives "pushing" an entrepreneur to establish a business that also includes the achievement of important goals and values. The second is the internal achievement motivation (Wach et al. 2016), when entrepreneurs fulfill their initial motivation through the business. In social entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurs focus on social transformation (Tracey and Phillips 2007). These entrepreneurs are characterized by their prosocial motivation and innovation motivation. In terms of prosocial motivation, social entrepreneurs aim to improve the well-being of others, providing social benefits as a prosocial attitude. This also involves

other attitudes, such as altruism, empathy, moral judgment, caring, compassion, guilt, self-aggrandizement, self-esteem, status, and personal satisfaction (Warnick et al. 2018; Bacq and Alt 2018; Bacq and Janssen 2011). Social entrepreneurs seek to facilitate the growth of the social venture to sustain social goals (Wry and York 2017).

Meanwhile, the motivation to innovate (Phillips et al. 2015) concerns new products/services and/or innovative production/distribution processes oriented to solve market and government failures (Santos 2012). The social entrepreneurship orientation comprises behavioral characteristics of innovativeness, proactiveness, and risk management (Dwivedi and Weerawardena 2018). Social entrepreneurs take the role of change agents by adopting a mission to create and sustain social value, recognizing and pursuing new opportunities to serve that mission, and engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning (Huybrechts and Nicholls 2012).

Entrepreneurial motivation is related to a broader view of inspiration (Oleynick et al. 2014) associated with high levels of optimism and positive affect. Inspiration enables the recognition, evaluation, and exploitation of major entrepreneurial opportunities (Wartiovaara et al. 2018). Realizing an actuality out of potentiality depends on the capacity of the human mind to discover, through creative thought, solutions that did not exist before, as depicted by the vision (Locke 2000).

The transition from one step of the entrepreneurship process to another one is also influenced by cognitive factors such as the skills and the abilities of the entrepreneurs. From this perspective, entrepreneurship depends on the entrepreneur's capabilities, such as intuition, alertness, and networking.

### **7.2.2 The Role of the Abilities in Social Entrepreneurship: Intuition, Alertness, and Networking**

An intuitive capability is a relevant cognitive asset that can lead the entrepreneur to defensible judgments when available information is not wholly up to the task. As defined by Sinclair and Ashkanasy (2005: 357), intuition is “a non-sequential information processing mode, which comprises

both cognitive and affective elements and results in direct knowing without any use of conscious reasoning.” Intuition is considered as affectively charged judgments that arise through rapid, nonconscious, and holistic associations (Dane and Pratt 2007).

Intuition is strictly connected to alertness, which is considered a process and perspective that help some individuals become more aware of changes, shifts, opportunities, and overlooked possibilities (Kirzner 1997). Alertness capabilities were founded on scanning and searching for information, connecting previously disparate information, and making evaluations on the existence of profitable business opportunities.

In addition, networking skill is critical in supporting the shift from identification/creation of an opportunity to its management. According to Baker and Nelson (2005), entrepreneurs make use of a broad variety of means and resources at hand both during and after founding an enterprise. The “repertoire” of the bricoleur consists of not only materials, but also non-material resources (Duymedjian and Rùling 2010). Gaining access to external resources through relationships is considered a key driver of networking, as resources residing outside the organization enable novel resources combinations, complex problem solving, reduced time and costs, and faster commercialization and diffusion of the innovation (Aarikka-Stenroos et al. 2014). Cooperation presupposes relatively close coordination, communication, and learning processes between the partners (Witell et al. 2011; Edvardsson et al. 2012). In the concentric cycle of networking, the main stakeholders include knowledge providers, suppliers, customers, employees, collaborators, universities, public laboratories, and other members of the business ecosystem (Perry et al. 2012). Thus, increasing attention has been focused on the social relationships of the entrepreneur and the role of networking in starting up a business.

Shifting the attention from social to business relationships (Aaboen et al. 2017), every business is a unique nexus of business relationships with customers and suppliers (Håkansson et al. 2009). Through the network activities, the firm develops the relationships that allow access to strategic resources. Focusing on previous considerations, the development of a new venture could be analyzed through an interactive approach (Baraldi et al. 2018; Snehota 2011).

## 7.3 Research Approach

In order to better understand the role of entrepreneurial passion in social entrepreneurship the paper applied a qualitative research (Dubois and Gadde 2002; Dubois and Araujo 2004) and a case study approach (Beverland and Lindgreen 2010; Harrison and Easton 2004; Barratt et al. 2011; Eisenhardt 1989).

An abduction process analysis enables data-driven theory generation (Järvensivu and Törnroos 2010). These choices related to the theoretical framework thus influenced the empirical investigation (Dubois and Araujo 2004; Piekkari et al. 2010) founded on semi-structure interviews developed with the founders of OTS benefit company.

The emblematic case is related to an Italian firm that at the beginning was an innovative startup according to Italian legislation (L. 221/2012) and that has become a benefit company (according to Italian legislation). The Benefit Companies and B Corps are complementary models. The Benefit Company allows aligning and protecting the mission in the medium and long term. The B Corp certification is a higher aspiration: it can be obtained only after passing the B Impact Assessment, and having obtained the determined minimum score. In Italy there are more than 80 B-Corps and more than 300 benefit companies (2019).

### 7.3.1 Italian Innovative Startup with a Social Vocation

In the Italian context, a startup to be recognized as innovative must respect some requirements (L. 221/2012). The main requirements are no more than 60 months from the date of submission of the application; already doing business; headquarter based in Italy. Moreover, the startup cannot deploy profits; the total amount of revenues per year cannot exceed five million euros; its aim should be the production and development of innovative products and services with high technological value; it should not be founded by sale, merger or division of a business unit of an existing firm. In addition, one of the following requirements should be considered over 15% of revenues or graduated employees should be

over 2/3 of the total amount of employees, or it should own a patent for a technological and industrial invention.

The same Law (221/2012) introduced into the Italian legal system the notion of the innovative startup with a social vocation. According to the art. 25, the innovative startups with a social vocation possess the same requisites of the other innovative startups, but operate in some specific industries considered of particular social value.

The identified industries are social assistance; health care; education, education and training; environmental and ecosystem protection; enhancement of cultural heritage; social tourism; university and post-university training; research and provision of cultural services; extra-school training, aimed at preventing early school leaving and scholastic and educational success; instrumental services to social enterprises.

The innovative startup with a social vocation work in industries related to social firm (DL 112/2017). In Italy, there are 10,426 innovative startups (Unioncamere 2019) and among these, 210 startups are characterized by a social vocation. There was a trend of 20% growth 2017 vs 2018.

The innovative startups have to declare to operate exclusively in one or more of the sectors listed in the legislative decree 24 March 2006, n. 155; to declare to pursue a purpose of general interest; and to give evidence of the social impact thus produced. The impact value chain represents a methodology for analyzing the activity of an organization by identifying the resources used (inputs), the products or services provided (output), the results (outcome) and the impact, the broader and long-term change.

### 7.3.2 Benefit Companies

By 2016 Italy became the first European state and the second Country in the world creating a new legal status for companies, called “Società Benefit” (Benefit Companies).

A Benefit Company is a company which combines the goal of profit with the purpose of creating a positive impact for society and the environment and which operates in a transparent, responsible, and sustainable way.

The Benefit Company is a new legal tool for long-term mission alignment and value creation. A Benefit Company is an evolution of the concept of for-profit business considering common benefits both for society and for the environment.

In order to become Benefit Company, a firm has to include in the object clause the aims of common benefit that it intends to pursue. The company will not only pursue the purpose of profit, but also the specific purpose of common benefit.

To the Benefit companies is required to produce and publish on the website an annual benefit report as well as to consider it for annual financial statement. The annual benefit report includes (a) the description of the specific objectives, modalities, and actions implemented in order to pursue the aims of common benefit; (b) the evaluation of the general impact of the company, using a third-party evaluation; (c) a specific section containing the description of the new objectives which the benefit corporation intends to pursue in the following year.

### 7.3.3 B Corps

The B Corps are for-profit companies that aim to spread a more advanced business paradigm: to use business as a positive force. The companies are measured for their wider results, not just those economic but social and environmental results also.

Certified B Corporations meet the highest standards of verified social and environmental performance, public transparency, and legal accountability to balance profit and purpose. B Corps are accelerating a global culture shift to redefine success in business and build a more inclusive and sustainable economy.

The Certified B Corporation Logo is a registered trademark that can be used only by companies, the certified B Corps, which create more value for society and the environment than they destroy. The B distinguishes from all the other companies not the best in the world but best for the world.

B Corporations are businesses that are legally required to consider the impact of their decisions on their workers, customers, community, and environment.

## 7.4 Case Study

Open Terzo Settore (OTS) is a benefit company founded in Milan in 2016 as an innovative startup characterized by a social vocation. According to the firm's mission, it aims "to revolutionize the approach to philanthropy in Italy through access to information on non-profit organizations and the Third sector." The main goals of the startup have been to reduce information asymmetries existing between non-profit organizations and donors to support the development and dissemination of the culture of gift-giving and conscious donation.

OTS created a unique and standardized digital platform (Italia non-profit) dedicated to gathering information and data from the Third Sector. The digital platform creates integrated digital solutions to collect and evaluate data and information about non-profit organizations. In promoting the evidence-based approach to the Third Sector, OTS supports public administration, organizations, private citizens, institutional donors (such as distributive foundations), and companies in identifying, choosing, and analyzing non-profit organizations through the data and information provided by these organizations. The data and information provided by non-profit organizations through the digital platform sustain the process of active donation and strategic philanthropy. OTS is focused on innovative high technology services oriented to social benefit. Considering the rules of a benefit company, every year the balance sheet of OTS measures the social impact and the way through which the firm generates social benefit.

Considering the potentialities of the digital platform, the data are accessible by all types of organizations and allows for a common information base that can be used, declined, and re-elaborated according to the specific needs of the users. OTS follows economic goals and social goals together. The business model is founded on free services and value-added services provided for a fee. The information provided through the digital platform is free. OTS's revenue model is founded on a fee required for the elaboration of data and the consolidated information.

