EXTENDING ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE THEORY TO UNDERSTAND SHARED RESOURCES AND ROLE ENCROACHMENT IN ORGANIZATIONS

A Dissertation
Submitted to
the Temple University Graduate Board

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

---

by
Maxine Gesualdi
August 2017

Examining Committee Members:

Deborah A. Cai, Advisory Chair, Media and Communication
Matthew Lombard, Media and Communication
Heather LaMarre, Media and Communication
Qi Wang, External Member, Dept. of Communication, Villanova University

ABSTRACT

This dissertation follows in the tradition of role theory and organizational scholarship by examining how one role can be taken over by another, which can be referred to as encroachment. Previous organizational role research has not explored fully encroachment and its effects. Therefore, this study investigated factors that lead to role encroachment, especially the sharing of internal resources, and how individuals cope with the effects of encroachment. To conduct the study, focus groups of marketing and public relations departments were analyzed to explain how roles are enacted within their practical context. The goals of this dissertation were to (a) investigate how shared resources affect role boundaries and role enactment that can lead to encroachment, (b) explain the concept of encroachment and how it affects role enactment, and (c) investigate the conflict between public relations and marketing that can lead to encroachment in the age of social media.

The study found themes related to: (a) definitions of encroachment, (b) factors facilitating encroachment, (c) factors affecting the intensity of encroachment, (d) shared resources and their effects on encroachment, (e) implications of encroachment to the individual, department, and organization, and (f) ways people deal with encroachment. First, encroachment was defined in three ways: the overtaking of tasks, or receiving unwanted strategic guidance, or interference of organizational processes. Second, the study found that role ambiguity and the communication of and adherence to cultural norms invite or prevent encroachment. Third, role ambiguity and organizational culture were found to be the dominant factors that affect the intensity of encroachment. Fourth, the study found that tangible macro resources, like organizational culture and structure, and practical resources, such as information and skill sets, facilitate encroachment. Fifth, findings indicated that implications of encroachment include stress, frustration, and confusion at the individual level; an *us versus them* mentality and role conflict at the departmental level; and broken relationships with external partners, lack of organizational nimbleness, and wasted time and money at the organizational level. Lastly, the study found that people deal with encroachment by providing and receiving emotional and informational social support, and by accumulating and spending social capital through relationship building within the organization.

Theoretical implications of this research indicate that role conflict, role ambiguity, and boundary spanning role theory relate to encroachment. In addition, previous theory focused on external resource use by organizations can be expanded to evaluate the internal use of resources. Theory from interpersonal communication, such as social exchange theory, social support, and social capital, relate to how people facing encroachment cope with their roles being infringed upon. Practical implications of this dissertation include recommendations for organizations including increased communication of role boundaries and evaluations of restrictive cultural norms. The findings from this study provide an understanding of encroachment and indicate directions for further development of theory about encroachment and role enactment.

I dedicate this project to:

my parents, Peggy and Mike, who raised me to believe I could do anything I set my mind to and modeled the work ethic I needed to achieve my dreams;

my husband, Tom, who never wavered in his support for my career change;

my sons, Nick and Leo, who understood all the times when mommy had to "do her work";

my sister, Marlena, who was always there with an encouraging pep talk and offers to help;

and my former colleagues in the corporate world who inspired my research.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.
– William Butler Yeats

Without heroes, we are all plain people and don't know how far we can go.
– Barnard Malamud in *The Natural*

This dissertation project is the culmination of 10 years of part-time and full-time graduate school and part-time and full-time working. I could not have made it through this career change and graduate school journey without the support from many caring people.

Thanks to Dr. Deb Cai for her patience, expertise, and guidance throughout my time at Temple. The finished project is better than I ever imagined due to her professional and expert feedback. I am grateful for her leadership and am very thankful to have met her. I look forward to many years of friendship and donuts at Linvilla.

Thanks to Dr. Matthew Lombard and Dr. Heather LaMarre for sharing their expertise throughout the dissertation project. I am grateful for their support and constructive feedback. Thanks to Dr. Qi Wang for agreeing to serve as the outside reader and for valuable feedback on the project. All of you provided insights that made this dissertation stronger and will help my future research flourish.

Thanks to the friends I've made at Temple who helped make this journey enjoyable. I am thankful for everyone in my cohort for all the fun we had along the way. Thanks to Steph, Carrie, and Maria who gave me valuable advice and key insight into the many processes and steps of the program. Special thanks to Nicole McKenna who never hesitated in offering help and allowing me to sit in her office to chat countless times over the years. She is the glue that holds us together in the program. Thanks, too, for all the inspiration provided by the M&C faculty. I am lucky to have worked with such supportive and knowledgeable people.

Thanks to all my teachers throughout my life who always encouraged me to push myself and reach my goals. From Ms. Adams in elementary gifted to Mrs. Boslet in high school to Dr. Pinnell at WVU to Dr. Orr at West Chester to Dr. Cai at Temple—they, and all my teachers, lit a fire that fueled my educational journey.

Thanks to my friend and tower of strength, Susannah McMonagle. Fate brought us together on that very first campus visit. From sitting through the earthquake during orientation to my dissertation defense, she was there with a smile, encouragement, and an optimistic attitude. I do not think I would have made it through the doctoral program without her sound advice and positive reinforcement. She kept me on pace throughout classes and research. She never failed to respond to an email or text, even at all hours of the night. She understood what I wanted to accomplish and pushed me to achieve. She gave interesting perspectives that made my work better. She listened to countless venting sessions and never judged. I am blessed to have met her, and look forward to many collaborations in the future!

Thanks to family and friends who have provided emotional support and encouragement throughout my journey. So many times I went missing due to deadlines, and my friends and family understood and encouraged me to keep it up.

Thanks to all the second moms and dads who helped me with the kiddos while I was in class or working on a paper. It takes a village, and my village of Marty, Kristin, Shelby, Megan, and Kayla helped me complete this project by making sure my sons were safe and sound and loved.

Special thanks to my sister, Marlena. Without her encouragement, I would have given up many times over. She always believed in me and that kept me going. She is everything you would want in a best friend, and I am so grateful for her every day for all she does for me. Her words of reassurance were a boost to my motivation throughout grad school.

And, I would not have even begun this journey without the belief that I could finish it. That belief came from the perpetual support and example set by my parents, Mike and Peggy. They instilled in me very early on a sense of hard work and an appreciation of the value of education. They always believed in me no matter what decisions I made about my career. Without them setting me on the right path, I would not have even dreamed I could begin such a life-changing effort.

Thanks to my kiddos, Nick and Leo. Mom guilt crept in sometimes and made me feel like I wasn't giving them all that I needed to. But, they were always supportive of my many milestones along the way, and gave me countless *power up* hugs as my batteries wore down. Nick was always asking if there were ways to help me, and his alphabetizing skills helped me make quick work of grading while also working on this project. Their enthusiasm for what I was doing and help they gave me along the way propelled me forward and inspired me to finish.

Lastly, thanks to my husband, Tom. Words cannot capture the thankfulness I feel for his support. He always told me I was unbelievable in my accomplishments, which is what I needed to hear when I didn't believe in myself. His partnership at home and flexibility with all my crazy hours made everything possible. He read more of my research than he ever wanted to, but did it with a smile. Without his love and

encouragement, I would not have begun or ended this journey. I owe him more than I could ever repay, and he has my eternal gratefulness.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Organizations shape much of modern life. From religion to schools to jobs to social clubs, many spend their entire lives in groups working toward a common goal or mission. Because of the widespread influence of organizations in society, organizational scholars have developed a diverse body of theory that explains how members navigate their roles. This dissertation follows in the tradition of organizational scholarship by examining how one role can be taken over by another, which can be referred to as encroachment. The study investigates factors that lead to role encroachment, including sharing resources. To conduct the study, focus groups of marketing and public relations departments were analyzed to explain how roles are enacted within their practical context.

Roles and Role Theory

Roles have been studied in many branches of scholarship including sociology, psychology, and communication. Within organizational research, theory on roles has been developed to explain how individuals receive and enact expected tasks and behaviors. Within organizational scholarship, a role has been defined as behaviors expected of someone who occupies a particular position (Biddle, 1979). This scholarship concentrates on how a member receives role expectations, acts upon these expectations, and influences organizational outcomes through role enactment. When examining roles, previous research has found that a lack of consensus of role expectations between organizational members can lead to conflict and stress (Katz & Kahn, 1968), which affects the organization's productivity and individuals' well-being. Further, unclear role expectations can lead to stress and dissatisfaction on the job (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001). But so far, role theory has not provided an explanation for how and why one role may take over another role. Understanding role encroachment is important to get a fuller picture of the dynamics of role interaction within organizations. This dissertation addresses role encroachment and enactment within the context of overlapping roles of public relations and marketing within organizations.

Importance of Shared Resources

Given economic pressures after the 2008 recession, organizations have streamlined their operations and reduced expenditures (U.S. Bureau, 2013). Therefore, internal sharing of resources has become an important part of organizational life. This shift to sharing internal resources often takes the form of common service departments, such as centrally located payroll departments, or shared technology and data systems. Because sharing internal resources is commonplace, understanding how role enactment is affected by sharing will provide a richer insight into organizational life. Organizational scholarship has focused on the use of *external* resources between two organizations, which has led to an understanding of how dependence on external resources affects the overall wellbeing of the organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). For example, previous organizational scholarship found that competition for scarce external resources will cause organizations to adapt by finding creative ways to obtain the resources (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Staw & Szwajkowski, 1975), or by finding innovative ways to do work without the resources (Husted, Allen, & Kock, 2015). However, the fight for *internal* resources has not been fully explored by role scholars. Given the pressures on resource use, it is important to understand how shared resources can lead to blurred boundaries and result in encroachment. This study will explore factors that lead to encroachment within organizations to understand how interrelated departments share resources, and how sharing affects role enactment. To investigate role encroachment, public relations and marketing departments are used as the context for this research.

Relationship Between Public Relations and Marketing

Public relations is a strategic communication function that helps an organization build relationships with various internal and external groups, or publics. The goal of public relations is to enhance the organization's reputation and build trust between the organization and those publics. Marketing is a strategic function that focuses on promoting a product or service to customers, with the goal of selling that product or service. Public relations and marketing departments often suffer from not having a clear identity within organizations due to similarities in their tasks, and the perception that communication functions are interchangeable (Ha & Ferguson, 2015; Lauzen, 1991; Pravin & Monique, 2016). Power struggles for control over external communication channels and unclear domain boundaries can emerge, which can lead to role and function uncertainty for people performing public relations and marketing roles (Ha & Kim, 2009).

With the introduction of social media to the public relations and marketing toolkit, the lines between public relations and marketing roles have become fuzzier (Nath & Bell, 2016). Historically and through the 1990s, marketing professionals used dedicated communication channels, such as brochures and point-of-sale displays, whereas public relations professionals used their own tools, such as press releases sent over the news wires and press events. With social media, these previously offline activities migrated online, and are now often conducted through the same channels. New practices, such as *content marketing* and *brand journalism* (Ecker, 2013; Royce, 2012; Vercic & Vercic, 2015), have distorted the lines between public relations and marketing. These new communication activities combine aspects of both functions, and are conducted through a shared resource of digital and social media.

By using the context of public relations and marketing departments, this dissertation contributes to the understanding of how role boundaries are breached and how shared resources affect role enactment. This dissertation (a) investigates how shared resources affect role boundaries and role enactment that can lead to encroachment, (b) explains the concept of encroachment and how it affects role enactment, and (c) investigates the conflict between public relations and marketing that can lead to encroachment in the age of social media.

Organization of the Dissertation

The second chapter of the dissertation reviews role and role theory literature and its key assumptions and concepts that relate to this study, including how the conceptualization of encroachment is a gap in the understanding of organizational roles. Next, this chapter discusses public relations and marketing as organizational functions and reviews previous research on the relationship between the two. Lastly, the research questions guiding this dissertation are explained.

The third chapter of the dissertation outlines the method of gathering data for the study. First, the multiple-case study approach is explained. Next, the evolution of participant selection for focus groups through two phases of the study is reviewed including focus group settings and procedures. Next, the chapter includes an explanation of the method of analysis for the focus group transcripts and the results of the pilot group.

The fourth chapter provides the analyses of the six focus groups. Each group is analyzed separately. Within each group analysis, the group membership is described including key characteristics of the group's parent organization. Next, key themes are identified that emerged in each group related to the research questions of the study.

The fifth chapter includes discussion, limitations and implications of the findings. First, common findings across all groups are discussed in relation to the research questions. Next, theoretical and practical implications are explained as they are derived from each research question. Then, I indicate how the findings augment theory related to roles and the practice of public relations and marketing. Next, limitations of the study are discussed, along with directions for future research to address these limitations. Lastly, conclusions are offered from the research for understanding role theory as it relates to the organizational roles of public relations and marketing.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter outlines previous research about roles to establish a context for the dissertation research. The first section reviews the concept of role and how it has been studied through social scientific inquiry. The second section describes distinct branches of role theory. The third section explains how organizational role theory has provided insight into how organizations work along with some gaps in the research. The fourth section explains the importance of shared resources to the function of organizational roles. The last section describes the context for the study: public relations and marketing departments within organizations.

The Study of Roles

According to role theorists, a role is "a behavioral repertoire characteristic of a person or a position; or a set of standards, descriptions, norms, or concepts held for the behaviors of a person or social position; or (less often) a position itself" (Biddle, 1979, p. 9). In other words, a role can be thought of as the combination of behaviors of a person who has a status within a social situation and the set of expectations that dictate behavior of a person in a social situation. For example, the role of a physician includes expectations about demonstrated expertise and bedside manner. The role of physician is dictated by societal expectations and enacted through the behavior of an individual who takes on the role. This multi-pronged definition reflects the origins of the study of roles, which was influenced by psychology (Moreno, 1934; Piaget, 1923), anthropology (Linton, 1936), and sociology (Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959; Mead, 1934).

In psychology, role theorists such, as Moreno (1934) and Piaget (1923), focused on how people observe behaviors of others to understand their own roles within a social system. This early research concentrated on role-taking behaviors (Selman, 1971), which is the tendency of people to make sense of their own roles through the guidance of other people's actions. Within role taking, individuals need to have the ability to see how others act, feel, and react to their own behavior to understand how to interact with others. For example, children observe their parents' behavior and understand how a parent might feel and react to understand the roles of child and parent. This process of being able to see the world through others' eyes is a complex cognitive process that develops as people mature.

Within anthropology, Linton (1936) pioneered work on understanding how roles are developed and enacted within cultures. He defined role as the behaviors associated with a status, which is a social position based on power and influence in the culture. People enact behaviors associated with a role within societal expectations to maintain status. Linton proposed that status can be assigned to someone by others in the society, or it can be achieved through personal accomplishment. In this way, roles are dictated by social structures and enacted to comply with the expectations of societies.

From sociology, roles have been defined as behaviors developed through social interactions. Roles in this perspective are enacted based on expectations we have of ourselves, expectations others have of us, and what we want others to see. Goffman (1959) proposed a theatrical metaphor to understand the enactment of roles, with people playing different parts depending on who they are interacting with and where they are performing. He proposed that people play roles on the *front stage* that are more guarded and calculated to be appropriate to others' expectations, while also playing roles *back stage* that are more open and less rigid based on societal expectations. An example of this would be a restaurant server who acts polite and gracious on the floor of the restaurant, but curses and rants in the kitchen. The goal of this approach is to understand how people's behavior changes based on which role they are enacting and where they are enacting it.

Mead (1934), and later Blumer (1969), proposed that people's roles are conceived through the process of communicating, relying on language and gestures to symbolically share and interpret messages with others. They suggested that roles are conceived and enacted based on how we think others see us. In other words, we develop our self-concept based on judgments of how others see us. For example, Mead's concept of *generalized other* shows how roles are enacted in this view. The *generalized other* is the perception that we have of ourselves that is made up of all the perceptions we think others have of us including people we know and cultural norms that influence our behavior. This social construction of role expectations creates shifting behaviors that change over time.

The Diverse Terrain of Role Theory

The wide-ranging foundations of role scholarship have led to an extensive body of theory aimed at advancing the understanding of roles. Role theory is a broad collection of viewpoints that describes and explains how roles operate. According to Biddle (1986), role theory can be divided into five major branches, based on what assumptions are made by scholars who developed the theories.

Functional role theory focuses on the observable behavior of a person within a social system. Roles, then, “are conceived as the shared, normative expectations that prescribe and explain these behaviors” (Biddle, 1986, p. 70). In other words, roles are defined by the organizational system, and individuals’ behaviors in these roles reflect organizational norms. Functional role theory explains how people enact their roles to keep the system stable and how role expectations lead to conformity by system members. Functional role theory has been examined in and applied to formal and informal social groups to explain how people enact their roles.

Second, symbolic interactionist role theory focuses on individuals performing and changing their roles based on contact with other people. Roles in the symbolic interactionist approach are “thought to reflect norms, attitudes, contextual demands, negotiation, and the evolving definition of the situation as understood by the actors” (Biddle, 1986, p. 71). In other words, roles in this approach are seen as the way people account for their social context and societal norms when thinking about what their behaviors should be in a given situation. Because symbolic interactionist role theory focuses on how people internalize cues about roles, theory from this approach applies often to interpersonal and informal situations.

Third, structural role theory is concerned with the social structures that dictate roles, focusing more on context than behaviors of the individual. Within this perspective, the focus is on "stable organizations of sets of persons (called ‘social positions’ or ‘statuses’) who share the same, patterned behaviors (‘roles’) that are directed towards other sets of persons in the structure” (Biddle, 1986, p. 73). In other words, roles are seen as stable sets of behaviors by people who make up the components of a group. This perspective is applied to the study of social networks and social systems, focusing more on the environment and context than the behavior of an individual.

Fourth, cognitive role theory focuses on how people make sense of the expectations of their roles. In this perspective, scholars focus on “social conditions that give rise to expectations, to techniques for measuring expectations, and to the impact of expectations on social conduct” (Biddle, 1986, p. 74). The sum of these conditions, expectations, and behaviors make up a role. Because this perspective is not concerned with a set social structure, it has been applied to understand any situation where people need to behave within social expectations.