The main stages that have characterized the startup evolution are from business dream to the business idea (up until 2015), the business plan

and the birth of the startup (2016), and the growth of the startup (2017 to now). The real go to market stage has been in 2019.

The two founders of the startup, Giulia and Mara, have been engaged in the non-profit context since they were young. During the high school, they were engaged in some activities as volunteers, and they cooperated with several social associations. They started in the non-profit context with some informal activities, then the non-profit became the context of their professional activity. At the beginning of their professional careers, they worked as consultants for non-profit organizations. Mara has a degree in management related to non-profit organizations and worked in a consultancy firm. Giulia cooperated with Turin University to develop research related to donors' behavior in term of transparency and accountability in the international context. Giulia won a grant for a project focused on economic sociology with the aim of investigating donors' behaviors and the relationship with the empowerment of citizens. The research discovered how non-profit organizations' greater transparency could improve the welfare of society. In 2014, Mara and Giulia met while attending a master of specialization program at Bocconi University, and Giulia involved Mara in the development of her research.

While investigating and researching the non-profit context, Giulia and Mara discovered the absence of a unique Italian public register and digital hub related to non-profit organizations. They wondered why this model had not been considered in Italy. The two young women decided to consider the American charity model as an emblematic success case, recognizing the attention to crowdfunding in Italy. However, there were some difficulties in introducing the model. In Italy, the main obstacles to the philanthropic marketplace were identified in the stratification of regulations, unfavorable taxes, and limited digitalization. These structural elements negatively influenced the Italian non-profit context. In addition, there are some differences between the Italian and American markets. The American donor market is more developed than the Italian one. In Italy, there is limited information about non-profit organizations and their activity. In the United States, donors consider themselves investors and use the social ratings of the Charity Watch rating agency, which was founded in 1993, with the highest ratings ranging from A to B+.



In 2015, Mara and Giulia decided to found a startup with the aim to become a digital hub dedicated to the non-profit sector. A business plan followed the feasibility study. The founders developed some focus groups in a national context and involved different stakeholders, including large national associations such as the Telethon Foundation, focused on rare genetic diseases, and other associations such as a Fondazione ANT, AIRC, Progetto Arca, Manitese, Fondazione Seragnoli, and Terre des Hommes. The startup was born in 2016.

After the foundation's first year, it faced a test. The goal of the startup shifted to activating a digital platform providing holistic and less sophisticated information as the market was not interested in analytical data. In addition, the founders enhanced their idea to create a rating system for non-profit organizations. After some months, a new goal was identified for improving the knowledge of non-profit organizations.

Initially the aim was to use the digital platform to support the knowledge about active organizations and explain the main features of non-profit and its complexity. Data and information were used to support the actors of philanthropy. In 2016, the founders participated in several calls organized by the Cariplo Foundation and the ComoNExT Innovation Hub. The startup won the ComoNExT's call, and it became a tenant. In addition, the startup cooperated with Social Fare, the Centre for Innovation located in Turin. During the same months the founders identified new investors. Today, 11 collaborators make up the entrepreneurial team.

In 2017, a new release of the platform was outlined and published. The goal of the startup became to improve the dialogue with citizens. Requests for registration on the digital platform came from different organizations—from large organizations to smaller institutions and from structured organizations to new organizations. The startup's growth was influenced by the business relationships activated with several stakeholders considered as accelerators. OTS was involved in GrandUP and Youth in Action in 2018. The "GrandUP Design your impact" is a Hackathon promoted by the CRC Foundation and Social Fare to improve the acceleration of social startups. OTS was involved in two editions as a mentor. The Youth in Action project for sustainable development goals supports young people in accessing sustainability competences in non-profit

organizations. Its two main goals related to economic and occupational growth. The Italian Foundation of Accenture, Mattei Foundation, and Feltrinelli Foundation together with ASviS, AISEC, RUS, and SDSN Youth promoted the contest. Participants engaged in e-learning projects and workshops. OTS participated as a partner in these events. In addition, OTS cooperated with the Italian Association of Fundraisers that recognized in the new venture an accountable business partner, transparency, and measure.

In 2018 OTS cooperated with Skills Platform of the UK to develop a survey of 450 professionals in the non-profit industry. The survey was related to the picture of non-profits and digital competences of organizations. The results showed how organizations fail to consider digital opportunities with a strategic vision.

Nowadays OTS is considered as a player in the digital context that supports connections between donors and organizations in the Third Sector. The digital platform can be considered a dynamic digital catalogue that provides information about organizations in the non-profit industry. Associations, foundations, committees, and social cooperatives can also present themselves and their activities through digital stories. The organizations can describe their activities as overcoming their dimensions. The digital space becomes a space dedicated to narration, discussion, and comparison. The additional services provided by the startup are strictly related to its evolution.

In 2019, the database of digital platform included 150,000 organizations and 2800 registered sheets related to the organizations involved. The digital platform has introduced a marketplace (known as “The right one”). Founded on a search engine and a series of automatic indications, the new service allows organizations to identify their own needs, evaluate possible solutions, and choose the most suitable supplier. This service considers suppliers of goods and services within nine product sectors, ranging from legal and tax assistance to fundraising and from marketing to training and digital services. In addition to the suppliers that have always specialized in non-profit services, there are those who have specialized in other markets but still understand the social and economic importance of this sector.

## 7.5 Empirical Evidences and Findings

OTS was founded by two entrepreneurs (Giulia and Mara) characterized by a strong commitment to non-profit organizations and a passion for non-profit values (*passion domain*). At the beginning, when the founders were involved in non-profit organizations as volunteers, their main values were associated with providing value for others. Their main aim was to help people live better. A social mission characterized the activity of each founder. They dreamed of a better world that pushed them to support several non-profit organizations in their specific activities. They considered non-profit to be “a fundamental engine for understanding the social needs and building a better civil society.”

Over the years, a change occurred: *the passion for a social aim shifted to entrepreneurial passion to promote social values*. The two founders, who had previous experience in the non-profit context, decided to work in this context to found a new venture oriented toward the sharing of data and information about the non-profit sector. The passion domain was transformed into a social entrepreneurial passion.

As social entrepreneurs, altruism, empathy, and a social mission characterized the two young entrepreneurs. In fact, the social oriented entrepreneurs are mission leaders, socially alert managers, and visionaries. The main values they have promoted are consistency between values and market approaches, balance, fairness and justice, communication, transparency, a fair system in economic dynamics, and vision. The two young entrepreneurs decided to find a solution for non-profit organizations and, thus, established their startup to create a solution. Their passion led them to assemble the necessary financial, human, and social resources needed to create a new venture.

The initial values of the founders have declined in the entrepreneurial context. The founders' mission (to help people) has influenced the mission of the new venture: “We want to revolutionize the approach to philanthropy in Italy through access to information on organizations and the Third sector.”

Mara wasn't born as an entrepreneur. “In the beginning, I preferred working in the back office,” she said. “But meetings with entrepreneurs

convinced me to consider an active role to support the non-profit organizations. The idea was to make something to help people. Which mission could I transmit to citizens?" The goal of the founders was to sustain a change in the rules of the market and to support innovation in the non-profit context.

Giulia worked in a Swedish multinational company. In her opinion, entrepreneurial passion refers to finding a consistency between means and goals. "I researched something in which I believed." She found she enjoyed the non-profit industry. In Giulia's point of view, "entrepreneurship means change."

*The two young volunteers became two young entrepreneurs and decided to found a new venture to reach their goal of introducing change in the non-profit context.* Giulia discovered and loved non-profit organizations. She was interested in "doing something in an innovative way and to diffuse this way considering economic goals." She was focused on the "how to." Meanwhile, from Mara's point of view, the aim of the startup was to do something in which she believed together with a profitability dimension. She explained, "Passion is a boost that sustains the activity in critical situations. An entrepreneur believes in his/her job and in his/her values." Passion influences the willpower to reach a social mission. "The effort related to entrepreneurial passion is high, and it involves all of life." According to Giulia, "there is personal and professional growth."

*The domain passion was transformed into entrepreneurial passion influencing the shift from entrepreneurial inspiration to entrepreneurial intuition.* Giulia and Mara investigated the Italian non-profit industry and the international context, and they found a gap related to the absence of a wide non-profit register. Thus, they decided to establish a new venture and launch a digital platform facilitating the sharing of information about non-profit organizations.

Initially, their main aim was to improve the quality of life in a social context (social aims). In founding the new venture, the main goals became "reducing information disparities between citizens and organizations and taking advantage of digital opportunities." Data can generate value for donation culture and strategic philanthropy. The goal is to improve the culture of an active donation. In addition, the donation can improve the collective welfare. In particular, during their previous

professional activities, the founders observed that the Italian non-profit context required new strategic tools and a new managerial approach.

*The combining of social and business goals* is well described in the manifesto of OTS: “Commitment to do well good, sustainability as a duty.” The organization assumes obligations before the citizen and the donor (bridging a social need), and in honor of these commitments, “the organization must prove that it is the right organization, in the right place, to carry out the social actions that are needed.” As stated in the manifesto: “Effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and transparency must be encouraged and represent key elements to support the active donation and the strategic philanthropy. Increasing the quality of information and its accessibility means positively impacting the value chain of donations.”

*The goal of reaching social values motivated the founders to overcome the critical aspects of entrepreneurial passion.* Their internal motivations influenced their motivation to establish the startup. “The job is very attractive and fascinating. It also involves responsibility.” As the founders explained, “there are no Saturdays and Sundays. The job is always with you.” The founders thought, “the entrepreneurial orientation could become total. The passion can be related to growth and fast actions. It implies engagement at different levels, high responsibility, and a high level of empowerment that sometimes could become demanding work.”

The entrepreneurship passion is considered as a point of strength to face complex situations. The founders think that it is critical to believe in the job and to stimulate people. The internal motivation influences the action of the founders considering the development of teamworking abilities.