Fifth, organizational role theory is concerned with how roles are conceived and enacted within planned hierarchical groups within organizations. Roles in organizational role theory are “assumed to be associated with identified social positions and to be generated by normative expectations, but norms may vary among individuals and may reflect both the official demands of the organizations and the pressures of informal groups” (Biddle, 1986, p. 73). In other words, roles in organizations are affected by both the formal expectations of the organization’s structure as well as the informal expectations of other people within the organization. Much of this work focuses on how competing expectations affect individuals and the efficiency of the organization.

Despite the differences between these five perspectives, they share some common aspects that are important to this dissertation. First, role theory advances the idea that roles are important aspects of human behavior that help us make sense of our social world. This assumption is the basis of this dissertation because the study is focused on role enactment within organizations and encroachment between roles. Next, role theory proposes that roles need to have a set of expectations guiding their enactment. This dissertation investigates how role expectations are sent, received, and acted upon within an organizational context. Lastly, role theory proposes that when role expectations are violated, discord is created for both the individual and the organization. Because encroachment is a violation of role boundaries, the assumption that role conflict affects the organization applies to this dissertation.

Because this dissertation is a study about roles within organizations, guidance for this study will come from organizational role theory. The following section will review organizational role theory, including concepts related to role encroachment.

Organizational Role Theory

Organizational role theory focuses on how people manage expectations and determine acceptable actions as they interact with others in their organization. As with the main body of role theory, organizational role theory proposes distinct vantage points to study roles. First, some scholars focus on the behaviors of the person in the organization. Biddle and Thomas (1966) pioneered this work by defining roles as a "person-behavior matrix" (p. 29), which explains roles as a mix of individual behaviors in the context of what is expected in a given situation. In other words, roles are made up of sets of behaviors that are enacted by individuals in response to situational needs. To understand how roles are enacted, scholars can focus on the person, the behavior, or the interaction of person and behavior. For example, Carter (2017) used organizational role theory with a behavioral focus to study organic food inspectors. He found that the more a person believed in the importance of his or her role, the more his or her behavior aligned with the expected behaviors of the role. If an inspector identified as a service provider, he or she would be more in favor of bending the rules of regulation to provide better service to the organic food producer. If an inspector identified as a regulatory monitor, he or she would be more in favor of adhering to the strict rules of the job. In this way, Carter illustrated that roles in the organization are based on how individual perceptions dictated anticipated behaviors in the inspection job.

Another main branch of organizational role theory has focused on how the organizational system defines roles and how enacting those roles leads to predictable outcomes (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Katz and Kahn (1978) defined organizations as “open systems of roles” that are structured around “acts or events rather than unchanging physical components” (p. 187). Although Katz and Kahn defined roles as the behavior of members of a social system (p. 43), their concept of roles relies on the system of the organization to define and standardize interdependent roles. For example, Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone (2007) used a systems approach of organizational roles to investigate how consulting firms distribute leadership tasks among organizational members. They looked at the enactment of leadership within a team of consultants and found that shared leadership within teams can be understood as a network, where patterns of mutual influence indicate the strength of the shared leadership. In other words, Carson, Tesluk, and Marrone advocated for an understanding of the organization through a rational lens of connections between team members and their roles.

The last main branch of organizational role theory has focused on the relationships between roles rather than on a single role or the individual in the role (Hage & Marwell, 1968, 1970). Hage and Marwell (1968) proposed that roles cannot be understood in isolation; rather, roles can be understood as “the role-relationship” (p. 200) or the “interaction or relationship that exists between two social positions” (p. 201). An example of this role-relationship would be the associations between the positions of graduate student and professor. Hage and Marwell proposed that characteristics of the relationship between two roles define the basic units of social interaction. In other words, this view of roles proposed that by understanding how roles relate to each other, one can discover how organizations operate. For example, Alexander, Hearld, and Mittler (2014) used this approach to investigate the role-relationship of patient-physician. They evaluated whether ethnicity of the physician affects patients’ willingness to take an active role in their interactions with the doctor and in decisions about their healthcare. They found that the traditional social distance and formality between physician and patient can be overcome more easily for White patients than minority patients. Alexander et al. recommended viewing the patient-physician role-relationship through a lens of racial differences. By doing so, healthcare providers can implement programs to help all patients take a more active part in their healthcare.

In summary, organizational role theory provides a framework to study roles within organizations by focusing on individual behaviors, organizational context, and interaction between defined roles. This theoretical framework offers the basis to examine and explain how one role can be taken over by another as well as to explain factors that lead to this encroachment. Organizational role theory has been used to identify various ways that explain how roles interact. The following section reviews the how role interactions are relevant to encroachment.

Interaction of Organizational Roles

Organizational role theory has provided multiple ways to understand role interaction. One major concept that helps explain the interaction of roles is *integration* (Biddle, 1979). Integration means that “roles fit well together” (Biddle, 1979, p. 77) within their system. The better the roles fit together, the more efficient the organization can be. Integration is based on two central factors. First, roles are integrated when they complement each other, such as when activities are accomplished more easily through a set of differentiated roles. For example, within a soccer game, the players’, the coaches’, the spectators’, and the officials’ roles complement each other to facilitate the function of a soccer match. In addition, integration is based on role interdependence, or “the degree to which roles are mutually facilitative or hindering of one another” (Biddle, 1979, p. 78). Within the soccer game, the role of the coach depends on the players. Without the coach, the players would be without a leader, and without the players, the coach would have no one to lead. For roles to be integrated properly, they must be separate but also related. In other words, roles need to have distinct boundaries but should have related tasks so that they interact and are interdependent within the organization.

Another feature of how roles interact is role conflict. Role conflict is “the simultaneous occurrence of two or more role expectations such that compliance with one would make compliance with the other more difficult” (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 204). In other words, role conflict occurs when one person is asked to complete a task within the requirements of one role, but completing that task would make another expected task within the same role difficult to complete. For example, consider a fast-food chain manager. The role of this manager includes adhering to policies as well as supporting and mentoring employees. She might experience role conflict when she is expected to schedule a worker for part-time hours, but she knows that the worker needs full-time pay to support a family. Here the manager's role includes competing expectations within the role. The expectation of the adhering to the chain's policy for hourly wage budget competes with the expectation to support and mentor employees.

Role conflict is defined as conflict within an individual role, when the person in that role must manage competing role expectations. These role expectations come both from the formal structure of the organization, such as job descriptions, and from the person sending the expectations, such as a superior in the organization. A person experiencing this role conflict is likely to feel stressed and less satisfied with his or her job (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001; Katz & Kahn, 1978), because the competition between tasks is difficult for a person to manage. Much of the research on role conflict has indicated that the root cause and effect of role conflict comes from interactions between the role enactor and the person who defines and supervises the role (Kahn, Wolf, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964; Wickham & Parker, 2007). Role conflict, therefore, can be used as a conceptual starting point to study encroachment, because encroachment, in part, can be affected by how role enactment can conflict with organizational expectations. However, role conflict research has mostly focused on effects of conflict on the individual in one role, rather than on how two different roles held by two different individuals can be in conflict. Therefore, the concept of role conflict is useful to explain how organizational expectations affect role enactment, but role conflict cannot fully explain encroachment.

Another concept for understanding role interaction is role ambiguity. Role ambiguity is "uncertainty about what the occupant of a particular office is supposed to do" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 206). In other words, role ambiguity is when a person does not have the essential or clear information about the tasks and expectations necessary to perform his or her role. As with role conflict, role ambiguity creates stress for the individual and leads to ineffective interactions with others, because it creates situations where uncertainty prohibits enacting the role properly. The study of role ambiguity has been focused on understanding the effect of ambiguity on individuals such as its relationship to levels of personal job satisfaction (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970; Wickham & Parker, 2007). However, because ambiguity affects others in the organization as the person in a particular role is uncertain as to how to enact the role, ambiguity's effects can also be expanded to explore what happens between roles. Therefore, as with role conflict, role ambiguity is helpful for understanding role interaction. However, because the current understanding of role ambiguity focuses on individual effects, it also does not explain encroachment.

In sum, role integration, conflict, and ambiguity are concepts within role theory that help explain roles and how they function in organizations. These concepts provide insight into role enactment, because they explain various aspects of what happens when roles interact and how people experience conflict and ambiguity while facing competing or unclear expectations. However, most explanations are limited to when organizational role boundaries remain intact and are not breached. Therefore, this dissertation will build upon prior role research related to organizational role enactment by including the challenge of encroachment.

Roles and Resources in Contemporary Organizations

As reviewed above, role theory has explained a variety of functions of organizational roles and the relationships between them. However, that understanding needs to be expanded to include encroachment between roles. To investigate encroachment, additional factors need to be explained. One of these factors that affects role enactment is shared resources.

Modern organizations often adapt to economic downturns and competitive pressures by downsizing (U.S. Bureau, 2013). Because of downsizing, organizations are working to do more with fewer resources. Therefore, internal sharing of resources has become an important part of organizational life. This sharing takes the form of shared services departments, such as centrally located payroll departments, or shared technology systems, such as human resource data systems. Role theory has examined competition for resources outside the organization (Husted, Allen, & Kock, 2015; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Pffefer & Salancik, 1978; Staw & Szwajkowski, 1975). However, the competition for internal resources has not been fully examined by role theory. Given the pressures on resource use, it is important to understand how shared internal resources can lead to blurred boundaries and result in encroachment.

Shared Resources in Organizations

External resources exchanged between two or more organizations has been explored, most notably, by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and their Resource Dependency Theory (RDT). This theory concerns the exchange of resources between organizations, proposing that procurement of external resources is critical to an organization’s success. An example of this resource dependence is a car maker relying on procurement of raw materials and finished parts to make a vehicle. RDT proposes that because organizations are often dependent on resources they do not control, the organization will adapt its behavior to ensure access to these resources. In the example of the car maker, it may acquire parts makers in order to get better control of that resource. This research on the use of *external* resources between two organizations has led to an understanding of how resource dependence affects the overall well-being of the organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Other organizational scholarship found that competition for scarce external resources will cause organizations to adapt by finding creative ways to obtain the resources (Katz & Kahn, 1978; Staw & Szwajkowski, 1975), or by finding innovative ways to do work without the resources (Husted, Allen, & Kock, 2015).

However, the fight for *internal* resources has not been fully explored by role scholars. In organizational role theory, discussion of shared internal resources or intra-organizational resources across roles is largely absent. However, the treatment of this concept in the organizational management literature provides a framework for understanding the importance of studying the effects of encroachment on organizational roles. The purpose of this section is to review the how intra-organizational resources are explained in organizational management literature. This section first reviews how the literature has defined organizational resources. Then, the section outlines how management scholars have asserted that resources are important to organizational success. In doing so, this section explains how shared intra-organizational resources should be added as a key factor in the study of organizational roles.

Conceptualization of Organizational Resources

Much of the discussion of internal organizational resources can be found in management research. However, within this area of study, the conceptualization of resources is not consistent. The concept most often explored in management research has been the separation between tangible and intangible resources (Andereggen, Zoller & Boutellier, 2013; Lin, McDonough, Lin, & Lin, 2013; Mudambi, Pederson, & Andersson, 2014; Tsai, 2000, 2002; Xu, Huo, & Sun, 2014). Tangible resources include organizational assets such as real estate and equipment. Intangible resources include knowledge and support networks in and out of the organization, as well as connections to coworkers and social capital (Bozionelos, 2003, 2008; Maurer, Bartsch & Ebers, 2011). Organizational members need a wide variety of types of resources to conduct their job and meet their objectives.

The discussion of resources in management research is consistent with interpersonal concepts related to resources. For example, Foa and Foa (1980) defined resources as anything exchanged in an interpersonal relationship. They classified six major resource types that are exchanged in interpersonal relationships, which are goods, services, money, love, status, and information. They categorized these resources based on how concrete the resource is and by how much value the resource has in relation to those exchanging it. For example, love is not concrete, but its value is determined by the people exchanging it. Foa and Foa's interpersonal concepts of resources have been applied to how organizational resources operate. For example, exchange of resources has been linked to members' identification with the organization (Rousseau, 1998) and to perceptions of organizational support (Fuller, Hester, Barnett, & Relyea, 2006). In these applications, efficient resource exchange was found to lead to members' increased attachment to the organization. This organizational research on resources indicates that resources can be characterized by how concrete, measureable, and tangible they are.

Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, and Schaufeli (2001) developed the Job Demands-Resources model to describe organizational resources. This model proposes that resources available to a person in an organization or at home can help offset potentially stressful demands of the job. In this model, they conceptualized resources as elements of conducting a job, such as control over one's work, decision-making power, and task variety. The model also includes social resources, such as support from peers or family. Based on this model, if a person experiences stressful or seemingly unreasonable demands for performing a job, the person's ability to deal with that demand is based on availability of resources. The job-related resources, such as decision-making power, allow a person to have more control over their work, which helps relieve stress. The interpersonal resources, such as family support, provide social support, which helps offset work-related stress. The model proposes that an organizational member who experiences demands, or stressors, without resources will feel stress and burnout, and the person will lack the ability to reach job goals.

Other scholars have used the term resources without defining or operationalizing it (Astley & Sachdeva, 1984; Ustuner & Iacobucci, 2012). In these studies, authors use resources as a generic term that refers to a taken-for-granted asset of the organization that members exploit to do their jobs. Without specificity, it is unclear what the resources are, how they are gathered, and why they are used. In all, scholarship about resources within organizations lacks agreement on the conceptualization as well as how resources interact with roles in organizations. But overall, conceptualizations acknowledge that the spectrum of resources in organizations include a range of tangible, measurable ones and intangible, immeasurable resources that are relational, social, and interpersonal.

Importance of Resources in Organizations

Even with lack of definition, organizational scholars assert that resources are essential for creating organizational success. For example, social capital and internal connection resources lead to individual career success and success of the organization (Bozionelos, 2003; Bozionelos, 2008; Maurer, Bartsch & Ebers, 2011). Further, salespeople and others who bridge organizational boundaries with outside organizations need to find the right resources both inside and outside their organization in order to build and maintain trustworthiness and manage relationships with external groups (Evans, McFarland, Dietz, & Jaramillo, 2012; Ritter, 1999). Additionally, control over resources relates to organizational power (Astley & Sachdeva, 1984). Therefore, even though organizational scholars have little agreement on definition and conceptualization, scholarship in this area makes clear that resource management is important to organizational success.

Opportunity for Refining the Concept of Shared Resources

In all, resources within organizations are important to the success of the firm, yet there is a gap in the literature about resources. How are resources defined? How do individuals share the resources? How do they communicate about using the resources? What happens when resources overlap between departments? How is role enactment affected by the use of shared resources? These questions, unanswered in the role theory, management, and organizational communication literatures, help guide the present research.

Because organizational role theory focuses on the interaction between roles within an organization, a focus on shared resources would explain a new aspect of the role relationship. This study examines the use of shared resources and adds to the understanding of how role issues arise. To study how roles are enacted, especially when sharing resources, marketing and public relations departments provide an organizational setting that exemplifies interrelated roles.

The Encroachment Concept

Within the study of organizational roles, scholars have described and explained what happens when someone's role expectations are not clear, or when there are competing expectations within one role. In these cases, scholars have examined effects on the individual. Scholars also have explained how separate roles within organizations should complement each other in order for the organization to function properly. However, organizational role scholarship has not fully explained what happens when the tasks defined as part of one role are completed by someone in another role. This act of taking over tasks of someone else's role is the concept of encroachment that is examined in this study.

The issue of encroachment can be illustrated by my previous experience in corporate communications. Fifteen years of working in public relations and marketing communications drove my interest in the subject of this study. An example from my experience occurred when working for a former employer, which was a sponsor of a professional sports team. The marketing department in the company was responsible for negotiating the sponsorship contract. As part of the contract, players from the team would make appearance as my company's retail locations. The role of the marketing team also included scheduling the appearances to coincide with product launches and other promotions in the company's locations. The defined role of the public relations team was to communicate to the public about important events in the company, which included these appearances. The public relations team also was tasked with gaining news coverage during and after the appearances.

At this time, Facebook was adopted by the company as an externally-facing communication channel. In the early days of Facebook use, no one was appointed as the leader of Facebook efforts; instead, marketing and public relations informally managed their own activities using this social media channel.

The marketing team scheduled the athletes' appearances, but they did not communicate this schedule to the public relations team. The day before the first appearance, the marketing team posted on the company's Facebook page that an appearance was happening the next day. The public relations team did not see this post. However, local newspapers and TV stations did see the post. Journalists began reaching out to the public relations team to find out more information. The public relations team did not have any answers, and the public relations team had to check in with the marketing team. The marketing team's rationale was that they could go directly to the public to announce the appearance via Facebook, and they did not think they needed to involve public relations. The marketing team's idea that public relations is tactical dissemination of information rather than a strategic partner led to encroachment on public relation's task of communicating to the public. The marketing team did not take over the public relation team's role entirely. They took over the task of communicating about this appearance. This taking over tasks is one illustration of the concept of encroachment that is studied in this dissertation.

Based on my own professional experience along with the literature reviewed above, it is evident that encroachment may be caused by misunderstanding of others' roles or by shared resources enabling the completion of tasks *across* roles. This dissertation studied these possibilities and other possible explanations. In addition, this study goes beyond individual effects of role issues, as explained in role theory research on conflict, ambiguity and boundary spanning, to identify department and organizational level effects. In the example above, encroachment led to tension between departments and ineffective organizational output as well as personal frustrations. This study identifies effects of encroachment beyond the individual.

Because of my personal experience with this type of encroachment as well as the historic tension between the two functions, public relations and marketing served as the context for the study. The following section reviews the relationship between these two functions.

Public Relations and Marketing: A Contentious History

As explained above, my personal experience of encroachment within public relations led to the interest in the encroachment topic. This section explains why marketing and public relations functions are a good context for the study of encroachment and shared resources. It explains what each function is and describes how public relations and marketing scholars have studied organizational roles. Next, it traces the historical tension between the two departments, and it ends by proposing that the conflict between marketing and public relations can be understood by studying encroachment and shared resources.

Public Relations as an Organizational Function

Public relations is “a management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends” (Broom & Sha, 2013, p. 7). Public relations is concerned with identifying organizational stakeholders and then communicating with those groups on behalf of the organization. For example, public relations includes both working with journalists to place stories regarding new products and communicating with employees about changes to policies. Public relations also communicates with community groups on partnerships and government officials on regulatory issues. The goal of public relations is to create goodwill toward an organization both internally and externally. Public relations generally is not concerned with sales or profits. Instead, public relations reaches out to any target audience that can affect the wellbeing of the organization.

Role Research in Public Relations

Public relations research has considered the issues of roles beginning in the late 1970s through the early 1990s. During this time, public relations scholars explained how public relations was evolving within organizations and prescribed the best ways to conduct public relations activities. Although organizational role theory was being developed at the same time, public relations scholarship did not draw upon this established body of research. Instead, public relations scholars created their own role concepts to define public relations roles and explain the responsibilities of a public relations professional to establish the function as an integral part of an organization.

Broom and Smith (1979) created a public relations role typology that explained tasks and duties enacted by public relations professionals. They identified these roles by interviewing public relations clients regarding their impressions and expectations of public relations support. These researchers identified four categories of roles that emerged from the clients' impressions of the public relations partners. The first is *expert prescriber*, which exhibited authority on all matters dealing with publics and was seen as a trusted strategic partner. The second is *communication technician*, which performed writing and editing tasks rather than strategic counsel. The third is *communication facilitator*, which acted as a liaison between the publics and the organization. The fourth is *problem-solving process facilitator*, which collaborated with other people inside the organization to determine and solve problems.

The implication of Broom and Smith's (1979) study was that public relations activities should not be thought of as monolithic and rigid. Instead, public relations work should be understood as a range of activities that are enacted through roles that depend on the needs of the organization, such as acting as a technician sometimes and a strategic partner other times.

Broom's (1982) survey of members of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) supported this conclusion when he found that public relations professionals self-identify their roles depending on the needs of the organization. He found that most practitioners see themselves as operating in the technician role most of the time, or in a hybrid role that combines the three other roles from Broom and Smith's (1979) original typology, i.e., expert prescriber, communication facilitator and problem-solving process facilitator. He also found that practitioners preferred to play the expert prescriber role, because it allowed for strategic integration within the organization. However, in practice, public relations practitioners indicated that they were enacting the technician role frequently because of the perception that writing and editing skills were most valued by the organization. This perception was prevalent because, at the time of this study, many public relations practitioners were entering the field with journalism training.

Broom and Smith's (1979) early conceptualization of public relations roles was expanded through research that examined how roles are enacted and affect career success. For example, Broom and Dozier (1986) updated the survey data from the 1979 study by asking practitioners how they advanced within organizations in relation to the role they played. These researchers found that men identified the expert prescriber role as their dominant role, because they were often seen as the expert by organizational leadership and were encouraged to act on that expertise to solve organizational problems. However, Broom and Dozier found that women stagnated in the technician role rather than moving toward the more strategic roles, because they lacked the ability to break into leadership circles. Barriers for women in public relations were the same as those traditionally found across organizational positions at this time, which included bias against women in the workplace. This exclusionary environment led to women having decreased pay and experiencing marginalization from organizational decision-making. Broom and Dozier concluded that public relations advancement was dependent on both gender and role.

In all, early role research by public relations scholars focused on defining roles unique to the practice of public relations. These roles were constructed from the task-based and strategic value of public relations to the organization. However, the study of public relations roles did not tie into social science efforts to understand and explain roles and their effects on individuals and organizational performance. Therefore, this scholarship on public relations roles set a trajectory for later research that was inwardly focused and placed public relations as the center of study while ignoring conclusions from outside the boundaries of the practice.

Because of this inward-focus, public relations scholarship was limited to explaining internal workings of public relations tasks, rather than explaining public relations within the role system of an organization. Beginning in the late 1980s, public relations scholars expanded their focus to be more aware of the organizational context of the practice of public relations. This expansion began with discussions of how public relations interacted with other departments, which is explained next.

Public Relations Roles and Interaction with Others

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, people who did not have public relations experience or education were being appointed to leadership positions in public relations departments (Dozier, 1988; Lauzen, 1992). Lauzen (1991) called this practice *imperialism*, which she defined as "interaction between departments with domain similarities that occurs as a result of perceived power differences…turf wars develop with one department intruding on the activities traditionally in the domain of the other" (p. 245). Lauzen defined domain similarity as departments that had similar tasks, goals or skills. Lauzen theorized that, because of domain similarities, public relations roles were being taken over by inexperienced people who had no formal education or experience in the practice of public relations. Lauzen's concept of imperialism was built upon theorizing within public relations literature using the term "encroachment." Dozier

(1988) first defined encroachment as the “practice of assigning the top management role in public relations to someone from outside public relations” (p. 9). Although encroachment was used in public relations research, its conceptualization differs from the concept guiding this study. In Dozier’s and Lauzen’s concepts, roles were taken over in their entirety, such as a director of public relations job being filled by a marketer, rather than task-based encroachment of a marketing professional to a task assigned to a public relation’s professional.

Lauzen (1991) found that domain similarities led to the perception by organizational leadership that functions within organizations are interchangeable, that organizational leadership confused public relations work with the work of other departments that perform similar tasks, such as marketing, legal, and human resources (Lauzen, 1991, 1992). Broom, Lauzen, and Tucker (1991) identified marketing departments as the main competition for public relations turf.

After Lauzen pioneered work on imperialism in public relations, other public relations scholars abandoned the topic. Neither Dozier nor Lauzen advanced this work. Lauzen changed her research focus entirely and now leads the Center for Study of Women in Television and Film at San Diego State University (Center, 2017). Dozier turned his focus to prescribing effective management for optimum public relations output (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 2013; Grunig & Dozier, 2003). No other public relations scholars advanced the understanding of imperialism or role encroachment in the field, as evidenced by the lack of citations for Lauzen’s original work.

So, why talk about imperialism today? Because public relations still suffers from turf wars with other departments, and because the growing trend is for organizations to make due with fewer resources. With the introduction of social media to the public relations and marketing toolkit, the lines between public relations and marketing roles have become fuzzier (Nath & Bell, 2016). In the past, marketing professionals and public relations professionals used separate communication channels. After social media were introduced as tools for these functions to use to communicate with audiences, marketing and public relations efforts converged. New communication practices that blur the lines between marketing and public relations were promoted as effective new tactics, such as *content marketing* and *brand journalism* (Ecker, 2013; Royce, 2012; Vercic & Vercic, 2015). These new efforts combine legacy public relations and marketing activities into one online communication, conducted through a shared resource of digital and social media. This new direction in the practice of public relations has created role issues for practitioners who are using new communication tools while trying to identify the shifting boundaries of their profession.

In summary, public relations scholarship has focused on role enactment and professional boundaries in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This scholarship was internally focused and did not utilize the social scientific understanding of roles as developed in sociology, psychology, and anthropology. In addition, the study of roles in public relations was abandoned in the 1990s. However, role issues related to encroachment still plague the practice. By using both public relations and marketing departments for the context of a study about role encroachment within organizations, this dissertation provides an understanding of role encroachment in situ.

Marketing as an Organizational Function

Broom and Sha (2013) defined marketing as “the management function that identifies human needs and wants, offers products and services to satisfy those demands, and causes transactions that deliver products and services to users in exchange of something of value to the provider" (p. 5). In this way, marketing focuses on interacting with the consumer base of a product or service. Marketing is closely aligned with sales efforts in an organization, because its goal is to drive sales.

Marketing drives sales through what is referred to as the *marketing mix*, or the four Ps: product, promotion, price, and place (McCarthy, 1960). Although the marketing mix concept originated in the 1960s, it remains the dominant framework in today's practice of marketing (Bhattacharya & Korschun, 2008; Gronroos, 1994). The marketing mix ensures that the right products are promoted to the right customers, at the right price, at the right place.

Role Research in Marketing

Role research in marketing has been driven by organizational role theory and has extended social scientific concepts into the realm of marketing. Marketing scholarship on roles does not look to other departments to define marketing roles, but instead it looks at how marketing functions within the organizational system.

Marketing research on roles relies on the boundary-spanning concept from organizational role theory (Kusari, Cohen, Singh, & Marinova, 2005; O'Brien, Hill, & Autry, 2009; Singh & Rhoads, 1991). Boundary-spanning roles are positions in an organization that simultaneously serve the organization and an external party, such as a customer or client (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Katz & Kahn, 1978). The research in this area began in the late 1980s and early 1990s when marketing was being established as a strategic advantage for organizations, and the interaction between sales and marketing was investigated closely. Sales and marketing tasks align within organizational structures, with marketing driving sales activities and vice versa. Therefore, marketing scholarship often includes sales issues. Salespeople are part of the organization and must answer to organizational members, but they also cross the organizational boundary to satisfy customers' needs. Boundary spanning can be used to examine this sales role, which spans internal and external boundaries of the organization when it executes a marketing effort towards customers.

Goolsby, Rhoads, Singh, and Goodell (1990) found that bridging the boundary between organization and customer base can lead to burnout in salespeople from trying to simultaneously satisfy organizational expectations and customer demands. In addition, boundary spanning in sales roles can result in role conflict and role ambiguity (Singh & Rhoads, 1991; Singh, 1993; Singh, 1999) due to competing expectations. Role conflict and ambiguity result from both the autonomy that comes with being a sales person in the field and the varied tasks that need to be undertaken in sales, e.g., cold calling, managing accounts, and fulfilling orders (Singh, 1998). Boundary spanning-induced conflict and ambiguity can result in stress on the salesperson, lower job satisfaction, higher turnover (Rhoads, Singh, & Goodell, 1994), and lower customer loyalty (Kusari, Cohen, Singh, & Marinova, 2005).

In summary, marketing research on roles has incorporated concepts from organizational role theory to explain how sales and marketing roles are enacted within an organizational system. However, marketing research has focused primarily on one aspect of roles, which is how salespeople, as an extension of marketing, suffers due to pressures of boundary spanning, role conflict, and role ambiguity.

As noted earlier, marketing and public relations boundaries are increasingly blurry, indicating that issues related to marketing roles go beyond sales and boundary spanning. Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the relationship between marketing roles and public relations roles to gain an understanding of issues affecting marketing role enactment.

The Intersection of Marketing and Public Relations

This section reviews what public relations and marketing have in common, including externally-focused objectives and relationship-building goals.

Because the marketing and public relations departments are primarily responsible for managing an organization's communication with external audiences (Cornelisson, Lock, & Gardner, 2001), work conducted by each of the functions tends to intersect. For example, marketing professionals may negotiate a sports team sponsorship on behalf of an organization, but public relations professionals will communicate with media to announce the sponsorship. In this type of situation, the shared purpose can create tension due to conflict over resources and responsibilities (Kent, 2012; Kotler & Mindak, 1978).

In addition to the shared task of communicating to external audiences, marketing and public relations departments share a strategic emphasis on building relationships with primary stakeholders. Public relations research has developed prescriptive theories and concepts that place a premium on forming and developing lasting, mutually beneficial relationships with publics (Broom, Casey, & Ritchey, 1997; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Kent & Taylor, 1998; Ki & Hon, 2007). Within marketing research, scholars have argued that the traditional top-down management of marketing to consumers should be replaced by strategic partnerships (Aaker, Fournier, & Brasel, 2004; Fournier, 1998; Sheth &

Parvatiyar, 1995; Webster, 1992), which can lead to lasting positive relationships between consumers and brands. As a result of these efforts, the marketing and public relations roles can overlap in that they are both concerned with building strategic relationships with stakeholders.

In summary, public relations and marketing efforts share a focus on external communications and a strategic focus on building relationships with important groups of stakeholders. Given these shared aspects, public relations and marketing roles are closely related, and therefore they are prone to role enactment issues. These issues arise when public relations and marketing professionals communicate to the same audience or form relationships with the same groups. Therefore, studying role enactment in this context will lead to better understanding of how interrelated roles may intersect and encroach on each other.

Consequences of Public Relations and Marketing Intersections

The purpose of this section is to explain the effects of the similarities between public relations and marketing roles. These outcomes include converged media resource use, ongoing confusion by organizational leadership about the departments, and efforts to streamline the two departments into one.

Because public relations and marketing professionals communicate to external audiences, they rely on mass media to implement their communication plans. Traditionally, marketing departments often relied on owned or paid media; in other words, marketing departments pay a third party to publish information about an organization or own the media used to communicate (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Public relations professionals, however, have traditionally relied on earned media; in other words, public relations developed relationships with various news outlets in order to convince the outlets to publish information about the organization. These differences in media use have required different tactics and messages to be used to approach varied audiences. Social media have blurred the lines between earned, paid, and owned media (Stephen & Galak, 2012). Therefore, the relationship between marketing and public relations activities is even more contentious now, because both groups are utilizing the same media outlets to reach their external audiences, often competing for audience attention and to be the voice of the organization.

In addition to converged media, misunderstandings of the value of public relations and marketing by organizational leadership can create confusion between the two departments. The confusion centers on who is responsible for what type of communications should be issued by the organization and who owns the relationships with external stakeholders (Hutton, 2010). The result of this competition is that top leadership sometimes sees marketing and public relations functions as interchangeable, while underestimating the value that each provides to the organization (Ha & Ferguson, 2015; Lauzen, 1991; Pravin & Monique, 2016).

Finally, top organizational management sometimes seeks ways to minimize tensions and redundancies in tasks between public relations and marketing. One solution developed within public relations and marketing practice and theory is a structural change to establish integrated marketing communications departments, known as IMC departments (Kitchen, Brignell, Li, & Jones, 2004). IMC is an approach in which one department is created to handle all external communications for the organization. Among public relations researchers, there is an assertion that, through the development of IMC, public relations is losing the turf battle, and there is a "need for public relations to define its intellectual and practical domain especially vis-à-vis marketing, to regain control of its own destiny" (Hutton, 2010, p. 509). From the marketing side, the contention is that resistance to IMC ignores logical reasons for integration that maximize the combined communications function's contribution to organizational success (Cornelissen, Lock, & Gardner, 2001). Public relations scholars are leery of the effects of IMC because it privileges marketing over public relations in terms of value. Marketing is even in the name of the combined function. However, marketing scholars see the combination as a way to streamline external communications under one strategic function.

Despite the focus on IMC departments in academic literature and trade press in the late 1990s and early 2000s, marketing and public relations departments still exist separately today in many organizations and universities. This lack of IMC departmental structure suggests that IMC perhaps was not the solution it was promised to be. The failure of IMC's widespread acceptance could be due to poor implementation by organizations or because, in practice, it ended up focusing on the traditional tasks of one of the departments and ignoring the traditional tasks of the other (Hutton, 2010). Therefore, although IMC could bring the related functions together to help the organization reach its goals with external audiences, struggles for control and confusion over how it should work have prevented organizations from embracing the IMC effort, and therefore the idea has not caught on in practice.

In summary, converged media, leadership misunderstandings, and failed attempts to consolidate the functions create tension between public relations and marketing professionals. This tension leads to issues in enacting roles within organizations because it creates confusion and clashes as public relations and marketing professionals navigate their daily lives. Therefore, the public relations and marketing departments will provide a research context where roles are inherently intertwined and at odds, which will help understand why and how encroachment occurs within an organization.

Roles and Encroachment in Context

By situating this study in the context of public relations and marketing departments, this dissertation adds to the understanding of how role boundaries are breached and how shared resources affect role enactment. This dissertation (a) investigates how shared resources affect role boundaries and role enactment that can lead to encroachment, (b) explains the concept of encroachment and how it affects role enactment, and (c) investigates the conflict between public relations and marketing that can lead to encroachment in the age of social media. To conduct this study, the following research questions will guide the investigation.

Research Questions

RQ1: How is role overlap or encroachment perceived by people in competing functions in an organization?

To understand role encroachment, it is important to first understand how people perceive encroachment within their daily lives. This question will explore how people in competing functions, such as marketing and public relations, see issues related to how others take over aspects of their roles. Because encroachment can be felt in different ways, perceptions of this phenomenon will reveal the ways people experience encroachment.

RQ2: How is encroachment defined between people in competing functions in an organization?

This question addresses the words and terms people use for discussing encroachment within role enactment. Although I have focused this research on encroachment, people in competing departments, such as public relations and marketing, most likely use different terms for this phenomenon. By uncovering language used by people in competing roles, I can begin to develop a vocabulary for role encroachment as it is discussed within organizations.

RQ3: How does encroachment function between people in competing functions in an organization?

This question goes beyond finding vocabulary about encroachment to identify how encroachment works. The answer to this question will help uncover factors that are related to encroachment, including job tasks and activities, which can further elaborate on the context and factors leading to encroachment.

RQ4: What factors affect the existence and intensity of encroachment between people in competing functions in an organization?

This question will help understand which factors uncovered by RQ3 affect the existence and intensity of encroachment. By investigating the importance of factors that affect encroachment, a more robust understanding of encroachment, how it occurs, why it occurs, what contributes to it, and concerns related to it, can be gained.

RQ5: How does the use of shared resources affect encroachment?

Because this study is situated in the context of public relation and marketing, the issue of shared resources is salient, given the functions' reliance on shared social media resources. This question also helps investigate the context of contemporary organizations that do more with less due to economic downturns and downsizings.

RQ6: What are the implications of encroachment between people in competing functions in an organization?

After uncovering perceptions, vocabulary, and factors related to role encroachment, this question will investigate the consequences of encroachment on role enactment. This question will help create a fuller picture of how encroachment works and what effects it has on individuals and the organization.

RQ7: How do people in competing functions in an organization deal with encroachment?