*One of the main features of OTS is the strong relationship between the prosocial motivation and the innovation motivation.* According to the founders, the main aim of the startup was to influence the non-profit context and to establish a new entrepreneurial vision. They had a vision of the world and wanted to change the rules. The aim of the founders was to become a benchmark before pursuing profitability. As stated by the founders, “in the capitalism platform we prefer the cooperative platform.” The goal was to introduce a change in the non-profit context by holding up a system characterized by transparency. The innovation introduced by OTS aims to provide more information about the activity of non-profit

organizations to allow a rating system and to sustain the donors in their activity.

In this context innovation means changes. The first relevant change was related to the valorization of a better transparency of the non-profit market; using the digital platform, the founders improved the efficiency and effectiveness of non-profit organizations, which are invited to provide data and information to support their awareness and the donations.

The second change concerned the new orientation. The digital platform is considered neutral with reference to the contents. The founders introduced an algorithm that allows for the evaluation of some items, such as the organizations' pertinence and exposition. A good evaluation benefits non-profit organizations that provide more information about their activities.

A third change related to the introduction of the evidence-based approach into the non-profit context. Data can suggest to non-profit organizations potential donors for a fidelity program, what projects to improve, and what resources to collect. At the same time donors can make a choice based on the information provided by non-profit organizations. As stated by the founders, "we want to be the collector of a large amount of data that, once processed, can give transparent information required by the Third Sector and the citizens."

A fourth change affected the educational approach: based on the analysis, OTS improved the knowledge related to the non-profit context for donors, industry actors, and people interested in the non-profit industry. The founders explained: "there is a need for tools, rules, and education to promote the understanding of complex topics. We need the guides. We work on the data to generate value for the organizations of the Third Sector, for the culture of the gift and for strategic philanthropy, providing answers to the social needs."

The founders further stated: "this reversal of cultural perspective does not concern only the capacity of the whole ecosystem to respond to the challenges related to the third industry. It will increasingly concern the capacity of all organizations to confront other organizations. This is something much deeper in the dimension of the gift; it involves all citizens in everyday life as it concerns their own ideas of the future." OTS aims to be an actor and promoter of this revolution, starting with the

organizations' data. It aspires to simplify the processes of choosing donors, providers, and public administrations, offering concrete opportunities to make an informed choice of donation. OTS became the promoter of a new entrepreneurial and managerial approach for non-profit organizations. "The right one" is the result of a collaboration between non-profit organizations and suppliers that cooperated with OTS to define the characteristics that the marketplace should have had. The founders consider it a collective goal that seeks to reduce the information asymmetry between the parties as well as to build paths of mutual knowledge. In addition, OTS introduced innovation by adopting the hybrid model of benefit company (social mission, profit orientation, measurement of the impact of activity on society as a whole).

Thus, it follows that:

*P1 In social entrepreneurship, the shift from the passion domain to entrepreneurial passion influences the shift from entrepreneurial inspiration to entrepreneurial intuition. The development of entrepreneurial intuition, related to the foundation of a startup, is influenced by entrepreneurial passion that emphasizes the relevance of innovation motivation to reach social goals.*

*Entrepreneurial passion means strong connections among the vision, goals, and strategy.* According to Giulia, the entrepreneurial passion means "responsibility to others" and "making it your own—consistency among values, vision, mission, and strategies—to get involved and take risks as well as push action." Mara explained that entrepreneurial passion is related to "commitment" and "transmitting to others, doing things in a certain way."

The founders combined their attributes with their skills to reach their goals. They used entrepreneurial and managerial skills. Their entrepreneurial passion influenced their entrepreneurial inspiration and prosocial and innovation motivation, pushing the founders to improve bricolage capabilities and enhance entrepreneurial intuition, alertness skills, and networking skills. Thanks to their alertness skills, the founders identified the absence of a wide central register of non-profit organizations and the lack of validated information (Duymedjian and Rülmg)

2010). Consequently, they outlined an innovative digital solution to sustain the sharing of data and information about non-profit organizations.

In order to transform the business idea into a firm providing solutions, the founders started by identifying the lack of resources: financial resources, human resources, tangible resources, and professional competences. The founders were characterized by bricolage capabilities that refer to the ability to successfully tap into distributed competence and knowledge (Lévi-Strauss 1966).

The founders also used their networking skills by adopting a stakeholder relationships approach. Through the relationships activated with heterogeneous actors, the founders could access different resources. The main stakeholders were accelerators (Avanzi/Make a cube and Cariplo Foundation) and incubators (ComoNExT, Social Fare), as well as foundations, mentors, and universities. OTS also cooperated with private capital organizations, such as business angels. The founders involved some universities in their activity, such as Cattolica University, Bocconi University, and Turin University. All of them had been active in previous relationships with the founders. Mara studied at Cattolica University, Giulia studied at Turin University, and both attended a master of specialization at Bocconi University. In addition, Bocconi University was involved in focus group activity, together with key referents of non-profit organizations.

Moreover, the founders participated in ComoNExT's and Turin University's call to access innovative services provided by the organizations. One of the main services was related to networking. The main services provided by ComoNExT are related to tutorship that promotes the sharing of knowledge and expertise, mentorship, and business networking. The founders collected resources from different stakeholders, including financial resources, knowledge, and heterogeneous competences. The business partners of ComoNExT became business partners of the startup, thereby demonstrating knowledge spillover (Cantù 2017).

Among the stakeholders, particular attention was paid to customers. The founders decided to change the platform and the business model based on the feedback provided by users. The founders provided



customized information to different customers interested in non-profit organizations. The startup is characterized by a market approach. Thus, it follows that:

*P2 The development of innovation motivation to reach social goals requires the combining of entrepreneurial skills (entrepreneurial intuition, alertness, and networking) and a new managerial approach founded on interconnected business relationships and a market orientation.*

In light of the previous considerations, several influences emerge (see Fig. 7.1).

The shift from domain passion to entrepreneurial passion influenced the shift from inspiration to intuition and the emerging of innovation motivation in entrepreneurs. These main attributes of the founders (inspiration and motivation) positively influenced entrepreneurs’ main abilities—namely, entrepreneurial intuition, entrepreneurial alertness, and networking. In addition, the market orientation and interconnected business relationships allowed the entrepreneurs to reach their social innovation outcome.

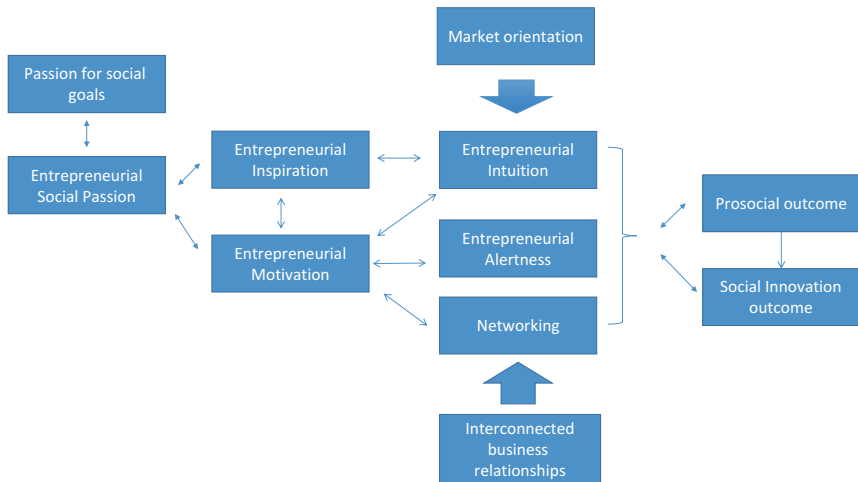


Fig. 7.1 The process to reach social innovation outcome

## 7.6 Conclusions and Managerial Implications

### 7.6.1 Theoretical Implications

In a traditional perspective, entrepreneurship research is defined as the examination of how, by whom, and with what opportunities are effected to create future goods and services that can be discovered, evaluated, and exploited (Shane and Venkataraman 2000: 218). Considering social entrepreneurship (Stevens et al. 2015), an “attractive” opportunity is one that has sufficient potential for positive social impact.

As demonstrated by the case study, the process of social entrepreneurship is influenced by the prosocial motivation of entrepreneurs and, increasingly, by the social innovation motivation. In the social entrepreneurship context, the social domain passion is transformed into social entrepreneurial passion to reach the social goals.

In the entrepreneurship research, the moments of inspiration have enabled the recognition and exploitation of major entrepreneurial opportunities. As the case discussed here indicated, entrepreneurial passion supported the shift from entrepreneurial inspiration to entrepreneurial intuition, thereby further pushing the innovation motivation of entrepreneurs. The social innovation outcome requires the combining of entrepreneurial skills, such as intuition, alertness, and networking, and managerial skills such as customer/market orientation.

### 7.6.2 Managerial Implications

Entrepreneurial passion can sustain the transformation of a social dream into a social mission that supports the active role of the entrepreneur in pursuing social and business goals. From this perspective, the first step of the entrepreneurial process is entrepreneurial inspiration followed by entrepreneurial intuition, which is the basis for developing a business dream. The business dream is followed by a business plan and by the foundation of a new venture. In social entrepreneurship, the social mission requires a social strategy to reach social goals.

In addition, the key role of prosocial motivation and social innovation motivations requires focusing a better attention on the different dimensions that could influence the entrepreneurial capabilities. At the same time, the social innovation motivation recognizes a new role of the benefit company: the activators of an innovation process. Relevant attention should be focused on combining entrepreneurial and managerial skills to reach the social innovation outcome.

### 7.6.3 Limitations and Future Research

The study is founded on a single case study and, thus, has limitations. Future research could analyze additional cases and could measure the impact of entrepreneurial passion on innovation motivation and social innovation outcome.

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# 8

## “Follow Your Passion”: Passion and Resilience in the Surfing Industry—The Entrepreneurial Case of Roberto Ricci Designs

Francesco Capone

### 8.1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

This chapter aims to investigate how entrepreneurial passion (EP) increases individual dedication, commitment and also perseverance in situations of high levels of risk or adversity such as new ventures creation or in front of particular hardship and event.