Lastly, this question helps uncover how people who experience role encroachment deal with it in their work. In addition, this question will help uncover how departments adapt to encroachment by other departments.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Background

The overarching purpose guiding this dissertation is to explore concepts that can contribute to expanding knowledge of role encroachment and shared resources within organizations. Because this study is using departments in corporations as the context, the focus is on gaining an understanding of language used and issues faced by the marketing and public relations professionals. To gain this nuanced understanding, a qualitative research method will provide detailed descriptions of encroachment and related role issues. The method is a multiple-case study that uses a series of focus groups to gather data and thematic analysis using Corbin and Strass (2008) qualitative analysis steps to interpret results.

To conduct the study, an overview of the project was submitted to Temple University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). IRB approval was granted for the study. The study followed rules set forth by the University's IRB, which required informed consent documents shared with and signed by each participant at the beginning of each focus group session.

Case Study

Yin (2003) asserted that case studies can help researchers answer questions about how and why a phenomenon is occurring as well as help understand how context affects the phenomenon. A case study approach allowed me to study roles within the everyday context where they are enacted. As Yin (2003) proposed, the case study approach is especially useful when it is unclear how much context affects the phenomenon. Because no two organizations are the same, various contextual factors, such as organization size and purpose, affect role enactment within organizations. Therefore, a case study approach is the best for exploring the role issues experienced within organizations. By analyzing departments in different organizations, the study will provide insight into differences between perceptions within the types of departments and allow comparisons across the contexts (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1999). Through this multiple case study, I examined the practices of sharing resources and their effects on role enactment with the organizational context in which the roles operate.

The unit of study for this dissertation is departments within organizations. Data were collected with focus groups of personnel within public relations and marketing departments. The goal of this research is to understand how these departments, and the individuals within them, deal with other departments within the organization with which they share resources. Although role theory looks at individuals and enactment of their roles, this enactment needs to be understood within contexts where the roles function. Many individuals enacting the same roles make up organizations and the parts within them (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Therefore, finding out how people within departments talk about shared resources will shed light on role-related issues.

The case study focuses more on depth of meaning than breadth of topics discussed. Therefore, I selected organizations based on access to personnel in my personal network and department type. I considered various business types and targeted different types of organizational structures, such as family-owned, internationally based, U.S. based, and regional. The case study is descriptive (Yin, 2003), because it describes the issues around the use of shared resources in the context in which the phenomenon of encroachment and sharing resources occurs. The case study is considered instrumental (Grandy, 2010; Stake, 1995), which means it goes beyond understanding the particular situation in each case to add to the theory on roles. The use of multiple cases provided rich description across different groups as well as uncover avenues for further study in other organizations. Therefore, analysis of each case answered the research questions. In addition, a summary of findings from all the cases will provide future direction for research on this topic.

Participant Selection – Phase 1 and Pilot

The purpose of this section is to describe the initial phase of the participant selection process. This section discusses how I conducted the pilot group study. It also describes how, based on the pilot group, the original data-gathering plan was alterted for Phase 2.

The original research plan for the dissertation was to hold focus group meetings, comprising people from different organizations. These groups would be attended by public relations or marketing professionals with separate groups for each function. This plan changed, however, based on the initial pilot focus group.

To invite participants, I conducted initial recruiting efforts via the professional social networking site LinkedIn and via email. I used my network of former colleagues and friends on LinkedIn as a source for contacts.

From my contacts on LinkedIn, I sent out an email to 29 corporate professionals with a note explaining my study, asking for volunteers who would be willing to participate in meetings in the area at times, dates, and locations to be determined based on volunteer availability. This plan included invitations to have separate groups for public relations professionals and marketing professionals. The goal was to have four groups of public relations professionals and four groups of marketing professionals.

Throughout the study an important nomenclature issue is illustrated. In practice, there is not much difference between thinking of oneself as a public relations versus corporate communications professional. The identity of workers in these fields largely comes from job titles determined by organizational structure. In the academic literature, public relations is often used as an umbrella term to refer to any function that communicates with stakeholders, which can include specialty areas such as media relations, employee communications, and government relations. However, corporate communications can also be defined as a collection of specialties that communicates to stakeholders. The main difference between the two concepts in theory is that public relations can also include efforts at non-profit or non-corporate entities as well as at agencies. However, in practice, many professionals see themselves as public relations and corporate communications, depending on how their job description reads. For example, someone may tell their friends they work in public relations because they deal with media, but to their coworkers they say they are corporate communications because that is the title of their department. Therefore, in the focus groups, I identify the public relations professionals by the terms they use during the focus group sessions, which can sometimes be corporate communications or public relations, although I identify them as public relations departments for the study.

Six of the 29 people I sent notes to contacted me directly and said that they would pass my information along to others. They were willing to help, and they told me they would actively recruit others in their personal network. I was able to follow up with two leads through this process. However, these people were unable to participate in person.

In addition to the mass email, I also contacted a friend who is a communications manager for a large, international manufacturing firm and a member of the Philadelphia chapter of the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC). He agreed to forward my message to his personal network. Through his outreach, four people agreed to meet with me in person.

Because of the low response rate to my request, I treated this group as a pilot, and at the same time, I reconfigured the recruitment plan. The four people who agreed to meet came from various public relations and corporate communications backgrounds. I found conference room space in a corporate center at the offices of my former employer in the suburbs of a major city on the East Coast. The meeting was set for an evening during the week. Although four people committed to attend, two backed out at the last minute. Because of the trouble I had recruiting and my desire to get the study started, I held the meeting with two people.

This group became my pilot. I used the meeting to test the questions in order to adjust them for future meetings. One of the participants was my friend who worked as a communications manager for a large, international manufacturing business. The other was a corporate communications specialist from a regional health care group.

Pilot Focus Group Analysis

The purpose of this section is to review the background and results of the pilot focus group. This section has four parts. First, it reviews the background of the recruitment for the group and the background on the participants. Next, it analyzes and discusses the focus group feedback. The third part summarizes important revelations from the pilot. The last part discusses next steps based on the pilot's results.

Background

This pilot group was formed through my original recruitment plan of selecting volunteers from different organizations. Four volunteers agreed to participate, but two backed out at the last minute. I will call the first participant Manager 1. He works as a manager of communications for a regional health system, which operates hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, and affiliated doctors' offices. His organization has 10,000 employees and 2,000 physicians in the system, which was founded in the 1980s. He works in the health system's headquarters. The second participant, Manager 2, works as a communications manager for a global manufacturing organization, which is based in Europe. Manager 2's role is to manage communications for the parent company's North American operations. He works in the company's North American headquarters. The company has over 170,000 employees in over 60 countries and was founded in the 1600s.

The managers have known each other for many years via connections in a network of communication professionals. They each have worked in public relations or corporate communications for over 30 years. Even though they have extensive experience in many organizations, I asked them to talk about their current position and organization.

Because there were only two participants, the group progressed more like a group interview than a focus group because the participants took turns answering my questions. I was able to ask all the questions on my list (see Appendix for the focus group protocol). I found that having two people answer in an interview style during the same session did not give me the depth or nuance I was looking for regarding roles and shared resources.

Despite not conforming to the style of a focus group conversation, the two participants shared insights that helped me adjust plans for future groups.

Analysis and Discussion

The purpose of this section is to analyze and discuss the results of the pilot group. First, I will discuss the broad findings from the pilot focus group. These findings include definitions related to social media resources and other shared resources, along with descriptions of roles and communication. Finally, I discuss the next steps stemming from the group that affected the future focus group sessions.

Social Media

I was surprised to learn in this focus group that social media and its management is not a source of conflict for the participants. They shared that the management of social media postings on Facebook and other networks is a formal process managed by a dedicated employee or an agency with oversight by a dedicated employee. This situation is much more mature than when I left corporate communications about four years ago, and it is surprising, given how the relationship between marketing and public relations is discussed in academic research and conferences: The situation with social media and marketing and public relations is portrayed as a major development that is yet to be fully understood. Therefore, inquiry regarding social media in this dissertation adds to the understanding addressed in academic research.

In Manager 1's organization, a dedicated social media specialist is a content-generator and gatekeeper for all information to be posted on social media sites. Manager 1 told me that this social media role was created about four years ago. He said that they have this dedicated person because they don't want "individuals to be willy-nilly starting to post on their Facebook page in the name of a hospital." He said the creation of the role was because "there's more of a management concern there, there's consistency for legal reasons, for privacy reasons, the privacy being a big point within the healthcare area."

In Manager 2's organization, the responsibility for social media is distributed across parts of the business and locations. He said that the various business units maintain separate social media presence due to the vastly different audiences and customer bases of each division. In the company's European headquarters, a dedicated staff manages social media. For the North American operations, an outside agency generates content ideas and writes content, and a person in Manager 2's department approves posts.

It seems that both organizations have a formal way to deal with social media through dedicated resources. It also seems like public relations and corporate communications have been designated as the owner of the channels in both organizations. Neither manager indicated that there is a conflict over the social media resources between marketing and public relations. Therefore, this shared resource is not affecting role enactment in a negative way; instead it has evolved. This information makes sense, because when I embarked on this project, I was experiencing conflict in my corporate communications role related to social media and marketing. However, that was a little over four years ago. It seems like the function of social media management may have matured. This shift is something to be explored further.

Other Resources

In addition to social media, we discussed other resources that affected the focus group participants' role enactment. The focus group participants discussed how information and shared design teams affect their roles. The following sections will discuss each of these items.

Information. Throughout the pilot group interaction, the participants discussed information as a resource shared between marketing and public relations and other groups within the organization. This discussion is consistent with the characterization of information as a key resource exchanged in interpersonal relationships (Foa & Foa, 1980). In their discussion, the participants discussed how marketing professionals sometimes have information public relations professionals needs to complete their jobs. In addition, public relations sometimes has information that marketing and other groups need to stay in compliance with company branding and messaging guidelines.

Manager 1 discussed collaborating with the marketing managers in the health system and seeing them as sources of information needed to do his job. Manager 2 said that he needs the marketing managers "to be providing [him] with the inside look of what is going on or what is happening" around the system in terms of new services or programs being offered to patients. He said the marketing department has a research group that provides demographics and other facts about the system and the population it serves. He said that the marketing department's business development department provides the communication department with information about long-term business strategies so the communications department can understand how to plan communication programs.

Manager 1 said that although his team looks to marketing for the information needed to do his job, he and his communication colleagues have autonomy over their work. He said, "I don't think they see us as their shills." In this way, Manager 1 revealed that marketing's information is a shared resource. Manager 1 characterized the sharing of this resource as a positive experience for his team, because once in possession of the information, the communications team members have autonomy in how it is used to communicate to their audiences.

Manager 2 provided insight into his department's information and procedures that others in the organization need to do their job. Manager 2 mentioned a process for reporting "significant events" managed by his department. Manager 2 said, "If you have an accident or if you have an immediate incident, we're supposed to report it to our people. We're supposed to use those tools universally." He said this process is well-known but is not always followed. However, he looked at the process as successful because it "provides some tools for collaboration and compels people to do things in a certain way."

Manager 1 and Manager 2 discussed another shared resource that they own and that others need to properly use the company branding. Both of the managers' organizations oversee a branding book or logo standards guidelines. These branding guidelines are communicated to other departments to help ensure consistent branding, which is very important to the integrity of an organization's brand image. Manager 1 called himself "the logo police" and indicated that it is an important but difficult job, because many people go out on their own using logos and other company branding elements.

Although it is clear in this discussion that both marketing and public relations departments share information as a resource, the marketing team seems to possess information that helps clue in the public relations team into vital happenings in the organization. The public relations team, however, holds information that is only related to its own policing efforts such as managing crises or brand integrity. Therefore, the marketing information seems to be more important to public relations than the other way around. This imbalance could contribute to the marketing department holding more power over public relations due to the type of the shared resource of information. I will discuss this more in the next step section below.

Design team. Both managers indicated that their organization has an in-house design or creative group that helps them design and produce print and online materials. Both managers indicated that this team is vital to their jobs because they support the projects for their teams. However, because the design team services multiple departments within the organization, it can create bottlenecks with projects. Manager 1 said, “The marketing folks will be sitting in a line outside their door trying to get brochures and fliers and whatnot done. And we’re going to be there trying to get similar things done.” He said, although this competition for time can create a backlog for them, the design department does a good job in managing priorities.

Manager 2’s organization’s creative agency is a resource that is shared, but it is not mandatory that departments use them. Departments can give the business to outside agencies. Therefore, the creative agency at Manager 2’s organization is not a source of conflict. However, it is a shared resource that is common to both organizations; just with different dependencies on this shared resource.

Role Enactment

Manager 1 and Manager 2 both indicated that major factors affecting their role enactment are the size and nature of the organization’s business, the structural relationship to the larger organization, leadership outlook, and organizational culture. This section reviews the implications of each factor according to the focus group results.

Size and nature of business. Manager 1 and Manager 2 are members of vastly different organizations. Their organizations differ by size, location, and stakeholders served. The goals of the organizations differ based on decentralized (in the case of Manager 2) or centralized (Manager 1) operations. These goals dictate how roles interact. Manager 1 talked about a small organization that can be in the same room at the same time very often. Manager 2 talked about hundreds of peers around the world who meet once a year, and even then, do not know each other by name.

In addition, Manager 1's service organization differs from Manager 2's manufacturing organization. Manager 1's business revolves around a small group of services, whereas Manager 2's organization provides a diversified product assortment. Therefore, the goals of the business and its customer base affect how the roles of communication professionals are enacted. Because the organizations differ on many dimensions that dictate how roles are defined and interact, these factors are important to understand as the context for role enactment. This study, and future studies of role enactment, should note these contextual factors and identify how they affect role enactment. Looking at organizational roles without this context would be overlooking key factors related to organizational roles.

Structural relationship and location. Along with organization size, the location of the communications professionals within the organization has an effect on role enactment. Manager 1 and his communication colleagues are part of a marketing department that reports to the president. Manager 2 is part of a corporate communications function that reports to a global corporate communications executive.

Manager 1 has been at other organizations where communications reported to human resources or legal or marketing or advertising departments. He indicated that alignment in the organization is important to one's job because the role is often dictated by the title of the group, rather than the skill set an individual has. For example, when he reported to a human resources department, others interacted with him in a specific way due to his location in the organization. Manager 1 said, coworkers would say, "Oh, are you benefits communication? No. I'm communications for the whole company. And then once, once they got over that and understood the function, it worked out fine."

Given that the public relations and corporate communications function can have various homes within organizations, the structure and reporting relationships can be an issue when looking at role enactment and shared resources. The structure could dictate what resources are available and necessary to perform a role. For example, if a communication function reports to human resources, as noted by Manager 1 above, the communication function's resources, such as budget and access to leadership, are tied to the organization's view of human resources. In this way, the home for the public relations or marketing can affect how roles are enacted, unrelated to the organization's view of public relations or marketing.

***Leadership*.** Manager 1 discussed the role of a department's leader in the ability to execute a role successfully. He shared a story about a previous manager who was very interested in the communication process and would micromanage his projects:

> When I joined the organization, I was hired by a senior VP who was very, I think she was, uh, she had some background in, in communication, and

> she really was hands-on. So, I started doing a magazine, and she wanted to tell me what was going to go on every page. What? Sure, whatever (laughs). She left. The new SVP is not as…doesn't have that background. I'm on my own. You know, there isn't that micromanaging deal, and, you know, part of that certainly is personality. It's not…I don't think anything was written differently in the way marketing is organized that said that. So, it's certainly a personality-driven aspect, uh, whether it's based on their background, their level of interest. I think the focus now is certainly much more on business strategy and business development than it is on, communications, the intricacies of communications."

Although Manager 2 did not share any managerial challenges, he did follow up to Manager 1's story by pondering aloud if communication functions were more prone to personalities of managers and the whims of people in charge. Manager 2 said,

> I wonder if our field isn't more prone or more susceptible to changes, uh, based on personality versus something that is, I would say more cut and dry like finance you have to have a license, you have to have a CPA. There's certain things you do in a certain way. Whereas our field people are coming from all different backgrounds.

This exchange about managers and their interference in enacting communication roles is insightful because of findings discussed earlier regarding the public relations encroachment literature and the effects of non-public relations managers in leadership roles. However, due to the nature of the pilot, not much else was discussed about this topic. Leadership and organizational structure are factors that are interrelated and need to be further explored.

Culture. Along with leadership and structure, the issue of organizational culture was raised in the session. According to Manager 1, his group operates with informal role expectations. When I asked about formal versus informal communications to the participants about their jobs, such as through job descriptions, Manager 1 said, "After 8 years, the job description does not match the job."

However, in the discussion, Manager 2 indicated that his group has many more formal expectations and roles that are delineated based on the company's structure and business lines. Therefore, the culture of the organization could affect role enactment and was explored in future focus groups.

Relationship Between Public Relations and Marketing

Overall the relationship between public relations and marketing seems complicated based on the discussion in the pilot focus group. For Manager 1, he is part of the marketing organization, but he also shared that the best situation would be for public relations and corporate communications to be its own function within the organization. Manager 2 reported on challenges working with his marketing colleagues. However, when I asked them about the relationship between marketing and public relations over time, Manager 2 indicated that the relationship has improved. I asked him what has contributed to the improvement, and he said,

> It seems like we're sharing more, both groups are sharing more information about what they do. There's certainly more work to be done per both groups, but I don't think it's bad for the both of us. In our company, it could be personality changes one thing was, we have a corporate marketing department in Europe now, and I don't think we did 10 years ago, so that may have changed. … Because there's so many advances in the electronic arena, it's easier to share information. That could have something to do with it. We don't have a lot of excuses for not sharing stuff and do it easily. This increase in communication has helped increase collaboration and success. More needs to be examined related to the role of communications and relationship formation between the two departments.

Key Ideas and Next Steps

The pilot group was productive because it provided direction for discussions with future groups. The purpose of this section is to outline some key ideas that guided the interactions with the remaining groups.

Organization Size and Business Type

As noted above, the size and type of organization dictated many aspect of the roles and responsibilities of these managers. These differences was examined with future groups. In addition, any future research on shared resources that is based on all of the focus groups may need to take into account these factors for how they affect resource sharing, role enactment, and communication.

Organizational Culture

Although not originally thought of as a shared resource, the mention of organizational culture in this group provided a potential new direction for research. Seeing how formal versus informal culture affects role enactment and resource sharing in this group helped me make a note to listen for clues about how culture may play a part in how roles are enacted and encroachment develops.

Skill Set

Both managers mentioned that others within their organization sometimes create communications on their own and violate branding guidelines or company standards as mentioned above. Therefore, it seems that skill set could be a potentially interesting aspect of the shared resources issue. Communication skills, especially, emerged as a resource in terms of how Manager 1 and Manager 2 were discussing them. If others outside of public relations and corporate communications see creating effective communications as something they can also do, then the communication skill set becomes a resource that is shared in order to complete organizational tasks. However, the trained communicators possess more developed and strategic skills and expertise. Therefore, the communicators must then use their own skill set to fix or complete the inadequate work done by others in the organization. This is a unique challenge to communications professionals, because for example, no one outside an accounting department would try to manage the company's profit and loss statement. But many employees approach communication as something anyone can do.

Both managers discussed how having marketing and public relations in the same department can be beneficial, because there is an overlap in skill set. This overlap can lead to better integration within the department. Therefore, skill set is a potentially interesting direction for examining the shared resources and encroachment discussion.

Leadership

As discussed above, leadership in a department affects role enactment, how the communications professional experience conflict, and how well roles within departments are integrated. Leadership was discussed at length and should be discussed within the other focus groups. In other groups, leadership attitudes toward public relations and marketing should be taken into account along with other contextual factors because, as noted in the pilot, leadership's ability to manage the functions creates role enactment issues. Factors such as micromanagement, lack of understanding or training in marketing or public relations, and ability to communicate are potentially important leadership factors that could affect role enactment and encroachment.

Design Team

Although the intent was to understand social media as a main shared resource, the design and creative team was mentioned by both managers as a vital shared resource in their organizations. Therefore, I explored the role of these teams in future groups. I am interested in the process of interacting with the creative groups, how the relationships are formed, how the sharing of this resource causes role conflict or ambiguity, and how power dynamics between the departments sharing the resource affect the use of the resources.

Communication Aspects

The final aspect explored in the future groups based on this pilot discussion is how communication links all these various aspects. Many of the key ideas listed above are rooted in communication. I need to uncover more details on how communication affects role enactment and shared resources and how it relates to encroachment along with how well encroachment is managed within the organizations.

Participant Selection – Phase 2 and Main Focus Groups

The purpose of this section is to describe the second phase of the study, for which I altered the recruitment of participants and revised the list of questions based on the pilot group. The section outlines the steps taken to hold focus groups within organizations.

After having minimal success with my original recruiting of individuals from different organizations, I decided to use my same network of contacts to ask individuals if I could come into their organizations and meet with entire departments. Therefore, I used LinkedIn to target individuals with whom I had a strong connection and who also had access to larger groups or departments within their respective organizations. In this way, I used a snowball sample for recruiting participants in organizations. The selection of these participants is consistent with the procedures approved by the University's IRB.

I sent out notes via LinkedIn's messaging function to eight people in my personal network. In my notes, I explained my study and asked if they would be willing to let me sit in on a team meeting and ask questions of the team members. I offered to bring refreshments and to provide the results of the study after the dissertation was completed. Five people agreed to set up meetings within their departments. Two out of the five also helped me arrange meetings with an additional department in their organization. These departments included various functions within corporate communication (i.e. public relations) and marketing. The organizations varied across business type, size, ownership structure, and location. In total, I held meetings at a large multinational health care manufacturing firm, a regional health insurance firm, a national health insurance firm, a regional consumer products company, and a small mobile marketing start-up. In all, I conducted six focus groups in five different companies. Complete descriptions of the organizations are provided in Chapter 4. A summary of the groups is in Table 1.

Table 1

Organizations Participating in the Focus Groups

Organization	Industry	Number of Participants	Type of Department
Pilot	Mixed (Healthcare and Manufacturing)	2	Public Relations (media and employee communications)
1	Health insurance	10	Marketing
2	Health services	6	Public Relations
3	Technology and manufacturing (same as Group 6)	6	Mixed (marketing and creative services)
4	Consumer goods	4	Marketing
5	Technology	2	Marketing
6	Technology and manufacturing (same as Group 3)	9	Public Relations

Focus Group Structure

Bristol and Fern (1996) have recommended focus groups for the purpose of evaluating and defining concepts. For this dissertation, focus groups provide language and conceptualizations related to shared resources, which contribute to role theory and can be used to develop future research and add to role theory. In addition, focus groups allow members of the groups to talk about how they feel and to provide in-depth explanations of why they feel that way (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

Instead of asking all the questions on the original list as I did in the pilot group, the sessions followed the funnel pattern (Morgan, 1996), which begins with a few standardized questions and then allows the conversation to naturally progress. See Appendix for a list of questions used in these focus groups. In each group, I began by asking about the relationship between public relations and departments (question 2), and let the conversation progress from there.

In my previous career in corporate communications, I conducted focus groups related to employee surveys. This experience prepared me to conduct the focus groups for this dissertation. Because I was perceived as an insider by focus group members, due to my previous corporate experiences that I shared with group members, I was able to use insider language and empathize with issues faced by the group members. This insider status afforded me an easy rapport with the groups that prompted open communication. I was sensitive to response effects and social loafing. During the group meeting, I encouraged different people to give the first answer on questions as well as asked people who had not spoken much to give their perspectives. In addition, I made sure to clarify questions as needed during the group discussions. I also made sure to ask people who were quiet what they were thinking when there was a break in the conversation.

The original plan was to have equal numbers of public relations and marketing groups. However, the final group count did not come out equal, because in practice some organizations combine functions or do not have each function housed within their organization, hiring consultants to do this work instead. In all cases, though, the groups were homogeneous in that members were all in one department that reported to the same manager. Having these uniform functional groups was desirable for the study, because it ensured that participants felt free to talk about other groups with whom they shared resources. Because the group members were in the same department and were asked about other groups who were not in the room, the participants openly discussed their problems with and reactions to encroachment. In addition, each group had the same manager and were in the same department, so the information they shared reflected their experience within the same context.

Each focus group was held in a conference room at the company's location. The meetings ranged from 45 to 75 minutes in length. I provided light refreshments to the participants. Per the IRB requirements, participants were informed of their rights and ability to opt out of the study at any time without penalty. The participants will be described in Chapter 4 within the analysis of each focus group.

Each session was recorded using a digital audio recorder, and I took notes as participants talked to capture important conversation points, ideas to follow-up on, and potential themes worth exploring further. A secure, online transcription service was used to transcribe the audio files.

Method of Analysis

To analyze the transcripts, I used an inductive, qualitative data analysis guided by steps outlined by Corbin and Strauss (2008). Per their recommendations, open coding involves reading and re-reading the transcript to establish concepts and themes that emerge from the raw data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). After reading and categorizing all the information gathered, I identified patterns that I used to create master categories through repeated comparison of what information was emerging. When more information was needed on a particular aspect emerging from the data, I conducted additional readings of the transcript to find more about a particular theme. In this way, the inductive method of analysis produced meaning and understanding of role enactment within the departments studied in the focus groups.

The analysis was conducted for each group's transcripts and then performed across groups. After analysis Group 5, it was apparent that consistent themes were emerging related to shared resource use and encroachment. Group 6 also revealed the same themes, therefore sufficient data was gathered to draw conclusions about encroachment and shared resources, and chart future research directions that would examine more specific aspects of organizational roles. The results of this study show how shared resources work within the context of each organization and address common themes that can be examined further. The themes that emerged answer the research questions and develop a broader understanding about the effects of shared resources on the encroachment of organizational roles.

CHAPTER 4

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to report the analyses of focus groups from each organization. For each group, a description is provided of the organization followed by insights into the research questions based on focus group discussion. Each group is numbered chronologically. Findings and themes common to the groups are discussed in Chapter 5.

For each group, the first section outlines how the group discusses the relationship between public relations and marketing departments. Then, it reviews the role-related issues prevalent throughout the group members' interactions with others. The next section describes factors affecting role issues and the implications of communication on role enactment. The section ends with additional observations and questions that arose from analyzing each group.

One important note before the analyses: The question list for the focus groups included questions about social media and its role in conflict between public relations and marketing. These questions were included because social media has contributed to blurred lines between the two functions and was anticipated to be a source of conflict. However, to avoid leading the discussion in this direction, I asked about shared resources in general rather than mentioning social media specifically. In all the groups, social media was mentioned as a tool, not an area of contention. For the groups, social media efforts have been formalized and are managed by one person or an agency. The use of social media, although increasingly important for both marketing and public relations, has also become a tool to be managed jointly or as a stand-alone function, not fought over. Therefore, in the analysis of each group, the emphasis of the questions and the discussion is on shared resources that foster competition between the public relations and marketing departments, which means social media was not a dominant part of the conversation.

Group 1 Analysis

The participants in this focus group did not discuss encroachment as an obstacle. Instead, they discussed negative issues related to sharing information between communication groups within the organization. They discussed role ambiguity and lack of role integration throughout many aspects of their work. They also discussed how the company promotes a process-driven culture but indicated that the processes are ineffective. To circumvent these ineffective processes, the focus group participants said they can enact their roles through informal communication and relationship management with people in the other groups.

Background on Group 1

Located in a major city on the East Coast of the U.S., Group 1's company is a privately held, non-profit health insurance company that employs approximately 10,000 people. The company was founded in the early 1900s and is a leader in its industry.

Ten members of one communications team joined the focus group, including the director and several managers and specialists. This team performs a niche role in the company, because it communicates exclusively to healthcare providers. The official title of this group is provider communications. It reports to a marketing group within the company. Although this group included more people than I preferred to have in a group, it progressed well and provided insight into the issues faced by team members.

Group 1's meeting took place in a bright conference room in a high security, high rise building in the heart of the city. The conference room was on the 24^{th} floor and had windows overlooking the city. My contact for this group was someone who I worked with in the past. He was very willing to help me as we had a positive working relationship during my time at the company. I provided bagels, pastries, coffee, and water. The meeting began at 9 a.m., after a brief chat with my contact in his office. Although he was the manager of the other group members, he had a very easy-going relationship with his employees. They joked and laughed prior to the meeting as we were settling in and generally felt at ease. Because I had worked at the company for four years, I chatted with the group members about my experiences and what I have been doing since I left and asked about my former colleagues who were in other departments. The meeting started a few minutes after 9 a.m., after participants settled in with their refreshments.

Results of Group 1's Focus Group

Encroachment Between Public Relations and Marketing

This group illustrated that boundaries of public relations and marketing efforts as stated in the literature are not as clear-cut in practice. Researchers have discussed public relations and marketing as monolithic entities with separate activities and purposes. However, this group did not fit into the typical definitions of public relations or marketing. Instead, the unit communicates with one set of stakeholders that is also a consumer of the company's products. Therefore, this group performs some public relations tasks and some marketing tasks although they report to someone with a marketing title. This is not encroachment, however, because the group is formally tasked with both types of work, which seems to be based on organizational needs. No other group in the organization is tasked with these efforts. This structure exists because the organization built their communication function around key audiences rather than communication activities and tasks. In other words, the group performs public relations and marketing tasks within a group called provider communications, and this group fulfills the organization's need to communicate with this essential group. It does not seem to matter if the group does public relations or marketing work. Instead, it matters to the organization that this group is effectively communicating as needed to their designated audience.

The relationship between Group 1's department and the other communication departments in the organization is not an *us versus them* mindset. Instead, the relationships with other communications groups are beset with ambiguity of roles and priorities. These other communication groups include corporate communication, which handles communication on behalf of the entire organization to external audiences; member communication, which targets users of the insurance; employee communication, which handles internal communication; and shared creative services, which handles graphic and web design. The organization also includes subsidiaries that have their own communication functions. Although the group did not discuss encroachment as a major issue, they did discuss role enactment issues that affect their jobs. This group provided detailed descriptions of how role issues are created and how group members deal with these role issues.

Roles Issues

The group discussed how role ambiguity is prevalent between members of the various communication teams. One example of this ambiguity is in Group 1's relationship with a subsidiary. The subsidiary is located in a neighboring state and provides health-related services. Group 1's formal responsibility is to create and implement all provider communications "from soup to nuts," according to a focus group member. However, the subsidiary recently took ownership of their own website. The subsidiary also formed a creative group that handles their work. The situation used to work well because Group 1 handled all the communication aspects. Now, the subsidiary formats information for posting through their creative group and posts the information to their website. One participant said,

> in that past, they didn't have staff to do it, and they still don't have provider communication staff, but it seems like it's creeping where they're starting to put people into these roles and now there's little unknown areas, some gray areas, around what is going to be done by them and what's going to be done by us. And there have been issues with accuracy of their content.

This example is typical of role ambiguity where there is uncertainty about the boundaries of a role. That uncertainty leads to inefficiencies and lack of role integration, which can harm the effectiveness of the organization due to uneven communication output and longer lead times to complete projects than if the projects were completed within Group 1.

Members of Group 1 discussed how the lack of their own understanding about structure within the company leads to role issues. They shared one example of how changing roles within other departments affect their own role enactment. One participant said,

> They're constantly changing things, I'm not sure who the correct contact is sometimes, like it used to be so-and-so, but that person now reports to so-and-so. They've re-orged their department. It's kind of reach out to somebody and say, hey do you know who's doing this?

Factors Affecting Role Enactment

The focus group participants discussed factors affecting their role enactment, including use of shared resources. These resources include internal service groups, information, leadership, culture, and skill sets. These aspects are defined and operations of each of these resources are discussed.

Internal teams. The focus group participants interact with various communication teams within the organization. These groups include web design, creative services, subsidiary communications, marketing, marketing communications, government communications, employee communications, and member communications. They described various internal information systems that enable their online communication channels, and they discussed sharing some outside direct mail agencies as part of their jobs.

The most in-depth discussion in this group concerned the web team. Many departments within Group 1's company share the web team. Participants in Group 1 use the web team often to post materials to webpages used by their audiences. From the discussion, it seems as if the web team is either overburdened or inept. Group 1's discussion included how submitted projects often get lost. However, Group 1 does not blame the other communications teams who may be sharing the web team. They blame the web team for lack of communication about project status and lack of understanding of urgent project deadlines. I outline more about the effects of these shared resources in the sections below.

Information. The focus group participants discussed information regarding new projects and changes affecting providers as a key resource that they share with other teams. Information resources emerged as the biggest issue facing the team. They indicated vital information flows to them haphazardly and is often fragmented. They also indicated that people who would benefit from information on their own projects often skip meetings.

One example Group 1 discussed involved changes to prescription medicine coverage under Medicare Part D. The change affects healthcare providers and individuals who use the health plans. Members of Group 1 set up a meeting to discuss this issue and invited communication colleagues in charge of communicating to individual benefit users. Individual benefit users are referred to as *members* within Group 1's company. When the meeting occurred, the member communication colleagues did not attend. One participant said,

> There's been absolutely no one and ... and we tried several times to get in touch with someone to let them know that this is serious and could have a serious impact on members. Because they can go to the pharmacy with a prescription that they've always had and be denied because that provider is not participating with Medicare. That member will have no idea what's happening, and our shop is working on communication to the provider to let them know, but we can't find out anything about a member communication and to me that's much more important in this scenario than provider communication, which is important, but it doesn't have the impact that it [a member communication] does.

Members of Group 1 discussed the reason for the lack of integration, such as other groups' reluctance to take responsibility for new communication projects. However, Group 1 reached no consensus as to what causes this issue.

Culture. Related to organizational culture, the group members mentioned the idea of a process-driven organizational culture many times. They talked about submitting work through the proper channels to the web or creative teams. However, even though these submission processes influence many of the projects conducted by Group 1, the focus group participants indicated that the processes are largely broken, with their projects getting lost and deadlines missed. To get around these inefficient processes, focus group participants discussed how they have created a culture within their team that focuses on creating and maintaining relationships with others who can help them work around the processes. One participant said,

> There is a split where you have those that you know who you can deal with, who will help you get this work done, get your projects posted, mailed, get you the information. And then others that will just drag it out, you know, they'll follow what they consider the letter of the law, where I have to do this and do this and do this and do this. Where a two-week process turns into a five-week process. And then you're in danger of missing deadlines. You have to get upper management involved, there are sidebar meetings, phone calls, emails, and then it just turns into this big mess of who's now the actual owner of the project. Is it the initial lead, is it now management, is it the other departments. So it ... it turns into a question of, you know, who's doing what, when, and why can't we just do the work to get the ultimate goal of getting the communication out.

The company seems to promote the development and implementation of processes to get work done. This creates a culture that expects those completing project work to follow the processes to the letter. Therefore, the company can be considered process-driven, because the processes drive task completion. The process-driven culture, while broken, is a shared way of behaving within the organization and can affect how roles are established, integrated and defined. The company's culture, therefore, can be considered a resource because its norms dictate how employees can enact their roles.

Skill set. As mentioned in the pilot group analysis, I proposed that the communication skill set is a shared organizational resource. In the case of Group 1, participants characterized skill sets in distinct ways. The group members indicated that their team is a niche group formed to serve one audience. Over time, Group 1's team grew to include people from many different areas of the company to gain the skills they needed to serve this essential audience. Therefore, some people on their team have the technical skills that can sometimes replace the work the web team does, which helps the team be more effective. One person said,

> I know when hurrying stuff through [the process], having some technical know-how has helped. If you're waiting for somebody to code something, and you can jump in and offer the solution, then you can hand somebody something…instead of waiting for somebody to do the work.

The group agreed that having many skills in one team helped them overcome obstacles. However, sharing the skill set they have with people in other departments can also be frustrating, because they are still expected to rely on outside resources to get the job done. One participant said, "It's a challenge sometimes. It's like we could do it ourselves but we have to depend on other areas to do that for us."