Passion has been at the center of a fervid debate on entrepreneurial theory. EP is recognized as it fosters dedication, commitment, persistence and full engagement of entrepreneurs (Cardon et al. 2017). It facilitates to face context of adversity, lack of information, resources and manage

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<sup>1</sup>The author expresses his gratitude to Matteo Ricca for the data collection on RRD and to Chiara Cantù and Andrea Sabatini for helpful comments and advises. A previous version of the work has been presented in three workshops on Passion and Entrepreneurship held at the University of Florence in 2017, at the University of Uppsala and at the University of Milan in 2018. We thank participants for comments and advises.

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unpredictable events (Baum and Locke 2004). EP has also been recognized to be contagious from entrepreneurs to employees (Cardon 2008) and preferred by investors (Murnieks et al. 2016). It drives tenacity, permits to work long hours, fosters courage and a high level of initiative (Bierly et al. 2000).

However, while the literature on EP is getting more and more wider, at the moment, there is not a good understanding of the full range of objects that may ignite EP (Cardon et al. 2017). EP is usually defined as a passion for work or love of one's work (Baum and Locke 2004), while few contributions defined passion as an individual trait (Baum and Locke 2004) or stimulated by an object or a context (Cardon et al. 2009). In addition, EP is usually seen as a goal-oriented process (Mueller et al. 2017), while few contributions recognize it as an overall entrepreneur self-identity feature (Cardon et al. 2013).

This chapter aims to investigate EP as a self-identity feature of entrepreneurs that permits to boost new ventures success thanks to higher levels of dedication, commitment and love for the products; it also fosters resilience to react to shock and external events (Bonanno 2004). EP is usually identified as a trigger to effort and grit in everyday activities (Gielnik et al. 2015), while less research is devoted to the reaction to critical events in entrepreneurs' life.

The work focuses on a successful case of user-entrepreneur (Shah 2003; Shah and Tripsas 2007; Capone 2019; Lazzarotti and Capone 2020) with a case study in sports (surfing), that is gaining increasing academic interest as a growing industry (Stewart et al. 2008; Warren 2012; Carvalho and van Winden 2017).

The chapter presents the analysis of Roberto Ricci's entrepreneurial career, founder of the brand "RRD", producing wind/surfboards and sportswear. We analyze the various phases that marked the birth of his products and their subsequent success in the domestic and international markets.

In the analysis, we highlight that the passion that has driven the entrepreneur's life is not devoted to work or to the entrepreneurial venture, but is more context-related of an entrepreneur's life, where the entrepreneur operates. It is not goal-oriented, but essential to entrepreneur self-identity.

Moreover, we describe the case of an external shock that creates a huge stop during the venture growth (fire of the start-up in first years), and we highlight that the entrepreneur's resilience was sustained by his passion to rebuild the enterprise to new levels of success.

We focus on the case of a *professional* user-entrepreneur, where the new idea develops within a professional sporting activity. The case is a special case of user entrepreneurship, as a former professional athlete who became a successful entrepreneur. The case, in fact, shows that former athletes are not simply users; rather they are passionate and extremely experienced professional users, often lively interacting with huge and active communities of users and followers (Guercini and Cova 2018).

Especially, in this case, there is a search for gratification that is mainly represented by the satisfaction of creating something new through passion and thanks to the support of a (surfing) community (Cova and Guercini 2016). Sport communities are not properly made up of consumers, yet rather they are made up of passionate, experienced and sometimes even professional users.

A novelty of the research is tentative to focus on the interrelationships of three research streams: user entrepreneurship, entrepreneurship and passion and finally perseverance and resilience.

The results show that the vocation and passion for a particular sport increasingly orient athletes or former professional athletes to take an entrepreneurial path. This is usually supported by a community of athletes and sportsmen that permits the improvement of the products and legitimate the new entrepreneur.

The main contribution of the chapter is to explain the entrepreneurial passion as a self-identify feature of entrepreneurs that permits to react to adversity and external shock, showing resilience and persistence. Moreover, passion boots success in fostering the love for the product, for the handmade production and for the artisan's life.

## 8.2 User Entrepreneurship, Passion and Resilience

### 8.2.1 Passion and Entrepreneurship

The literature on passion and entrepreneurship is increasing and more recently entrepreneurial passion has been at the center of a fervid debate on entrepreneurial theory. If we perform a quick search on ISI Web of Science on “passion” and “entrepreneurship” we can easily find more than 150 contributions receiving more than 2000 citations. Emerging literature shows a stable growth of 10 contributions per year after 2014 and 20 works yearly after that date.<sup>2</sup>

Entrepreneurial passion is a thriving research field. It fosters dedication, commitment, persistence and full engagement of entrepreneurs (Cardon et al. 2017). Passion permits entrepreneurs to be full of energy, drive and spirit (Baum and Locke 2004). This “fire of desire” permits them to succeed in difficult conditions and better than others. EP can be contagious from entrepreneurs to employees (Cardon 2008) and preferred by investors (Murnieks et al. 2016). It may foster courage and a high level of initiative (Bierly et al. 2000).

However entrepreneurial passion is not absolutely positive. A wide part of the literature has also underlined its negative aspects as a *dark side* of entrepreneurial passion. EP can have detrimental effects, reduce well-being and create conflicts in personal life (Stroe et al. 2018). Vallerand et al. (2003) point out two types of passion: one positive and one obsessive, blind that can create misdirected actions. Cardon et al. (2005) point out that passion can be misleading with quite detrimental effects. Spousal or parental relationships may suffer due to the overwhelming dedication to the business over-control or overprotect.

Aside from the negative aspects, when passion is positive and entrepreneurs are passionate it can boost their success; this fire of desire can be a flywheel for entrepreneurship as an intense and positive emotion,

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<sup>2</sup> A search performed in January 2019.

similar to excitement that is linked to entrepreneurial task and activities (Gielnik et al. 2015).

However, notwithstanding the wide literature on EP, at the moment, there is not "a good understanding of the full range of objects that may ignite EP" (Cardon et al. 2017). Several entrepreneurs show in fact passion for several things. Cardon et al. (2017) indicate that there can be a passion for inventing, founding or developing. EP is usually defined as "passion for work" or "love of one's work" (Baum and Locke 2004), while few contributions defined passion as an individual trait (Baum and Locke 2004) or stimulated by an object or a context (Cardon et al. 2009).

In addition, EP is usually seen as a goal-oriented process (Mueller et al. 2017), while few contributions recognize it as an overall entrepreneur self-identity feature (Cardon et al. 2013).

We aim to investigate EP as a self-identity feature of entrepreneurs that permits to foster resilience to react to shock and external events (Bonanno 2004). EP is usually identified as a trigger to effort and grit in everyday activities, while less research is devoted to the reaction to critical events in entrepreneurs' life.

In fact, passion can also be important for overcoming adverse events, overcome obstacles and remain engaged (Cardon et al. 2009). Passion is relevant to face extreme uncertainty and resource shortages (Timmons 2000). Why do some entrepreneurs persist despite considerable obstacles and impediments during the process of entrepreneuring? The reason is their passion (Cardon et al. 2009).

### 8.2.2 Passion, Persistence and Resilience

Passion in particular increases persistence as a continuation of effortful actions despite failures, impediments or threats (Gimeno et al. 1997). Mueller et al. (2017) underline that entrepreneurial passion motivates entrepreneurs to overcome hardship on the arduous road to new venture success. Passion and grit have also been studied in two aspects of entrepreneurs. The authors underline that grit may be composed of two main dimensions. The first one is the consistency of interest, that is the continuation to focus on clearly defined long-term goals, and second is

perseverance. Gielnik et al. (2015) underline that more the effort people show the faster they reduce the discrepancy between the current state and their desired goal. Passionate entrepreneurs put more effort into their ventures and reach higher levels of success.

Entrepreneurial passion fosters *resilience* of entrepreneurs as a capacity to face adversity and overcome difficulties. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy—defined as a belief in one's ability to be an entrepreneur—and resilience are particularly important (Bullough and Renko 2013).

The concept of resilience has been defined as “an ability to go on with life, or to continue living a purposeful life, after hardship or adversity” (Tedeschi and Calhoun 2004: 4) and “a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (Luthar et al. 2000: 543). Bonanno (2004) defines resilience as “a stable trajectory of healthy functioning after a highly adverse event” (p. 2). Moreover, he underlines that resilience represents a distinct outcome trajectory from that typically associated with *recovery* after traumatic events or adversities.

People who start businesses under dire circumstances often have to alter the status quo and forge new paths to success. Without resilience, individuals would be less capable of engaging in entrepreneur activities to start businesses and new ventures (Bullough and Renko 2013).

The resilience of entrepreneurs may help to explain entrepreneurial success and this is particularly relevant to individual firms or small firms, where the entrepreneur is a central figure (Ayala and Manzano 2014).

According to Holling (1973), resilience is not only the capacity to absorb shock and maintain function but also the capacities for renewal and development. This “adaptive capacity” may be considered a creative adaptive capacity, able to generate ideas and innovation after a shock and respond to adverse events (Lazzeretti and Capone 2015).

### 8.2.3 User Entrepreneurship and Passion

Shah (2003) notes that in sectors of consumption, such as that of sporting goods and in particular windsurfing and surfing products, the main innovations result from firms that are set up by end-users. According to

the author, 43% of the key innovations in these sectors have been commercialized by end-users. The GoPro camcorder used first time on a surfboard and the O'Neil wetsuit, among others, are often mentioned as emblematic cases. Users who are no longer satisfied with the products that are currently on the market try to innovate on their own.

In this context, idea generation is frequently guided by the passion that users feel in using a product (e.g., windsurf, surf); the commitment to develop a better product leads them to strive for innovations. Given such a scenario, some authors show that passion is an important driver in the generation of entrepreneurship, and it can manifest itself more often in consumer communities (Cova 1997), to the extent that entrepreneurship creation may be perceived as a tribal process (Cova and Guercini 2016; Guercini and Cova 2018). In fact, the best expertise in consumption is more easily expressed within consumption communities, for which it is also possible to verify and test the new idea and its ability to meet unexpressed needs.

Also, Von Hippel (2005) in the past underlined that in the same business "the evolving pattern of the locus of product development in kite-surfing illustrates how users can displace manufacturers from the role of product developer" (p. 5). In this business, he underlines that the collective product design and testing work of a user community "has clearly become superior" relative to the levels of in-house effort of manufacturers. In fact, manufacturers were increasingly shifting away from product design and focusing on product designs first developed and tested by user innovation communities.

User entrepreneurship is characterized by a high level of passion and in particular former athletes and professionals show dedication and commitments in starting a new venture based on their love and passion for the related professional activities or sport.

The case is a special case of user entrepreneurship, as former professional athletes who became a successful entrepreneur. The case, in fact, shows that former athletes are not simply users; rather they are passionate and extremely experienced professional users, often lively interacting with huge and active communities of college and fans.

Our research questions are then the following:

- (a) Can passion foster the success of a new user entrepreneurship venture?
- (b) Can EP reinforce the resilience of entrepreneurs to react to obstacles and adversity?
- (c) What is the role of the user community in foster passion and resilience?

Our general hypothesis is that passion can foster the success of a new venture for several reasons, but in particular, it may reinforce the resilience of entrepreneurs to react to obstacles and adversity. In this idea, passion is not a necessary goal-oriented and general on firm creation, but it is more a self-identity feature of the entrepreneur. This hypothesis can be particularly investigated in user entrepreneurship ventures where entrepreneurs as users (or former athletes) are passionate about a product or sports. They became artisans for the love of the product and the sport and this can trigger the commitment and passion in a virtuous circle until the entrepreneurial success.

### 8.3 The Context of the Research: The Surfing/Windsurfing Industry

Over the last decades, a global industry developed around surfing and windsurfing, including the design, production and distribution of equipment, accessories, apparel and surfwear (e.g. clothing, bikinis, shoes and sunglasses) (Carvalho and van Winden 2017).

Surfing has traditionally been linked with young people and a rebellious culture, but it has recently lost this connotation (Orams and Towner 2012; Stranger 2017), becoming a global industry. For example, it is estimated that there are 3.3 millions of surfers in the US, they own 4 surfboards on average and earn more than \$75,000 a year and they are in their mid-30s (Kvinta 2013).

Surf-related production systems have permitted several places to thrive and they have been remarkably clustered in space in some iconic places such as California, Australia and Europe (French Aquitaine, Basque

Country). Several studies explain their early development in the 1980s and 1990s using territorial innovation models and the cluster theory (Logue et al. 2015; Stewart et al. 2008).

In Italy is estimated that there are more than 30,000 surfers, growing with a rate of 15% each year. There are more than 300 surfer shops and several producers (Nani 2011).

Moreover, in Italy, there is an increasing interest in the industry thanks to the debut of surfing at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games and the qualification for the first time of an Italian surfer<sup>3</sup> who started to compete among the 50 best surfers of the world at the ASP World Surf Tour. Also, Alessandra Sensini (fellow villager of Roberto Ricci) just in the 1990s and 2000s won a gold, silver and two bronze medals in windsurfing race at Atlanta (1996), Sydney (2000), Atene (2004) and Pechino (2008) Olympic Games, carrying this sport to the national limelight.

Surfing and windsurfing are engaging sports that are linked to several global brands mostly investing in clothing and apparel. Some of the most important brands around the globe are the Australian Billabong, Quiksilver, Rip Curl or the US Reef, O’Neil, Vans and so on. They all started as board producers, but then became global brands thanks to their entrance in the global fashion industry. Global Industry Analysts forecasted that the surf apparel segment will reach US \$10.3 billion in 2024, driven by the interest in surfing as a lifestyle, environmental concerns and fitness trends.

Notwithstanding the global and relevant nature of the industry, it is also important to underline the fact that the production is characterized by innovativeness, and handicraft production that is important for passion also related to the sea life.

Also, Von Hippel (2005) started from this industry to highlight the democratizing innovation process where users develop innovations, considering “the development of high-performance windsurfing techniques and equipment in Hawaii by an informal user group” (p. 1). Board producers—called “shapers” as they *shape* a board from a blank piece of polyester foam—are artisans that love their work and are passionate. A shaper

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<sup>3</sup> Leonardo Fioravanti, a native from Rome, has also been in several television channels counting his history.



can then be seen as an artisan and each board is made as a custom product and is related to passion and love for the activity.

Tracing back a brief history of the surf industry, in the 1950s and 1960s, the big brands were all originated in the US and Australia by former athletes and surfers. In handmade production, each *custom* board was handmade by the *shaper*, following the indications of the user. The shaper, as an artisan, has to be competent to understand the needs of the users.

This industry can be particularly interesting for the case study for multiple reasons.

Firstly, as said, it is a growing industry where board producers (user-entrepreneurs) are often involved and passionate as surfer or former surfer (Shah 2003). This is necessary as handmade producers should be able to interpret or better understand client requests.

Secondly, in this context passion can play an important positive role for the entrepreneurs, but also a negative one, driving entrepreneurs who can often find themselves chasing a dream more than developing a real sustainable business.

Thirdly, this passion can be linked to resilience and be contagious to employees and help the entrepreneurs to respond to adversity and show a greater entrepreneurial engagement.

Finally, a relevant role in the entrepreneurial path is played by the local surf community that represents the first crucial users of the products of the new business.

## 8.4 Research Design

The research follows the principles of both case study and longitudinal research (Dawson 2013; Pettigrew 1990). The case study approach focuses on the collection and analysis of a wide range of information and data, using different methodologies (interviews, questionnaires, secondary data, in-house business documents etc.) to illustrate the events and behaviors in a given study context (Yin 1994). It can be considered as a comprehensive research method for analyzing the process of entrepreneurship evolution (Dana and Dumez 2015).

The research started with the case study selection and the choice of some criteria of the case study. The case study should satisfy three criteria: (1) the firm to be investigated should be in the windsurf-/surf-related business: in particular, the firm should produce surf equipment and surf-related accessories (apparel, kite etc.) in Italy; (2) the entrepreneur of the firm should be a former surfer or sportsman and founder of the firm and (3) the firms should be of relevant size and revenue.

First of all, we decided to preliminary investigate the presence of entrepreneurs operating the business in Italy through a search in the Bureau Van Dijk Database AIDA.<sup>4</sup> As it is not possible to identify firms producing surfing-windsurfing boards via national databases or ATECO codes, we have integrated the AIDA database search with an internet search and secondary data (Nani 2011).

Most results were retailers of international brands mostly working on clothing and apparel economic activities codes. However, we found several cases of Italian producers and shapers of custom boards. In Italy and in particular in Tuscany, we found some cases of shapers producing boards of different dimensions, but on analyzing their website, we found out that most of them are individual firms, mainly micro-business or artisans, that operate as shapers of custom surfboards only for the local surf community.<sup>5</sup>

The most relevant case was Roberto Ricci Designs as the only one respecting the criteria and the most interesting case that has developed from a former surfer to an entrepreneur of international success.

The case study has been developed as a retrospective case study (Pettigrew 1990; Dawson 2013) collecting secondary data on the firm and the entrepreneur (published interviews, balance sheets, etc.) and interviewing informants of RRD.

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<sup>4</sup>AIDA is the database, created and distributed by Bureau van Dijk, containing the balance sheets, the personal and product data of all Italian limited liability firms required to deposit the balance sheet to the local Chamber of Commerce.

<sup>5</sup>In Tuscany for instance, most relevant cases, also cited in Nani (2011), are Dr.ank Surfboards in Pisa (<https://www.dranksurf.it/>), Ola Surfboards in Viareggio (<https://olasurfboards.com>) and TwinsBros Surfboards in Livorno (<https://www.twinsbros.net/>), but no one is relevant enough to be in AIDA database. Most of them are individual firms.

In the case study, we try to investigate the relevance of the following issues according to the literature review and the aim of the analysis:

- (1) The role of entrepreneurs' passion in establishing the business
- (2) The role of passion in facing adversity and as a self-identity feature of the entrepreneur
- (3) The role of the user community for success in the business

## 8.5 The Case of Roberto Ricci Designs

This section is devoted to the analysis of the history of RRD from the birth and the development of the business. In particular, we focus on the experiences of Roberto Ricci as a sportsman and in his development as a businessman and as an entrepreneur. The history of the firm will be described from birth to its full development and international recognition.

Roberto Ricci was born in 1964 in Grosseto, a city in south Tuscany, Italy, at the seaside. As a child, he grew up with a strong passion for the sea and water sports and started to practice surfing and windsurfing as a pioneer in the Italian surfing and windsurfing scene.

In the 1980s he started then to produce some windsurf boards for him and his friends in his garage as he was the son of an artisan, and also because boards were not available at that time in Italy. He started copying images from journals, and trial after trial and use after use he became a trailblazer in producing surfing and windsurfing boards.

He also stated that: "In the 80s in Italy boards did not exist yet. I am the son of artisans, my mother is a seamstress, my father a coachbuilder, so I borrowed some tools from his workshop and I started to make myself" (La Stampa 2013).

Later on, he started to compete in *international tours* and he became a professional sportsman and began to travel all around the world to compete and get in contact with the international community of surfers in

the Windsurfing World Cup. "Only when you surf the wave with your own made board you can understand everything", he stated (La Repubblica 2014).

The first idea of a business started in 1989 when Roberto Ricci began his first business to produce and sell his prototypes. The first products were custom windsurfing boards, designed and shaped by hand, one by one, for the top windsurfing racers around the world. The business was an individual venture and profoundly based on his passion for the sea and the sport of an entrepreneur-athlete. His parents' garage was his laboratory where he produced the boards.

He asserted, "The passion for the sea it has been the key for everything" (Il Messaggero 2016).

Unfortunately, an adverse event happened in the life of Roberto Ricci and just after a few years, in 1993, his laboratory burnt down with his family house. All the things he had become ashes together with his laboratory and his business was gone.