However, they also discussed how other groups do not share strategic planning skill sets. One example was dealing with a project owned by the government communications team. Group 1 members discussed how they used to collaborate with the government group on a newsletter, to review the information for accuracy. One participant said,

> Our role has dwindled and dwindled down and there's almost no communication at this point. We used to be very heavily involved with the process and now it's like it's ... if they remember to send us the PDFs to review, that's great. (Laughing) We have to beg for the finals. Uh, it's broken down over the years. Which it's not our communication, but, I don't know that they understand the significance of our role.

Group 1 discussed the exclusion from this process as a lack of understanding that the strategic use of their group's expertise helps the entire organization.

A participant gave another example of sharing skill set resources. She indicated that the issue comes down to understanding the value of strategic versus tactical resources. She said that there is,

> A kind of a disconnect from a messaging and audience perspective macrocosm, you know, a big picture and then the microcosm of the details. We deal more with the details. And communicating with other areas, especially some of the communications areas, they don't understand the details and how that fits into the big picture.

Communication and Roles

As indicated above, focus group participants said they overcame issues with the company's broken processes and role ambiguity through communication and cultivation of relationships with individuals in other teams. The participants discussed the process of working with the web group and how the established processes within the web group are not working. One participant said, "So you submit a job, and then it's days until they even assign it to someone and then that person needs to work with someone else, so it's like you don't even know who is really working on your project."

The participants discussed one way around the issues with the web team, which is finding someone who will elevate a project and move it quickly through production. One participant said,

> So we find that we put these [projects in] and then there's one person in particular up there that I know, I'm sure most of us know, and just email and say, look we submitted this project five days ago and nothing's happened. Can you just do it so it gets done?

The delays working with the web team are detrimental to businesses efforts. Group 1's participants discussed a recent example where the web team had a project to update some language on the website for providers regarding a rule change that was effective on the first of the month. As of the meeting date (the 15th of the month), the website had not been updated. One participant said,

> These needed to go in on the 3rd…there's only so many emails and follow-ups. So now there's different information, so providers are going to two platforms and they're reading one thing and they're going to go to another platform and read something different, so there's a disconnect.

These relationships are the main way focus group participants accomplish their work and enact their roles. However, the downside to the reliance on these relationships is that newer employees must figure out how to form their own relationships. One of the newer members of Group 1 indicated her difficulties of finding resources to help her work around ineffective processes:

> I've only been here for just over a year and a half, but still, I think that there's a problem with this company that ... that it's ... it's an old company, right, so I think everyone just assumes everyone knows everyone. And oh, you know her, she does this. No, I have no idea who she is. But like everyone does know, because everyone's been here for ten, twenty, thirty years. So it's ... sometimes it's hard as a new person or newer person, to be like…so what exactly does your department do.

Even though Group 1 seems to face dysfunction at every turn, they discussed some lighthearted ways communication can help them enact their roles and reduce uncertainty. They talked about sending requests through formal channels like email, but always trying to soften the communication to include a personal touch. One participant said, "Follow the process, but follow up with the personal contact." One example that was discussed was using a smiley face on emails. Some group members joked that "a smiley face cures all."

Other Observations and Questions

Within this focus group, structure of the organization was discussed. The organization has a decentralized model, meaning that there is not one communication leader for all the communication efforts in the company. Instead, there are smaller communication groups scattered within business units in the company, with reporting relationships into those business units. It seems that decentralization of communication strategy and tactics in Group 1's organization does not work well. Speaking with one organizational voice gets lost with all the decentralized groups and overlapping goals. As evidenced above in the discussion about the out-of-state subsidiary, decentralization can be a hindrance, especially when there is ambiguity about who does what tasks. This leads to each of the communication groups within the company trying to coordinate but not having a unified chain of command to assist with problems or conflicts.

As mentioned above, Group 1 members discussed skill set. A very interesting distinction was made between technical skills and strategic thinking. This distinction bears further evaluation in future groups. According to Group 1's discussion, technical skills can create communication projects, but the strategic guidance is imperative to success.

Although leadership was not central to this discussion, Group 1 members did mention the effects of leadership on roles. They discussed how a leadership change at the subsidiary affected how they enacted their role, which involved helping to create a magazine for a stakeholder group. One participant said,

> They had a switch of people in their management, so I think they had different ideas for the magazine, which they have changed format and style of it and that kind of stuff…we were brought in way back under a different management, so with the new management, I don't think they really quite understood they actually had to reach out. And just on this last magazine we explained why we needed to put it through review and our role.

This leadership change eliminated the role for Group 1 in the magazine's production process, and Group 1 needed to reinsert themselves into the project. Group 1 experienced changes to their role based on the whims of management, rather than through formal role process that changed expectations.

Summary of Group 1

Group 1 members did not experience encroachment from other communication departments. Instead, their major issues revolved around the sharing of resources internally and ambiguity as to where their roles begin and other communication teams' roles end. Group 1 members dealt with ineffective internal processes by communicating and forming relationships with individuals who can help them circumvent the processes. Group 1, given its diverse skill set and niche audience, was able to maintain their own role boundaries, but the members struggled to explain the strategic value they add to other communication efforts outside their domain.

Group 2 Analysis

Group 2, a public relations team, revealed a divide between the public relations group and marketing colleagues that echoes what researchers have said about this relationship. Group 2 members discussed issues of power and influence that put marketing interests ahead of public relations concerns. Group 2 also provided insight into conflict with the business partners they serve with communication strategies and tactics. The participants in this focus group discussed how the marketing team and business clients do not value their role as strategic partners. This devaluation leads to role ambiguity and conflict for the participants.

As with the pilot group and Group 1, Group 2 struggles when working with internal creative agencies due to ineffective processes, and the members used relationship building and communication to overcome these issues. Lastly, Group 2's company culture, which has been disrupted by a recent announcement of a company merger, affected role enactment within the group. The members discussed how the current culture of fear about the possible takeover by another organization is driving business partners' decisions and creating an environment where no one wants to draw attention to him or herself.

Background on Group 2

Group 2's company is headquartered in New England and provides healthcare services around the world. I met with Group 2 in a large satellite office in a major city on the East Coast. The company is publically traded and employs almost 40,000 people worldwide. The company splits corporate responsibilities between the New England office and the major satellite office where Group 2 is located. Although it is a very old company, its modern foundation was built in the 1980s. A few months before the focus group session, another organization announced it would acquire the company, so at the time of the focus group session, the company was preparing for a merger. As discussed below, the recent announcement about a potential acquisition had an effect on Group 2's members and the way they enact their roles because of the uncertainty created by the pending transaction.

Six members of one communications team joined the focus group, including specialists and managers. There were no direct reporting relationships among the participants. This team considered itself to be public relations, but it reports to the marketing department, which is led by a chief marketing officer. Members of Group 2 were assigned business units to support with communications. These business partners rely on Group 2's members for both internal (employee) communication and external (media and customer) communications.

Group 2's meeting took place in a conference room with no windows in a high security, high-rise building in the heart of the city at 11 a.m. My contact for the group had worked with me in a previous company. She and I chatted in the hallway on the way to the conference room to catch up briefly on each other's lives. She sat with me for a while in the conference room, and then she had to leave to find the other members of the group because they were all late. I provided muffins, coffee, and water for the group. Once everyone came into the room, the meeting began with light chitchat and joking with each other. The group members all joined in in making fun of my contacting for using a mason jar as a water cup, which seemed funny to the group members due to its association with hipster trendiness and rural culture. The group seemed comfortable with one another and with me as I explained my history with my contact in our previous company. The group seemed to enjoy sharing their issues with me as they remarked at the end about how it was nice to air their grievances.

Results of Group 2's Focus Group

Encroachment Between Public Relations and Marketing

Group 2's discussion indicated a divide between public relations and marketing personnel, in which marketing holds more power in the organization than public relations. The group discussed how, in theory, it makes some sense that public relations would fall under marketing. However, the way it operates in Group 2's company does not work well, because the organization emphasizes marketing efforts over the public relations efforts.

The participants said the rest of the company sees public relations as a cost center and marketing as a revenue generator. One participant said,

> I don't think that the value we bring is often understood by a lot of folks in the business and I'd say probably even on the marketing side. And I think that they probably sometimes perceive us to be a pain in the ass.

Group 2 members explained how their role is reduced by others in the organization to being tactical writers and editors, rather than strategic partners. This characterization is consistent with the literature on the relationship between public relations and marketing, where public relations has struggled to prove its value to an organization.

Roles and Shared Resources

Group 2 members discussed role ambiguity that resulted from a lack of understanding by business partners and marketing colleagues of the value of public relations. They also spoke of lack of integration of roles with certain business partners. They indicated that they experience role conflict between pleasing their leadership in marketing but also serving their business partner clients.

Role ambiguity. The group members discussed times when they were not aware of communication projects that business partners were completing on their own. They mentioned how these times are often a result of the business partner not wanting to find out the proper channels of communication support or not knowing who to contact to complete a project. One participant suggested that her business unit does not understand her role and often thinks that she is "just kind of writing the memos they could write." Another participant said, "When you try to explain the concept of communicating from a strategic standpoint, a lot of folks don't buy it."

In addition to issues with their business partners, Group 2 members talked about role ambiguity with marketing colleagues. One participant said, “They are not quite sure what I should be doing, and I’m not always quite sure what they should be doing, so there is a little bit of paralysis there.” The same participant provided an example of a marketing team that keeps him out of project conversations. The participant said,

> I don’t know what they’re planning. I’ve tried to be involved with it and you know they say they will and then oh we forgot. I mean, that’s fine…I’m not going to demand to go to a party I’m not invited to…and in the 11th hour when they want you to do something I have no problem saying this ain’t gonna happen.

Role conflict. Group 2’s place in the organizational structure led to role conflict, because it needs to satisfy expectations of the business partners and the marketing department. One respondent said he dealt with this conflict by deciding that he needs “to satisfy one or the other.” He said, “My goal is to make my clients happy, because I think if they’re happy - the CMO and the marketing team may not care - but at least I’m not on their radar screen as not making them [the clients] happy.” The group members discussed how it is logical to spend more effort on the business partners because they have more interaction with their business partners than their marketing colleagues due to the organization’s structure. In other words, because they interact with the business partners more often, the public relations team prioritizes the business partners’ needs over the marketing team’s needs.

Factors Affecting Role Enactment

The most detailed discussion by Group 2’s members focused on shared internal services groups and shared skill sets. Group 2 members also talked about culture in detail. The following section explains Group 2’s definitions and functions of each of these shared resources that affect role enactment.

Internal service teams. Group 2's main shared internal resource was the creative team. This team is located in the New England headquarters and provides design and publishing resources for clients throughout the company. Group 2 indicated that the company requires them to use the creative services team on all projects needing design work. The creative services team administers a project queue through established processes and bills their internal clients for project work. However, Group 2 indicated that often they "dread" having to work with creative services, because the process is rigid, projects go into a void, and deadlines are missed. Therefore, urgent issues are delayed, and Group 2's role enactment suffers. One participant said,

> I think it is horrible, and they're like the mafia, they won't do anything unless you show them the money first, which is ludicrous. . .I've never worked at a place where creative services was handled the way it is here. It's really terrible.

Group 2 members explained how the main issue with creative services is that the business partners hold the public relations person accountable for the creative team's failures and delays. Therefore, the creative team resource becomes a nuisance and a burden to the public relations team members.

Members of Group 2 mentioned that they are able to use other creative agencies outside the company as an exception with special permission, which sometimes helps to meet deadlines. When talking about the use of outside agencies, one of the focus group participants named another internal creative agency based in New England. No one else in the focus group had heard about this alternative internal resource. One of the participants said, "See. That's the problem. I don't even know what [the other internal agency] is," so that simply finding out about potential resources needed to do their job is a struggle.

The one positive aspect the group discussed within the creative services team is the social media unit. One Group 2 participant said, “We have worked collaboratively with [the social media team] and gotten amazing results that please everybody, and it’s like if we could all work together like that” it would be beneficial. Others in the group agreed that the social media team is an effective partner and does not create any tension within the organization. Group 2 members conjectured that the social media team collaborates well because their work is similar to the work of media relations, therefore the two teams integrate well. The group members suggested that social media and public relations teams have similar goals, which makes collaboration easier.

Skill sets. Group 2 members pointed to overlapping skill sets between their marketing partners and their business partners as a resource issue. The participants discussed how people “across the board” in the organization “think they can do communications.” One participant gave an example of issues she has with her business partner not understanding her role. She said,

> They used to have their own dedicated [communication] person reporting into them. And, while I can give them a broader view of what’s happening within marketing or with the rest of communications, they still feel like they can do it versus taking this strategic council that I can give them. They are more tactical versus strategic. Like they miss the strategy most of the time.

Others agreed that their counsel is either not sought or ignored.

This example suggests that tactical communication skill sets are perceived as easily mastered by other non-communication professionals. In addition, it points to a broad lack of understanding of the strategic value of communication. One participant said she felt like she was “taking fast food orders” and another said her group was treated “like a deli counter” when business partners would order a communication deliverable.

The group discussed how the business partners do not seem to understand the strategic value public relations can provide.

Overall, Group 2 indicated that many people within the organization view tactical communication skill sets as a resource that can be deployed by anyone who can write words on a page. This view leads to role ambiguity and encroachment.

Culture. Group 2 members talked about recent company developments as creating a culture of fear that drives decision-making on their team and other teams. A few months before the focus group session, another company announced its intention to buy Group 2's company. Because the purchasing company is the same type of healthcare organization, there will be duplicate jobs within the merged organization. Although the merger will need government approval, which will take months, Group 2 indicated that there is a high level of uncertainty within the organization as to what will happen to each department and segment of their organization.

The group members brought up culture during a discussion of competitiveness between business units. The group shared how they sometimes get negative feedback from one business unit when they see another business unit received a better communication product, such as a nicer brochure or a fancier town hall meeting. One participant joked the feeling was like "The Hunger Games." Another shared that the characterization is not too far from reality:

> I do think the reason why sometimes people operate the way they do is also fear-based. It's competitive because they... I just think there's a lot of uncertainty you know and it's going to get worse. But I would say even let's look even generally, not even just at [this company]. Not even just in our industry. Like because of what happened with the economy and everything you know where people were losing jobs like there's competition everywhere. I think people for the most part in corporate settings operate out of fear … so they either say yes all the time or they're you know not willing to work as collaboratively maybe because they're

> scared about you know not going off of their script. So I think that's a big problem and I don't think there's a remedy for that.

Group 2 members mentioned how this culture of fear affects their day-to-day role enactment. One participant said,

> When you're operating from that place where you feel any day you could come in and be told your job is eliminated, it's hard to be creative and forward thinking. You just want to stay off the radar screen and make sure that check is there every two weeks.

In addition to the fear and uncertainty in their current environment, Group 2 members also indicated that aspects of their culture are process-driven. A process-driven culture is one that is organized by the norm of following step-by-step processes within the organization, such as the creative services process. Group 2 talked about how they cannot get an estimate from creative services without entering a project into the queue. In addition, once creative services approves the project for production, it can take what Group 2 members perceive to be an excessive amount of time before it is complete. Following the norms of the process-driven culture can create role conflict for Group 2 because following the rules will make their business partners unhappy.

Communication and Roles

As discussed above, Group 2 experienced issues with their business partners and marketing colleagues due to day-to-day communication breakdowns. These issues were often in the form of willful or unintended withholding of information that hinders Group 2 members from enacting their role.

In addition to these issues, Group 2 members discussed the use of communication to overcome faulty processes, similar to the use of communication in the pilot group and Group 1. One participant said,

> There are certain people that if you build a relationship with them you can go to them circumventing the process…in order to get things done. So, there are two creative people that I can go to who can either help answer my questions right away or if I have to go through this process they can try to help speed it along.

Group 2 members talked about how these relationships are often reciprocal. One respondent said, "They want to help me because in return they know I will help them…that's the way to get things done."

The culture of Group 2's company is process-driven, meaning that the organization has developed processes for task completion, and organizational members are expected to follow these processes. However, these processes often break down, and the respondents work around the processes to enact their roles. In addition to the process-driven culture, Group 2 experienced some uncertainty that has been pervasive in the culture of the organization. As noted above, the merger announcement has created a halting in the communication efforts between departments. Because the merger was a recent development, Group 2 members did not express how they were overcoming the uncertainty.

Other Observations and Questions

Group 2's discussion brings up an interesting point about company type. As mentioned in the pilot group, a potential variable that needs to be established in future research is company industry. Manager 1 in the pilot, Group 1, and Group 2 are in highly regulated and constantly evolving industries. This organizational type will have an effect on how roles are enacted due to rigid rules and regulations. Future research should be sure to delineate by industry type.

In addition, the structure of the department's organizational chart for Group 2 is different than the structure of other groups I have conducted thus far. Within the pilot, Group 1, and Group 2, four departments were represented, and all four had different structures and relationships between marketing and public relations. In Group 2, internal and external communications were functions in a marketing department, which also included marketing and marketing communications. People in these groups would most likely find it difficult to call themselves marketing or public relations. Therefore, future research needs to account for these structural and identity issues among communication professionals.

Summary of Group 2

Group 2 faces painful uncertainty in the face of a potential take-over by another company. This fear pervades their work. The main issues Group 2 faces have to do with role conflict. They are beholden to their group's processes for projects, but they also want to satisfy their internal clients' needs for quick turn arounds and met deadlines. Therefore, Group 2 constantly navigates its way through the demands of its management in marketing and the expectations of its business clients. One way the members of this group have overcome this role issue is through communication and relationship building with people in creative services who can expedite their projects. In addition, Group 2 members suffer from the perception that anyone can do their jobs, which indicates a lack of understanding of the strategic versus tactical support of communication teams to the business.

Group 3 Analysis

Group 3's company is the largest in the study. Its complexities and pressures differ from previous groups. The size, scope and complexity of the organization affect everything Group 3 members do in their roles. The culture of the company is one of intense competition spurred by competition in their industry and by internal pressures for accumulating scarce resources. Even though I held this session in 2015, the company was still emerging from the negative business effects of the recession in 2008-2009. The group's conversation was intense as they shared how they struggle to be effective while experiencing role conflict and ambiguity within the organization's matrix structure. The biggest source of conflict for Group 3 members was their position as an intermediary between business clients they serve and the marketing processes they must follow.

Background on Group 3

Group 3's company calls itself a global technology company. It is a publically held conglomerate with nine distinct divisions organized by product offering. A Fortune Global 500 company, the conglomerate operates in more than 190 countries and employs almost 400,000 people. Headquartered in Europe, the conglomerate's history dates back almost 200 years.

Group 3 comprised six people who work in marketing communications for the company's healthcare division, which is headquartered on the East Coast of the U.S. The manager of the group attended the session. The division employs over 45,000 employees worldwide and contributes almost 20 percent of the conglomerate's total revenue. The division has another major office in the Midwest and scattered smaller offices around the country. Group 3 members are assigned business units within the company to support with marketing efforts. These business units are assigned to Group 3 members by their management in marketing. The participants see these business units as their clients. Two months before the focus group session, Group 3 experienced a restructuring of the entire communications functions within the company. The group was part of the global communications department, a centralized communications team for the conglomerate based in Europe. In the restructuring, Group 3 joined the U.S. marketing department, which focuses on U.S. business. Because of this recent change, participants answered my questions by referring both to their previous structure and what they expect in the new one.

Group 3's meeting was held in a conference room with windows in the company's newly renovated, three-story headquarters building in the suburbs of the city. The meeting was set for 11 a.m. My contact for this meeting was a classmate in my master's program. She had been in a few classes with me three years prior to the meeting, but we kept in touch via LinkedIn. She chatted with me regarding the new building and asked if I kept in touch with any other classmates or professors. She led me to the conference room. I provided fruit, pastries, and waters for the group. The group was going to an off-site holiday party after our meeting, but did not seem rushed or anxious to leave. The participants were all on time. Because I had a history with my contact, we chatted about that with the group to break the ice. I also relayed a story about how I had interviewed with the company many years prior.

I faced some unexpected issues with this group. The session was to include members of a marketing communications team who work in the office. At the last minute, a visitor from another office of the same company who works with the marketing communications team came to the building for another purpose. As a courtesy to the visitor, the marketing communication manager invited this visitor to the meeting. The visitor works in the creative services team, which is a shared resource of the marketing communications team. The visitor's presence affected the openness of the conversation of the session because she is a member of a team that is a shared resource, and that team is seen as ineffective by members of Group 3.

When I asked Group 3 about shared resources that may cause issues with their work, a marketing communications team member spoke up and mentioned the creative team. However, the manager of the group changed the subject when the first speaker took a breath. Later in the session, someone else brought up the creative team, and again the manager changed the subject. When reading the transcripts of these exchanges, it was clear to me that the group has problems with the creative team, but the manager did not want them discussing the problems in front of the guest who works on the creative services team. I believe that the group would have discussed the creative team in detail had this guest not been in the room and that the creative services team might have emerged as their top complaint.

The guest may have helped push the conversation into other topics that I had not heard about in previous groups, which moved the research in a new direction. All my previous groups complained about a shared creative or web team, but this group barely touched on the topic. No group prior to Group 3 had discussed business strategy and its effects on their jobs as an issue whereas this group addressed this issue. Therefore, this group yielded some unique insights into their role issues despite the silencing effect of the guest's presence.

Results of Group 3's Focus Group

Public Relations and Marketing

The group did not discuss tension between public relations and marketing as outlined in the literature. Their biggest issues stemmed from the culture of the organization, an unclear business strategy, and their conflict between marketing and business partners, as reviewed in detail below. They did not seem to struggle with any type of encroachment, but instead they struggled to get the information they need to do their job. They were challenged also by their own internal processes that delay their work and affect how they enact their roles.

Role Issues

*Role ambiguity***.** The company's organizational structure caused role ambiguity for Group 3. The participants talked about how the move to a decentralized management structure created confusion in their roles. One participant said, "Things had a process…that's all been dispersed now, and everybody's like, OK how's this going to work?" In addition, the employees said the matrix organizational structure fostered role ambiguity. According to members of Group 3, the recent reorganization had made the role ambiguity worse. One participant said, "We're just in limbo right now…we have a lot of dotted lines. We always say, 'that's my boss,' but I have dotted lines to this person and that person."

Group 3 members also indicated that the culture of competition has led to ambiguity because their business partners do not take the time to understand the role of the team. This gap creates an issue because when the business partners do not understand Group 3's role, the business partners create unrealistic demands of the team. One participant said,

> We're all part of the same creature, and we have to find a way to make the heart and the veins go in all the same direction, together for the whole. I feel like it's a breakdown in understanding of each other's needs and how to get there.

Uneven sharing of information also contributes to role ambiguity. The group members discussed how not being included in project meetings and conversations held by the business partners makes it difficult for them to know what their role is for projects taken on by the business. It also makes it difficult for Group 3 members to understand the goals and objectives of business initiatives. One participant said that when information is shared evenly,

> Everyone hears the same thing, everyone knows what’s going on. Everyone knows the condition of the brand and what sales are like and what the forecast is like and everything and then you move forward as a team. When that doesn’t happen, it’s very difficult and not everyone knows.

This exclusion from critical conversations about projects occurs because the business partners either fail to see the value of bringing Group 3 into the projects early on, or the business partners do not understand Group 3’s role and how it relates to their projects.

Role conflict. Group 3 members indicated that role conflict is generated when they are put in a position to either follow their internal processes or satisfy client needs. They discussed how following the internal processes may delay the end products that the business partners need. That delay then can reflect poorly on the group and on other communication professionals in the company. One participant said,

> It comes back to us…so it's a negative reflection on the entire comm community. I mean, like it or not, we're the face to the client, so yeah it must be you but it's also the whole community. And like I said, it trickles down. Because then you're frustrated and then I pick up the frustration. It just goes, it goes around.

Another participant shared how he regularly makes decisions that involve choosing between following the department’s processes or pleasing his business partner. He said,

> You have clients who have clients and then you're performing a creative function. I am squarely focused on process adherence. So it's, like, I try to think of myself who wants to help people. But if, in the back of your mind it's always a risk-reward decision you're making. Let's just be honest with ourselves, if the heat gets turned up high enough, you're going to start making decisions that aren't based on the good of the process with a good end result. I mean that's just the world we live in right now. But [there are] different factors and all the different trigger points that we all have to take into consideration when we make however many decisions in a day.

The conflicts in enacting their roles come from many directions, according to Group 3 members, and they often are caught in no-win situations.

Factors Affecting Role Enactment

As mentioned above, a visitor to Group 3's session may have affected the ability for participants to speak freely about the shared creative services group. However, the participants spoke at length regarding the company culture, business strategy, and information needs as factors affecting role enactment.

Creative services. As noted above, the creative services team is a shared resource with other groups throughout the company. The group members discussed how creative services resources are only sporadically available to them due to the structure of the global organization, which placed them on a long waiting list for creative services. Often, the participants' projects missed deadlines or took longer than their business partners expected. One participant said, "We're constantly educating our clients [on the timelines]…and doing all the right things, but oftentimes all the client hears is no." As mentioned above, from my experience in previous focus groups, I could sense that the creative group was a major issue, but I was not able to hear more.

Business strategy. Although the manager of the group led the discussion away from creative services, she led the group toward a discussion of business strategy. This was the first mention of business strategy in any of the focus groups. I put business strategy in the resource category, because it consists of written and unwritten rules that employees use to make decisions about their work. The strategy affects the participants in Group 3, because it dictates the messages they communicate and how they communicate those messages. It also dictates the way Group 3's business partners plan their communication needs.

Through the conversation with Group 3, there is some confusion as to what strategic direction the company is taking now. As a result, the participants said they are uncertain as to how to utilize the business strategy resources. The manager discussed how different departments and factions within the company do not agree to the strategic direction of the business. Some departments in the organization promote a strategy that there is one overarching brand that is reinforced universally. Others promote a strategy that there is a parent company with individual brands that are promoted instead of one overarching brand. Group 3's business partners disagree on which is the correct strategy. Group 3 members indicated that which strategy being followed "depends on who you are and everyone has their own interpretation" and that no direction has come "down from up above" to resolve the issue. This lack of clarity affects the work of Group 3's members, because they feel "caught in the middle." They want to maintain some consistency in their communications and are unsure how to do so without a set strategy.

In addition to the branding strategy, Group 3 also discussed staffing strategy. The group discussed how the company has gone from a decentralized model, to a centralized model, and back to a decentralized model. These changes have meant that the company went from allowing business units to self-manage, to managing from a central leadership team, to going back to self-management. This shifting of strategy now created issues as Group 3's members have had to navigate their relationship with their business partners, because they are not sure what stage the decentralization is in for any particular partner. Group 3 members said they are often confused as to who is in charge and who has the final say over projects.

In addition, because the company's business has improved in recent years, there is more work for Group 3 to complete. However, the group indicated that they are staffed at only 50 percent, based on their workload. This shortage in staffing has created tensions for the group, because their business partners do not understand their workload. The business partners often go above the group in the hierarchical chain to complain that Group 3 members are not accomplishing their projects and are not meeting the business partners' expectations. This escalation of the project issues by business partners created problems for Group 3. One participant said,

> There's probably about 5 of us, there should probably be about 10. We're slowly growing…so the areas of the [business partners] that we can cover, because we simply have headcount, we are doing quite well….where I would say we do, we absolutely get hammered…we can cover these 5 areas of your 1.6, 1.8 billion dollar business…but, this other thing where you just decided to invest [we cannot staff], then they come to us and they're frustrated because they can't get any support. [The business partners] don't come back to us and try to learn the process [of staffing] or invest the time, because they're under so much pressure to produce. That would typically go a level or 2 above me [to complain that we are not supporting them]. Well, you know, that [complaint] might go to the VP world. Someone [at that level]…they're not helping me [get more staff to support the business partners].

Overall, this discussion of strategy creates a possible new direction for the understanding of shared resources. Because other groups have not discussed business strategy, the assumption might be that it is not an issue. However, it is evident that an unclear business strategy can become a source of frustration in enacting roles.

Culture. Group 3 members discussed the company's culture during various portions of the session. First, the group members talked about how the company is complex and hierarchical. They discussed how the company culture proclaims to be process-driven, but norms favor networking behind the scenes. One participant said,

> It's a very hierarchical organization that lives on networking. So I'm not quite sure, you know, how much is actually awarded based on merit. There's a lot of, still, sort of, behind the scenes dealings, that well, you're my guy, so you're gonna get this job. And then I like you and I'm in power now, so things are gonna run the way you want them to run, but then, next year they get taken out and then there's a whole new… So, there's, there's this strange behind the scenes network. I think that's one thing that we've been challenged by.

In addition to the hierarchical structure and behind-the-scenes networks, Group 3 members discussed the pressures across the company to produce results and drive profits. One participant said,

> At least for our company it is quarter after quarter after quarter, you're only as good as your last quarter. We are intensively profit-driven, we are the most profitable arm in the [conglomerate] family, bar none. So we live and die by our quarterly number. So that's the pressure you, you feel. It creates this competition. Because yeah, how do I get credit. That number, I helped somehow, how do I get that to reflect my success so I can stay on board or grow?

Group 3 members discussed how this results-driven culture creates pressures on them to deliver their projects. One participant said a "culture of conflict" was "in the bloodstream" of the company. Another said the competitive environment is like "a virus."

Group 3 members also talked about what it means that the culture is process-driven and how the process for submitting projects to creative services goes through a central, automated system. One participant shared that once she did not log all her project information into the system and was reprimanded. She said,

> I just got my hand slapped for using informal communications, not putting things- every comment into Tracker. Got my hand slapped and there was a comment on

> it, you know. Like, no. Like don't speak outside of Tracker, everything has to go into Tracker.

Unlike previous groups, this group did not talk about work-arounds to their process. They indicated that, because their business partners are not located in the building with them, they do not form those informal relationships that come with face-to-face interaction. They said that they email and text each other, but those communications tend to be more formal than informal. Therefore, the group did not indicate that there are any informal communication-based remedies for slow project processes.

Information. Group 3 members characterized information as an unevenly shared resource. The group discussed how they struggle to be included in conversations about business initiatives. The participants talked about how management, in both marketing and among the business partners, do not share information consistently. One participant said,

> It seems like there's a closed door meetings here where senior management gets direction, perspective, forms opinions…they make some decisions. They make some assumptions, what have you. And then it comes back to us. Okay, maybe I see some of it. But I'm also hearing this from the leadership here. So why are they not exactly in sync? Like, what I often think that they're not in sync. I hear something from someone here in marketing and then I hear something from the business and I'm like, eh I see some similarities, but then you throw in global and I'm completely confused.

The members' lack of participation in strategic conversations keeps the group from functioning efficiently.

Communication and Roles

As noted above, sharing information is a major communication challenge that affects role enactment. Unlike previous groups, Group 3 members did not discuss informal communications and relationship building as a way for them to combat these role issues. Group 3 members said they have a hard time forming these relationships because their business partners are not located in their office. One participant said,

> Yeah, the virtualness of it is a bit much. And there's something to be said for if those people were face-to-face, maybe I might have more of a rapport with you because I see you in the lunch room, on a regular basis. And I say, "Hey, I know this project isn't due for you to approve for another week, could you, but, do you think you could try to get it in, you know sometime this week and get it done?"

Communication within Group 3 helps them cope with their role issues. They discussed how the group members get along well, and they rely on each other to deal with daily challenges. When asked about what aspects of communication help them do their jobs, a few of the participants mentioned the communication within their team. One person said,

> The biggest strength is this team. Even though a lot of the reasons in my mind this team is here is because of the negative things we talked about. How else are you going to survive and how else are you going to get the work done, unless you somehow developed some sort of community like this?

Another participant said,

> I think what, what really helps get you through and, and makes your good days are, are the peer-to-peer relationships that you forge with people….the people that, you know, offer a hand when you need one are the people who define kind of what this company wants to be at its highest form.

His thoughts were widely agreed upon within the group. The manager of the group discussed how the group's camaraderie is well-known. She explained how the reputation of the group leads to an overwhelming number of internal applications for any opening on the team.

Other Observations and Questions

Because Group 3's members did not have issues with others trying to do their jobs, the group did not discuss skill sets. From the session, it seems like the company's financial position has resulted in limited staffing to perform work. This limitation has ensured that specialized roles stay within their role boundaries, because people need to be focused on their core duties and do not have the ability to go beyond those duties. Although a lack of staffing that most likely cuts across functions could result in more people scrambling to get work done and breaching role boundaries, that role encroachment does not seem to be happening in this group. In addition, because the company is so highly bureaucratic, specialized roles have been created and maintained.

Organizational culture and structure were discussed at length. These features emerged as deciding factors in how resources are shared and roles enacted. This group did not have the ability to build relationships that help them work around process inadequacies is unique. The effect of not having these informal communication resources seems to explain at least some of the tension and frustration of Group 3's members. Future research could include relationship-building channels as a resource.

Summary of Group 3

Group 3 operates within the most complex organizational structure of all the groups in the study because of their international headquarters and their matrix hierarchy. They have been affected by big-picture strategic issues as the company continued to change and foster a competitive environment. Group 3's members have not experienced encroachment from other communication functions, seemingly because the company is lean on staffing and is precisely hierarchically ordered with specialized roles. The factors affecting Group 3's role enactment have been the unclear strategic direction within the company and scarce information sharing from the group's business partners.

Group 4 Analysis

Group 4's biggest challenge is that colleagues from all levels of the business interfere with marketing. Group 4's work has been encroached upon by people at all levels of the business. Group 4 members discussed their frustration that the whims from senior leadership or salespeople can scrap months of work and thousands of budget dollars. The group members discussed how they manage their role and try to keep moving forward despite the ambiguity and conflict they face when other people overstep their bounds and dictate marketing tasks and strategic direction.

Background on Group 4

Group 4's company is a regional consumer goods company on the East Coast of the U.S. Founded in the 1940s, the company is privately held and family owned and employs over 1,500 people. The company's offices include manufacturing facilities, warehouses, and a headquarters building. Group 4's participants work in the headquarters.

Four members of the marketing department joined the group, including the manager of the team. The company does not have internal public relations or creative services teams. Instead, the marketing team hires outside professionals and agencies for public relations and creative work. Even though the manager attended, the meeting participants seemed to speak freely about their challenges. The participants laughed and shared inside jokes. The manager also encouraged group members to speak up with candor. Group members spoke freely about the negative aspects of their jobs. The manager supported the views of the participants as they discussed positives and negatives of their roles.

Group 4's meeting was held in an conference room on the first floor of the two-story headquarter building in a rural area west of the city. The conference room had windows at ground level overlooking landscaping outside the office. The meeting was set for 11 a.m. I arrived early and had a 15 minute wait in the lobby. The building was decorated extensively for Christmas. The day of the meeting was the company's annual Christmas potluck party, which was held in a large room just past a display area off the lobby. As I waited in the lobby for my contact, I examined the reading materials on the coffee tables, which included company history as well as inspirational Christian texts. I also explored a display area, which featured the company's products. While in the display area, the president of the company came into the room. I recognized him from a project I did with him many years ago when I worked for a company that Group 4's company partnered with on promotions. He did not remember me, but he was friendly. We spoke about the party and how good it smelled in the room. He left, and I went back to sit in the lobby.

My contact came to the lobby to get me and we proceeded to the meeting room. My contact was a stranger to me. I had acquired his name from a mutual acquaintance. He responded to my cold call for the meeting and was very accommodating. We spoke once on the phone prior to the meeting to discuss the project and expectations for the focus groups. I provided pastries, fruit, water, and coffee for the meeting. The group members seemed comfortable with one another. We discussed the holiday party and my history of working with my previous company and my experiences in the retail industry. We discussed mutual contacts at my old company to break the ice. The group was a bit more formal at first because I did not have anyone to vouch for me in this group.