At that moment, Roberto thought he had no choice but to take this opportunity to re-launch a new venture with a new series of boards and an important investment in sponsoring an international championship. In 1993 he found the actual "Roberto Ricci Designs" logo and company.

"That night I decided it was time to get serious." He said years later. "I had the right knowledge and contacts so I launched my first collection of surfboards, produced in series, and decided to sponsor the number two at the world championships."

After some years the firms were recognized at the international level, and it became a market leader in the production of kitesurf boards.

Roberto Ricci narrated the event saying: "The turning point was in 1993. It came from the *passion* for a new project; to build an international company that would share Roberto's love for the water with the world. Because of the technical expertise and contagious *passion* of Roberto, the company became one of the leading brands in the Windsurfing and Kitesurfing industry within a few years. The company was originally registered as RRD—Roberto Ricci Designs, Italy-Hawaii, reflecting the combination of the typical Hawaiian surfing tradition with

the Italian artisanal technique and creativity of Roberto Ricci, born and raised in Tuscany.”<sup>6</sup>

Another interesting aspect of the history and development of Roberto Ricci is the role of the community for the success in the business and the recognition of the value of the new products. Several works underline the role of the community of users in user entrepreneurship (Shah 2003), or tribes of users and entrepreneurs (Cova and Guercini 2016).

In the history of Roberto Ricci his links with the national and international windsurfing community are in fact particularly important. In the 1990s after having competed at a high level he decided to move to Garda Lake so that he could come in full contact with the most important shapers community at the national level. He began to learn new techniques, making comparisons with Italian surfers and shapers evermore.

The notable step is the journey to Hawaii (the international *mecca* of surfing) where he lived six years improving his skills and competencies.

He underlined on his experience in Hawaii: “Back in Tuscany in 1994 I started to produce surfboards and windsurfs. I tried to fuse the secrets of Hawaiian shapers with the taste of Tuscany for harmony, colors, details, etc.”<sup>7</sup>

In that period, the recognition from the national and international community was crucial for the development of new products and the legitimation to establish a trustworthy brand. Later on, also with some sponsorships at the international competitions, the firm took over and RRD added to the Equipment line the development of a sportswear line of articles for surfers and sportsmen and women, with his shareholder and friend Roberto Bardini.

In 1996 a specific company for the clothing line was established by combining the passion and ambition of two young friends (Roberto Ricci and Roberto Bardini). “The clothing started with the development of specific boardshorts and t-shirts designed to address the passion of those who ride wind and waves all over the world. The RRD clothing originates

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<sup>6</sup><http://www.robertoriccidesigns.com/equipment/contacts/company-profile/#background>.

<sup>7</sup>He expressly refers to two local gurus of surf, Jimmy Lewis and Ed Angulo, who were particularly important for his development.

from the desire to re-invent the classic surf-lifestyle concept according to Roberto’s lifestyle.”<sup>5</sup>

Evident of the characteristics of the entire RRD business is the share of products sold abroad and in Italy. In the Equipment segment, 80% of the products are sold abroad, while the sportswear segment sells 90% in Italy.

At the moment RRD sells in 65 countries and he is the leader in boards and sails. RRD has reached 12 M€ of revenues from 2013 onward, 65% of them are realized abroad. The firm continues to produce innovations; for instance, new products are added to the production called “Stand-up-paddle” as a new water sports and several lines of clothes and boards (Fig. 8.1).

Some other statements of Roberto Ricci clarify even more the evidence of this case study. For instance, he always underlines the importance of artisan production and passion for the manufacturing activities: “Computers are useless, it is a handmade job, trial after trial”.

Later on, we will also comment about his extraordinary success of wind/surfboards “(Selling Italian boards to Hawaiian) ... is like to produce Mozzarellas in Tuscany and commercialize them in Campania”.

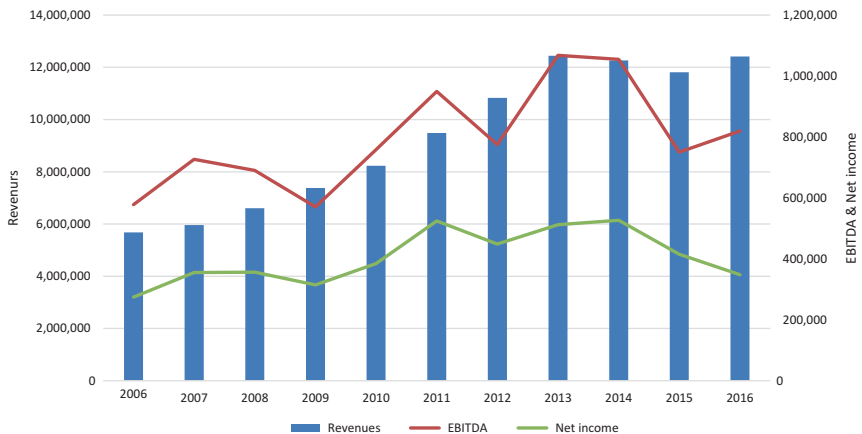


Fig. 8.1 The recent evolution of the RRD business. (Source: AIDA)

## 8.6 Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter aimed to investigate how entrepreneurial passion is important for the business generation and in particular how it increases entrepreneur perseverance in situations of high levels of adversity such as new ventures creation and in front of particular hardship and event.

The work focused on a successful case of user-entrepreneurs in the sports industry, Roberto Ricci. A former athlete, a sport passionate and an entrepreneur of success, he is the founder of the brand RRD, producing surf and windsurf boards and sportswear.

The RRD case has been recognized as an interesting case on user entrepreneurship in the surf industry in Italy, driven by the passion for the sport and the sea. It is also relevant for its perseverance and endurance in the business, also related to the fire in Roberto's laboratory in the first years of the firm's life.

The analysis showed that passion was important in the creation of the company, in its development and to face the initial adversities and the incident that occurred in the first years of the life of the company.

It is possible to reflect on some considerations. First of all, the study underlined how passion in the case does not regard a specific activity or an object, but it concerns a wider context such as a passion for the sea or sport. This in parts deviates from the definition of passion found in literature, but it emerges more as a feature of self-identity, that characterizes the entrepreneur as a personal trait that leads him to behave with greater dedication and commitment and therefore to achieve even greater success. In this contest, interesting research perspectives open up to investigate the full range of sources that can ignite the EP.

Another important aspect is how passion has contributed to the success, an element that in literature is quite confirmed. Passion has confirmed a source of greater dedication, effort and perseverance, which has led the entrepreneur in the case study to succeed in his business thanks to the care and love for its products and particular attention to the production process. Roberto Ricci always reminded us: *"I do this business because I am a waterman and a surfer. It is my passion."*

The case also highlighted how passion creates a relationship with resilience as the ability to overcome obstacles, difficulties and adversities. In fact, the case has highlighted how a self-identity passion leads to reacting to impediments not only by restoring the previously reached equilibrium and business goals but by intensely focusing on new goals and new degrees of self-satisfaction. In this context, the Chinese character of "crisis" means both "crisis" and "crucial moment" to highlight the possibility of turning a bad situation in favor.

Concerning managerial implications, it is clear that the case shows how passion is an important element of being an entrepreneur and doing business. It is important to have passion for what we do; this allows us to be more involved, believe in what we do, involve employees, attract investors and so on. From this point of view, the literature on entrepreneurship has shown that it is increasingly necessary to analyze entrepreneur's psychological aspects in the process of business creation and that this *inner fire* allows the entrepreneur to carry forward his ideas and fully demonstrate his features.

Some limits of the research must necessarily be highlighted. In fact, this case was a positive example of the passion that supported the overcoming of moments of difficulty and also contributed to the success of the new venture. Certainly, this does not prevent the passion from bringing negative effects or leading to obsessive feelings or creating blindness in the entrepreneur. The case had the premise of focusing on the positive aspects.

Regarding further research, as the case study is limited to a single case in a specific country (Italy), international benchmarking could be particularly interesting in order also to compare the results and characteristics of the entrepreneurs. Other analyses of international brands on the surf/windsurf business could open interesting future avenues of research. Among others we remind the international known company *Pukas* with its base on San Sebastian in the Spanish Basque Country, which is a leading brand in Europe in surf equipment/apparel (Carvalho and van Winden 2017).

Finally, we could end this work with some open questions that indicate further research issues: could the entrepreneurial resilience be positively



influenced by belonging to a community? In which way the user entrepreneurship can influence the EP and vice versa?

In conclusion, the study proved to be an interesting case of interrelationships between user entrepreneurship, passion and resilience, which demonstrate how the motivational and psychological aspects of the entrepreneur are extremely relevant to the success of a company and business in general.

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# 9

## Conclusions: Implications and Further Research Avenues for the Connection Between Passion and Entrepreneurship

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### 9.1 Our Key Findings

A central theme of this anthology has been *questioning the connections between passion and entrepreneurship*: this quest led the 16 authors through a passionate journey that took us about three years. As highlighted in the Introduction, this research group held informal meetings, seminars and workshops to discuss the links between passion and entrepreneurship, in both empirical and conceptual terms.

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One of the main results of this book is a novel research framework to capture the multifaceted connections between passion and entrepreneurship, which is introduced in Sect. 1.3 in our Introduction. This framework does not embrace a single viewpoint but tries to grasp the complexity of the theme at hand. This holistic framework (see Fig. 1.1 in Sect. 1.3) considers the different *forms* of passion that can drive entrepreneurs, distinguishing between domain and “entrepreneurial passion” (Cardon et al. 2009), as well as the different *intensity* of this passion, from low to high levels. Moreover, a third important dimension concerning the connection passion-entrepreneurship emerged from focusing not only on the *positive* side of passion and its role as a factor in the mobilization of resources for entrepreneurship, which is already the subject of extensive attention in the literature, but also on the *negative* side of passion and the limitations it can create. In this sense, the book offers a contribution in relation to that large part of the literature that has highlighted mostly the positive aspects of passion in entrepreneurship.

Next to providing various viewpoints about both the positive and the negative aspects of passion for entrepreneurship, the chapters in this anthology also show that the relationship between positive and negative aspects, as well as between different forms of passion, is a complex one. For instance, a highly motivating domain passion for an entrepreneur can take such a crude form that it eventually hinders a business pursuit (see Chap. 4), suggesting that it is only moderate forms of domain passion that bring positive outcomes (see Chap. 6). Therefore, one and the same passion can produce both positive and negative effects for an entrepreneur, depending on how intense it is manifested. Moreover, several chapters provide evidence that “entrepreneurial passion” (Cardon et al. 2009) needs to be combined with domain passion, including focus on socially

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relevant goals, in order to produce really positive effects on an entrepreneurial pursuit (see Chaps. 3, 7 and 8). The connections between passion and entrepreneurship are certainly multiple and complex one. Therefore, the various perspectives of the single chapters allow for a more holistic picture of this phenomenon.

The multiplicity of viewpoints in this book concerns also the *locus* of passion and entrepreneurship, that is, the analytical level where one investigates the link passion-entrepreneurship. As pointed in the Introduction to this anthology (Chap. 1), this work analyzes both the *individual* and the *collective* nature of entrepreneurship in order to suggest alternative conceptualization on the links between passion and entrepreneurship. This book includes in fact a collection of conceptual and empirical chapters that adopt different units of analysis, ranging from individuals to communities.

We also acknowledge that investigating the connection between passion and entrepreneurship is not an easy task for several reasons. First, the book shows that passion assumes different forms and intensities, with likely different outcomes for single entrepreneurs. Second, passion is not always a positive force, but can cause tensions and force entrepreneurs to conduct and continue business pursuits that are not economically sustainable. Or, as showed by several contributions in this book, passion might be considered simultaneously as a catalyzer of entrepreneurial intent and as a hindrance to control entrepreneurial intent. In other words, an important conclusion is that that passion and entrepreneurship do not necessarily go well together if a strictly business perspective is applied.

A third element making it difficult to investigate the connection between passion and entrepreneurship is the role played by the context around the entrepreneur. Passion can be viewed as a means for entrepreneurs to endure market uncertainties and economic difficulties, but passion is also dependent on the context of the entrepreneur, in terms of supply and using markets, as visible for instance in the case of user-entrepreneurs. Also, the personal background of the entrepreneur, bonds with family and friends—all these contextual elements intensively affect the development of passion. Not least, personal motivations and the formation of a self-identity impact on the connection between passion and

entrepreneurship. The relevance of the context for this connection is stressed in several chapters in this book. Moreover, we have several evidence that due to its multifaceted nature passion is an entity that can neither be easily measured by experts and academicians nor be controlled by policymakers or entrepreneurs themselves. Exploiting fully passion, at both individual and organizational levels, can have both positive and negative influence on a business initiative.

We end this overview about the key findings of this anthology with a short note about methodology applied in the various chapters. The complexity of the connection passion-entrepreneurship stresses the importance, and indeed the need, of ethnographies to penetrate deeply into single cases, of mixed methods—for example, qualitative interviews and quantitative content analysis—and of longitudinal studies capable to capture the process through which passion and entrepreneurship are linked. We continue this chapter by discussing several types of implications of the findings of this book: first implications for theory and then for practitioners. We conclude with suggestions for a research agenda on the connections between passion and entrepreneurship that can expand the findings of this anthology.

## 9.2 Implications for Theory and Methodology

In this section we propose theoretical and methodological implications on the connection between passion and entrepreneurship based on the findings of this anthology.

There is a need to be both theoretically and empirically careful when investigating the nexus between passion and entrepreneurship. Just as it is important to emphasize the positive effects of passion, it is necessary also to critically assess the pro-passion bias of entrepreneurship research. This side of passion can make the actor blind to lessons that could derive from experience, as it motivates to reiterate behaviors that may not appear motivated by the results. Passion focuses on a particular domain, which gives pleasure to the entrepreneur, rather than performance. This dominance of passion can support entrepreneurial initiatives for which results



can come in the long term, but it can also destroy many resources in economically non-rational terms. Just as much as passion can be a fuel for entrepreneurs it can thus become toxic for business. In other words, as noted in the Introduction, passion, entrepreneurship and business performance are not always positively related. This leads to a key question:

To what extent can passion and entrepreneurship coexist? There seem boundaries and limitations that make this coexistence sometimes difficult. Any entrepreneur assembles and combines elements of passion according to will and opportunity. As we have seen throughout this anthology there are variants and flavors both of passion and of entrepreneurship.

This variety suggests theoretical implications that contrast the common assumption in the entrepreneurship literature according to which passion and entrepreneurship are linked only in one direction, namely that passion affects entrepreneurship in a positive way. In the first place, passion for entrepreneurship, that is “entrepreneurial passion” (Cardon et al. 2009), is an important phenomenon, but the effects of passion on entrepreneurship can be of different intensity and not always positive. We should also distinguish the effects of passion on starting a new business from its effects on the success of the new business. A particular effect of passion, especially domain passion, can also be connecting the entrepreneur to a community wherein the same passion is shared with other actors, which creates an important context for the new business.

Moreover, the connection between passion and entrepreneurship is complex, because rather than being unidirectional it entails a mutual influence: not only does passion affect entrepreneurship but also entrepreneurship affects passion. The entrepreneurial experience can in fact support and fuel the entrepreneur’s passion, but it can also lead to a crisis in how the entrepreneur experiences her passion, transform it and even destroy it. This modification of the starting condition of passion can occur to unconventional entrepreneurs, who must at some point make a choice between prioritizing their passion or business development. Therefore, the connection between entrepreneurship and passion is complex and emerges in unique ways along the evolutionary process experienced by the individual entrepreneur.

To illustrate this complexity we can consider consumer entrepreneurship. What inspires musicians to create music groups, or to establish record companies of indie music? What inspires lovers of fitness and bodybuilding to open and run gyms? What motivates authors and scholars to give life to publishing businesses? The purpose is linked to the search for identity that is associated with the processes of consumption. This entrepreneurship is a continuation of the needs and motivations of the consumption process. Becoming entrepreneur does not interrupt the connection with the core passion found in consuming a particular service or product.

Stressing further the reverse link, much less explored in the literature, from entrepreneurship to passion, we already mentioned that entrepreneurship can support the further development of a passion but also cause its crisis or exhaustion. Entrepreneurship allows passion to express itself to a higher level, both because it occupies also the workplace of the entrepreneur, who can dedicate more efforts and creativity to that passion, and because it is driven also by the aim to create solutions for herself, for a community, for the market or even for society as a whole.

Another important theoretical implication of this anthology concerns how we can understand passion as a construct. How shall we interpret someone saying “I am a passionate entrepreneur” or “I am passionate about my gardening business”? How much passion does such statement entail and what kind of passion do they refer to? Being passionate about particular domains or products can mean that a single consumer or a community starts a business focusing on them because there are no longer suppliers providing the quality or economic terms they find satisfactory. In other words, passionate consumers become entrepreneurs driven by passion. The passion-entrepreneurship link emergence thus from a transition process: for instance, from being just a committed user to becoming an emotionally involved business developer, from individual to collective efforts and from aspiring to acting. These transitions are longitudinal processes that researchers can unravel if they apply a processual gaze on the unfolding events. The fact that passion and entrepreneurship are connected through transitions occurring over time raises some intriguing questions. Is passion sustainable? Is passionate entrepreneurship sustainable? Can it be? Is it even desirable?

Passion induces experimentation; it motivates actions taken in conditions of uncertainty, and it can therefore support learning. When passion has a positive effect on entrepreneurial activities, it acts either as psychological fuel for pursuing the entrepreneur's dreams or, in harsher times, to push forth despite hardship. Passion can be a motivating factor for the formation of skills and relationships, and this represents an asset. However, as we have seen throughout this anthology, passion can have "dark sides" and obstruct rational choices. This is not necessarily negative, as non-rational choices can provide other rewards to entrepreneurs and even stimulate creativity and innovation. Considering passion as both potential remedy and poison, a *pharmakon*, for business as well as for individuals, opens up questions concerning the sustainability of passion. It would provide a way of addressing lighter and darker sides of passion, from the rush of experimentation, lustful action and learning to obsessive behavior, burn-out and slow but inevitable bankruptcy. Passion does not only indicate an emotional heightened state of the entrepreneurs, but it is also an important element of the entrepreneurial identity. To be an entrepreneur suggests passion, and today, in difficult times, it may even be a necessary attribute. This indicates a route of further inquiry that is analyzing the passion-entrepreneurship link in terms of identity work.

Our theoretical implications suggest also some methodological implications. Investigating the connection between passion and entrepreneurship requires input from different disciplines because of its complexity and multifaceted nature. This complexity has prompted the use of different methodologies in this anthology, albeit characterized by a prevalence of qualitative case studies. Qualitative methods are really important to investigate the passion-entrepreneurship link because they penetrate "in the mind of the entrepreneur". Ideally, participant observation and even action research are important tools to improve introspection on a set of complex linkages like those that we have highlighted throughout this book between passion and entrepreneurship.

However, to broaden the perspective on this complex phenomenon it is advisable to embrace also other methods. In particular, quantitative content analysis such as text mining (see Chap. 2) enables to identify complex patterns in entrepreneurial stories obtained through in-depth interviews. Finally, in order to provide a holistic picture, it is very

important to avoid the natural bias toward success stories, where passion clearly sustained entrepreneurs and helped them achieve positive results. Instead, one should select also cases where passion and entrepreneurship are linked in unusual and non-intuitive ways.

### 9.3 Implications for Practice

The previous chapters suggest a set of practical implications for entrepreneurs, policymakers and also for business associations.

Passion can be considered as an important element at various stages of business development. In particular, a particular domain passion can be exploited in order to mobilize relevant stakeholders within the entrepreneur's own social network and also to build a business network. For instance, an entrepreneur's passion can make it easier to approach the potential investors needed to start up a business and even to convince them to invest. In fact, an entrepreneur showing passion for a specific area closely related to the business can transmit the positive drive of this passion to a broader audience: the passionate entrepreneur could pitch more convincingly the start-up to venture capitalists or other investors by capturing their attention and even motivating them to learn more about the nascent business idea. The entrepreneur's passion can turn important also to carry forward the business idea after the initial phase, especially to involve employees. Developing a new business through the involvement of motivated people is important, and an entrepreneur with strong passion can more easily engage employees along the business journey. Moreover, if the entrepreneur succeeds in instilling in the employees the same passion, both domain passion and "entrepreneurial passion" (Cardon et al. 2009), this can mitigate the difficulties which may appear during the business development process, and helping employees cope with their own concerns. Organizing events or social activities are useful tools to promote and share passion within companies. It can be also an intriguing choice to perform social games and promote playful moments so to simulate creativity and innovative thinking which can in turn support the emergence and diffusion of passion for the same domain that drives the entrepreneur.

On the other hand, the results of this anthology also show that passion holds negative sides. And this might be the case when excessive domain passion emerges and ends up hindering business development. Entrepreneurs afflicted by excessive manifestations of domain passions should involve surrogate entrepreneurs who may counterbalance their own extreme domain passion. The surrogate entrepreneur would focus on the more mundane business management tasks, which the passionate entrepreneur may be less interested in handling. The excessive domain passion can be balanced by the presence of a surrogate entrepreneur who can act as a mediator to turn down the negative influence of domain passion, while keeping it still available, as this passion is indeed important to support the entrepreneur's business in a unique way.

From a policy perspective, our book can help derive some implications for policymakers. One first important point concerns the question of how policy can exploit the "power of passions" held by entrepreneurs for the benefit of local and national economic development. For instance, non-business and non-profit entrepreneurial venues can be equally important for value creation than traditional company start-ups and have a massive societal and social impact in a city or in a region, even in economic terms. One can think at all fairs, festivals or other such initiatives organized thanks to the commitment and passion for, for example, culture, folklore or traditions of certain entrepreneurs: those initiatives attract visitors who spend money in the shops, restaurants and hotels of the city where the events are held. In other words, passion can also mobilize important economic resources and contribute to local growth and higher tax incomes in a specific region/area.

Another interesting theme concerns how policy can stimulate or exploit the domain passion which is clearly an important dimension to fuel the start-up and development of businesses. It may be difficult to use too direct instruments such as specific "start-up if you have passion" subsidies: it is more a matter of culture and basic education which forms the passions that animate people and which then eventually link passion and entrepreneurship. For policy it is more important to create adequate support structures that enable people to cultivate and develop their deepest interests, such as meeting points, cultural events and discussion fora, both physical and virtual. Moreover, reflecting the focus of this book also

on the collective and community aspect of passion and entrepreneurship, policy should also create such fora where people with common passion can meet and develop it, including the active involvement of passionate entrepreneurs who can act as role models for others.

Next to these initiatives at a broader societal level, policy should also play an active role via education in order to promote connections between passion and entrepreneurship. For instance, policy should aim at creating educational programs that focus on how to ignite, retain and effectively deal with domain passion. These programs can include ad-hoc courses involving local entrepreneurs and industry associations to provide relevant role models for younger generations. The role of these associations is relevant also because they usually supply services to their members such as courses in entrepreneurship and are engaged in spreading entrepreneurship culture in broader terms.

## 9.4 Avenues for Further Research

The single chapters and the whole book deal with a number of questions ranging from how expert knowledge and passion combine with each other to the impact of passion on business resilience, and from searching for deeper form of passions to the connection between passion and play and games. Those addressed in this book are clearly just a selection of the many possible research questions concerning the link between passion and entrepreneurship. In this last section, we would like to suggest some additional specific questions that have been opened by the results and discussions in this book. We propose these research questions as potential avenues for further research clustered around three main themes: (1) capturing particular facets of passion, in terms of its *sources*, *analytical levels* where it appears and *effects* on entrepreneurship; (2) connecting passion not only to entrepreneurship but also to other key theoretical and practical topics (e.g., sustainability, gender, ethnicity); and (3) defining the methodological approaches of future studies on the linkage between passion and entrepreneurship.

As for the first theme, this book makes clear that passion can have many different facets when it interplays with entrepreneurship, and only

some of these facets were captured in this book. Therefore, further studies should explicitly consider the source of the passion or even possibly the multiple passions involved in one and the same entrepreneurial endeavor. Passions deriving from different domains likely influence entrepreneurs in different ways: for instance, we can expect that passion for science (e.g., the possibly obsessive search for discoveries driving some scientists) intervenes in a different way than passion for arts (e.g., the sense of rapture accompanying musicians). Studies should accordingly compare these various sources or original domains of passion, ideally also in individuals that are simultaneously driven by multiple passions.

As witnessed by various chapters in this book, passion intervenes at different levels, not only the individual entrepreneur but also teams of entrepreneurs working together on a specific project and also broader communities of entrepreneurs. But the specific mechanisms through which passion gets activated and eventually affects the behavior of individuals and groups remain unexplored. Some key questions that should be further investigated in this regard are for instance: which are the particular psychological traits or personal histories of entrepreneurs that make them more or less prone to follow certain passions? Why are some entrepreneurs able to somehow “control” and “exploit” their passions for greater business performance, while others become “victims of their passion”? Investigating the individual level would likely lean toward psychological investigations, whereas the role of passions in entrepreneurial teams and communities can be investigated with concepts from social psychology or sociology. For instance, we need to learn more about the group dynamics that arise in entrepreneurial teams with individuals driven by passions, distinguishing between the possibility that these are the same kind of domain passion and that these passions arise from different sources, causing also potential conflicts between entrepreneurs. Moreover, looking at communities of entrepreneurs, a key question is how the identity of entrepreneurs relates with their passion, in both positive and negative ways. And this leads to the last issue in the various facets of passion that deserves to be studied further, namely the effects of passion on entrepreneurial endeavors. These effects deserve to be studied across all the three analytical levels (individual, team and community) identified in this anthology. An interesting study would be to investigate

if the same kind of for instance domain passion that has a certain effect at individual level is associated with a different effect at team or community level. We also need classifications and taxonomies about the specific effects, not only the positive but also negative ones, of passion on entrepreneurship: while a lot of work has been done on classifying the positive effects, more needs to be done to capture the dark side of passion and in which way they can turn into a liability for entrepreneurs. In particular, how and when does a particular passion create negative effects on entrepreneurial endeavors?

Our second theme for further research suggests connecting passion not only to entrepreneurship but also to a third topic of current relevance for entrepreneurial phenomena, such as ethnicity, globalization, financial performance and the societal role of entrepreneurs, for instance in terms of sustainability and involvement in addressing crises and emergencies. Studying the triad ethnicity-passion-entrepreneurship may possibly reveal different entrepreneurial strategies and styles among different ethnic groups, not the least in handling the linkage passion-entrepreneurship. Looking at a different contextual scale, one can investigate how globalization creates tensions for certain passions linking entrepreneurs to specific localities (e.g., passion for agriculture, food and cultural heritage) while sustaining other passions of universal character of the entrepreneur (e.g., passion for specific technologies, sports or other transnational trends). Investigating the linkage passion-entrepreneurship-financial performance is pivotal as the latter is one of the key effects of passion and research has so far leaned more toward a positive such linkage. However, this anthology suggests that there are several conditions under which passion has negative effects on financial results. Key questions that further research should address are then if these conditions concern the degree of the activated passion, the personality traits of the entrepreneur or its social relations.

Moving from the financial to the social impact of entrepreneurship, future research should consider how and how much passions matters for the pursuit of ecologically and socially sustainable goals. While passion for the environment and such issues as human rights seems to be obvious supporting elements for an entrepreneur's reaching sustainable goals, it should be investigated more explicitly how other facets and types of



passion (e.g., for sports, use of particular products or specific foods) can be combined with these goals. Finally, there are challenges such as crises and major emergencies, where the passion of engaged entrepreneurs can matter a great deal for a positive societal outcome. The role of passion and entrepreneurs should be investigated in these particular contexts. In particular, the interplay between two opposing roles of passion should be studied: how passion can allow the rapid mobilization of energy and efforts of single actors necessary to address any emergency, but also how the same powerful drive of passion can also hinder coordination and a more ordered division of labor, which is also essential to deal with complex emergencies.

As for the third theme for further research, methodological issues, there are arguments for conducting mixed methods studies in entrepreneurship research (see Coviello and Jones 2004). Such methods allow combining the depth of single inductive case studies, and their ability to capture the multifaceted links passion-entrepreneurship, with the possibility to generalize some restricted facet such as the impact of a particular aspect of passion (e.g., intensity) on a particular dimension of entrepreneurship (e.g., risk-taking behavior). Investigating in which conditions passion entails positive as opposed to negative outcomes for entrepreneurs—one of the research questions proposed above—calls for comparative studies of situations (e.g., individual entrepreneurial processes) where the same kind of passion entails opposed outcomes. Likewise, cross-country comparisons would be useful in order to capture the influence of cultural and societal factors on the relevance of passions in entrepreneurial activities, including the emergence of national patterns whereby passion and entrepreneurship are linked in particular ways, for instance, a typical Asian as opposed to a European way.

However, we consider as even more important than snapshot studies longitudinal ones, which can unravel the dynamics of the development processes whereby the linkages between passion and entrepreneurship are forged, the potential conflicts between the two elements become visible and changes unfold in both the facets of passion that become salient and in entrepreneurial behavior. Methodologies such as ethnographies, diaries and story-telling would be fruitful to capture these processes. At the same time as historical processes are important to make sense of the

established connections between passion and entrepreneurship, future research should also use methods that enable to capture the complexity of multiple contexts of entrepreneurship, and in particular how the individual, team and community levels are related and together shape the passion-entrepreneurship link. A possible research design would be embedded case studies, whereby individual entrepreneurs' passions are related to their social context, both their restricted teams and broader communities.

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