However, as the group conversation became more open, I was able to prove my insider status through the questions I asked and corporate lingo I used during the session.

Results of Group 4's Focus Group

Public Relations and Marketing.

Because Group 4 controls the public relations aspects of their work through outside agencies, there is no conflict between the functions of public relations and marketing. Group 4 members discussed how they hire various agencies to conduct public relations, design, and social media work. Group 4 members indicated that they are able to direct the work of the agencies and give them firm directions. Agencies rarely overstep the bounds clients set for them, so for Group 4, the relationship between public relations and marketing is not contentious. Therefore, this relationship is not an issue for Group 4. However, other groups internal to the organization encroach on marketing work. This encroachment is reviewed below.

Roles Issues

Group 4 faces intense encroachment by other people and departments in the organization. The influence comes from many directions. The encroachment by others can be at the level of the strategic direction of a marketing campaign all the way down to the selection of a color on a package. The group discussed how this interference creates inefficiencies, because the marketing team ends up wasting time and money. In addition, the interference causes the organization to be slow to respond to competition in the marketplace.

Role ambiguity. Group 4 members' plans and output can be changed at the whim of many people in the company. This involvement of others into their work has led to role ambiguity. The marketing group knows its formal role in the organization and works to fulfill that role. However, it is not clear to Group 4's members if they have the final say, so they often wait to see if a project will go through the organization's management for final approval instead of relying on their own expertise to finish projects. This ambiguity leads to frustration. One participant said,

> There's also sort of the tactical decisions at the level that we would execute and there's also bigger decisions that you think that there would be more of that strategy, and it's like, hey look, as long as we're hitting the strategy I'm okay that, you know, it's blue or red or it's, you know, you're going to, to sample it this way or that way, but I think what that senior level does they've grown up in this company and saw it developed at the tactical level so tactical for them is the strategy. So it would be - and there's nothing inherently wrong with that, but what you end up having is saying, 'Whoa, the most important thing today is that green should be blue,' and at their level can be really hard for the marketers to deal with because it's like well, we're moving past that we're worried about what's in the cup and how it's going to be sold, you're worried about green is blue, and that's gonna flip us in another direction and it's late in the process.

Role conflict. Group 4's main role conflict is between defending their role and work they are supposed to do, and allowing management to take over. The group members discussed a continual struggle between being able to see a project through and reacting once someone else comes in and tells them what to do. One participant said,

> I remember one evening…upper management came downstairs, with a package design. This whole package and there's this little basting brush on a ramekin in the bottom corner and he goes, "Yeah, I'm just really not sure about that basting brush. You should really look at some different brushes." (laughs) Basting brush. I'm like, really? We're done. That's what we're going to nitpick right now at the end of this project is the look of the basting brush. It's a high level to be making those decisions.

Although the group discussed many examples of this micromanagement, they never talked about pushing back and asserting their role. Instead, Group 4 members indicated that they felt frustrated while performing a role they are supposed to be experts at doing and becoming order takers from top leadership.

Group 4 members discussed how they experience conflict because they waste time and money when they are told to change their output. They also talked about how the myriad changes are hurting them in the marketplace. One participant said,

> Our competitors seem to have captured the nimbleness, quickness and take an idea and blast it out and make it big, and I think what we feel is we're, we've got tons of little ideas that we struggle to kinda launch because there's so many little decisions that get…we're thinking, you know, when you get to the store at the end of the day your competitor has done a better job, and you're ending up in a place you didn't want it to be.

Factors Affecting Role Enactment

Group 4 members talked about several factors that affect how they enact their role. They discussed culture, skill sets, and outside agencies as contributing to efficient and inefficient role enactment.

Culture. Group 4 members discussed how sales drives the company's culture. The group discussed how the sales department dictates what goes out to consumers and how that is unusual; in their prior experience at other companies, marketing would drive the sales initiatives. One participant shared how a recent marketing project was abandoned after sales did not like the elements of the campaign. The participant said,

> When they're the ones that have to execute what we have planned, and if they don't have buy in to our plan, it's going to go nowhere. It's going to sit, you know, the point of purchase and the stuff will just sit in the warehouse because they say they already have a bad taste in their mouth, no pun intended, on a certain product. So if they don't like it, well then their customers aren't gonna like it. Well, you're not going to know that until you put it out there…here sales truly drives marketing.

Group 4 members noted how sales sometimes drives manufacturing as well by promoting new product ideas.

The group talked about the conservative nature of the business culture. One participant gave an example of how their marketing campaigns cannot attack competitors.

This unwritten rule affects how aggressive the marketing team can be in the industry. Group 4 members mentioned how, in their product market, there is one big corporate competitor and the rest are smaller regional companies. The industry, therefore, has a "small world" feel where the competitors all know one another. One participant said, "There's more of a community than you'd ever expect in this business" because of so many regional competitors in the area. The group members said that, because of this community feel, there is an unwritten agreement that the companies will engage only in friendly competition.

In addition to the friendly competitive environment, Group 4 members brought up that the conservative nature of the company is based on its Christian values. I noticed the Christian influence when I was waiting in the lobby for the meeting to begin. The lobby table featured books of favorite Bible verses of the company's founder. The receptionist at the company's switchboard said "Merry Christmas" when she answered the phone and told people to have a "blessed day" when she hung up. Group 4's participants used the example of Halloween to describe the way the Christian culture affects their work. One participant said,

> When I first started in marketing I didn't know you couldn't use black cats and bats and witches. Demonic Halloween characters. So, you know, that was a learning curve for me. Now we've gone away from that. We have happy black cats and happy bats. Still no witches.

Group 4 members indicated that the owners play a major role in setting the culture. The company is run by two family members who have assumed different top leadership roles. These leaders set the tone for the conservative culture and overtly Christian elements of their company norms. Group 4 members indicated that the family members feel an obligation to carry on the business. The top leaders managed the company in a hands-on way and got involved in all aspects of the company. Group 4 members mentioned that the family name is synonymous with the business, so the owners feel obligated to make sure they are involved, but in doing so, they create friction within Group 4. This culture of micromanagement affects the role enactment of the marketing team.

Skill set. Group 4 members discussed how others within the organization perceive that they, too, have marketing skills so they feel entitled to create marketing campaign elements. The most stressful aspect of this perception is that the owners and senior leaders believe that they have the skill set to overtake marketing’s processes. This topic dominated the remainder of the focus group, although the group reluctantly mentioned it halfway through the session. For the first half-hour of the session, participants discussed how they hire and work with outside agencies. The process of working with agencies, as they described it, sounded very well run, and not dysfunctional. I commented that the company seemed like a well-oiled machine. The participants laughed to indicate that it was not so. One participant said,

> The other thing, which is kind of the elephant in the room that I'll, I'll be the first to mention it, is that we have another element that's a little, it's internal in the company, but, uh, has to do with upper management being very involved in marketing. And so one of the issues that we have is that marketing could have done research, written up a creative brief - the upper management may have even seen the creative brief and said, "You know, kinda like where you're going with this" - but they want to be so involved in it that we kind of have to start adjusting our process to bring them in at different stages of these kinds of projects to make sure that we're all still on the same page, because, you know, we could get to the very end where we're getting all the creative and the whole package presented to us and we have to just, you know, trash the whole thing because upper management didn't like it for one reason or another.

Group 4 members discussed how the involvement is not predictable. One participant said, “So it's a tactical thing, and there's no degree of involvement based in proportion to the degree of importance. The biggest things, the smallest things could get the same amount of attention as the most important things."

Group 4 members mentioned sales and warehouse employees, as well as friends of the owners, as influencing the marketing work. The group discussed how they need to have their office doors closed when salespeople are in the building, because the salespeople will barge in and comment on the latest projects. One participant said,

> It's easier to critique than it is to create. And our artists find that a lot. They, it, it's great but, you know, our sales guys come in once a month and [the artists] try to get their door closed quick because if our sales guys go into their office they'll critique everything that they see on their shelves and desks or whatever, but then if we were to say, "You know what, but if your guys used our POP [point of purchase materials] and told them how to sell, then it would be a whole different story. So, you know, it's kind of, it's very easy for them to come in and critique us but if I were to go out and critique their skills it's a whole other story.

The warehouse employees also perceive their role as commenting on marketing output. One participant said, "Everyone from the warehouse level wants to give their opinion. 'I saw this bag come through, I think it should look ...' That's great, thank you."

Group 4 members mentioned that even people outside the company have an influence on the marketing output. They mentioned that one of the owners tends to listen to what people tell him about the products, which translates into suggestions for the marketing team.

When asked why they think they get so much interference from outside their department, the participants speculated possible answers. One participant said,

> Marketing, I think, is more visible and everyone thinks it's fun. I mean until you are working, and it's, that's not that it's not fun, but you know what I mean, it's like your job as well. It's a fun game for everyone. So even people who aren't managers want to give you their opinion, know what I mean? They're not the ones spending the money or the time on the project, so they can fly in and make a comment and then fly back out.

Outside agencies. Group 4 does not share communication responsibilities with any other internal resources. Instead, the group hires agencies and professionals to help them create marketing materials, communicate with media, and post to social media. Group 4 members admitted that most of the agencies serve as tactical “extra hands.” The marketing team sets the strategy.

Group 4 members outlined their use of outside agencies as systematic and measured. They use agencies for advertising, public relations, social media, website maintenance, consumer focus groups, and package design. They discussed how these agencies serve tactical roles and provide extra sets of hands in order to complete their work. The culture of the company affects these resources. One participant discussed how interference from the owners had caused one agency to decline the company’s business. The participant said,

> Yeah, they basically left. They're like, ‘We can't work with you anymore.’ Uh, the reason was is that they said, ‘we brought you lots of good ideas and you basically said no to most of them. And then when we got one idea you changed it, changed it and we revised it, revised it, and then you said, No, we're not going to do that.’ And they said, ‘We were just losing like tons of money on your business’ … What ended up happening is at the end we basically scratched their idea, gave them a drawing that we received from somebody upstairs, and had them recreate the billboard based on a yellow legal pad drawing of what the billboard should look like.

Communication and Roles

Group 4 members discussed how informal communication within the small company has created ambiguity and has led to conflict. As described above, Group 4 members receive informal communications from many colleagues throughout the organization regarding marketing initiatives.

Group 4 members also discussed how they wish project communication within the organization would operate. They talked about their process of writing a creative brief, which is a document that outlines an upcoming project. In the current process, the marketing team sends the brief to the agency doing the work. Then, the marketing team holds a conference call with the agency to discuss the brief and answer questions for the agency. Although Group 4 members asserted that this process is working well, there are still misunderstandings and miscommunication because the key decision makers are not on the conference calls. One participant said,

> When we're briefing an agency making sure that more than just one person with one role is in that meeting, because you know, you can have a conference call, you know, with just the marketing manager and an agency and we can talk through a whole bunch of stuff that's not expressly written in the creative brief because you can only write so much in your creative brief and so you start talking through it. Well, without the other people there there's a lot of stuff that's said in that conversation that doesn't get communicated and then there's a lot of holes to be filled, and I think that, you know, going forward in the last couple of weeks we've been doing a lot more of the whole team being in on the brief with the agency when it's a project that is multi-faceted. So I think that's really important…when it's a marketing plan that's pulling together, integrating multiple people in the department or bringing it to an agency we need to have everybody involved in that communication.

Other Observations and Questions

Group 4's focus on one major problem of encroachment provided a deep description of the factors that affect their role enactment. The discussion did raise some additional questions. First, what is the role of a strong manager in this situation? It seems as if the vice president of marketing, who attended the focus group, has no power to remind management of the group's role in the organization. Therefore, strength of leadership may be a factor that alleviates or aggravates role issues.

Organizational culture again emerged as a primary factor affecting role enactment. Conceptualizing culture as a shared resource needs more attention in this study to understand role enactment. Without understanding types of culture operating in the organization, it may be difficult to isolate other factors that affect role issues and sharing of resources. For example, Group 3's culture is based on strict processes, whereas Group 4's culture is based on results oriented micromanagement. These cultures create norms that affect how people are able to do their jobs, and should be taken into account when analyzing roles.

Summary of Group 4

Group 4 members suffer from severe encroachment from many other people within the organization. This encroachment does not come from public relations, because the organization outsources its public relations work to agencies. Instead, the encroachment comes from executive leadership and sales. The encroachment is caused because other people perceive marketing as something that is fun and can be done by anyone. The entrepreneurial culture of the company contributes to the encroachment. Group 4 members experience role conflict because they are tasked with marketing for the company, but they also need to defer to top company management who are above Group 4 in the organization's hierarchy.

Group 5 Analysis

Group 5's role relationships are defined by its culture of openness and personality of a business start-up. In Group 5, members of the marketing department, participants spoke of very few conflicts, which they credited to the open atmosphere and flexibility of the organization. They did describe some conflict due to growing pains of the organization. Because they do not have a public relations department, they spoke of their relationship with other groups within their division of the organization as well as the IT division. These relationships work well, but they could benefit from increased communication.

Background on Group 5

Located in the suburbs of a major city on the East Coast of the U.S., Group 5's company is a privately held, technology company that employs approximately 100 people. The company provides sales and marketing applications for mobile marketing and customer relationship management (CRM); it also provides data analysis tools. The company was founded in the late 1990s, but it transformed its product offerings in the last three years. Because of the transformation, the company's stated mission and vision is that of a technology start-up, rather than of a decades-old service business.

Two members of the social media marketing team joined the focus group, the manager and a specialist. One other person was scheduled to join the group but backed out at the last minute due to an unplanned scheduling conflict. This team creates content to promote the company's services. Due to the small size of the group, we were able to talk in detail about each question. The group provided insights into how the group shared resources, communicated, and overcame challenges with other departments in the company.

Group 5's meeting was held in a conference room that had no windows. The meeting was set for 11 a.m. The company's office was on the first floor of a two-story, shared office building. My contact for this meeting was my former student who had been hired into her position after an internship two years prior to the focus group meeting. I provided water and pastries for the meeting. My contact walked me to her cubicle to wait for the other participant. We chatted about our lives, and she asked about my family. I noticed that there were many plants around the office, and the cubicle decorations were more personalized than in other offices I had worked in previously and in those I visited during this project. I could tell that there was much more flexibility here for employees to personalize their experiences within the company. Because my contact was a new employee, she seemed to defer to her manager throughout the meeting. However, I was comfortable asking her to speak up and she was comfortable doing so when asked directly. I was sure to ask her pointed questions throughout the session.

The participants in this focus group talked about an open culture in which employees regularly see the top executives in the office. The top executives handle different parts of the business. One handles the customer-facing side, including sales and marketing. The other top executive handles the information technology (IT) programming functions. Group 5 members indicated that these sides of the business operate mostly separately, with their day-to-day activities rarely overlapping. The organization does not have a public relations department, because the company’s focus is on business-to-business communication through marketing. When they need public relations work, they hire a consultant to complete that work. Group 5 members indicated they do not interact with any public relations consultants. However, the participants in the focus group interact regularly with other functions within the organization, which will be the focus of the results. Even though this group did not reflect on the research questions regarding marketing and public relations, the results explained role issues and the use of shared resources in a small organization.

Results of Group 5's Focus Group

Public Relations and Marketing

The relationship between public relations and marketing was not explored in this group because there is no public relations group in the company for the reasons mentioned in the previous section. As with other groups, this structure shows there is not a one-size-fits-all configuration of marketing and public relations in organizations. Future research needs to consider how to study these groups within organizations when each organization defines and structures their communications functions differently.

Roles Issues

Role integration. Group 5 members characterized the roles within the organization by their placement in the overall structure of the organization. Organizational functions are arranged under the leadership of each of the two founders. One side of the business includes the marketing and customer-facing functions, which are arranged in various departments. The other side of the business includes the information technology and software development functions, which includes various specialized departments. Role integration varies by where the roles are in the overall organizational structure. Within the marketing side of the business, Group 5 members agreed that the roles are integrated well and collaborate effectively. The participants indicated that they are able to work effectively with other people in their organization because they rely on each other to adapt to any obstacles that arise. For example, Group 5 members go to the technical support departments directly when they experience technical issues with their work. The open atmosphere and small company help Group 5 members integrate their work with others in the organization.

Role conflict. Group 5 members identified some areas of conflict among various roles. First, they discussed having to share the design team. According to the participants, the design team provides graphic design for multiple internal clients. The use of this shared resource creates conflict for the design team members as well as their clients. During the focus group, the manager said,

> We have great communication with them [the design team]. It's kind of a two way street, in terms of you know, we provide some ideas on our direction like what we think this could be executed. And then, they have a lot of those same ideas, too and we kind of collaborate together to get those done. I would say that the only friction points that we have are really in terms of bandwidth. Like, because they are being stretched by other teams as well. Sometimes, the turn around's usually pretty quick, but we have to get into the queue sometimes.

The friction comes from informal processes of getting on the design team's project list. The manager said that the design team takes projects on a "first-come, first serve" basis and by project priority. He said, "So, if something, if they're working on a project and something that comes up that's a higher need, they'll sometimes bump that project." He went on to say that having your project bumped to later in the queue and after another one is completed can cause stress because "everybody's trying to get everything done as quickly as they can."

In addition, Group 5 members mentioned a marketing operations team member that creates conflict within their group. The marketing operations team assists the social media marketing team by building email lists for direct communication efforts. Although the social media team does not have an issue with the social media marketing team, they mentioned that one person on the marketing operations team is the most stressed resource in the organization: This marketing operations team member not only builds the marketing list for the social media team, but she also administers the sales management software, and a marketing automation tool. Because of her many duties that affect other members of the organization, as well as external clients, the participants indicated this person is spread thin and faces seemingly impossible expectations for completing work. Although the marketing operations person is pulled in many directions, Group 5 has no issues with her work on their tasks. The social media manager indicated that she is "one of the most highly stressed people on the team," but she doesn't create any bottlenecks because "she's good."

One of the focus group participants, the social media specialist, indicated that she has become a shared resource recently due to an unexpected increase in potential clients. The customer success team asked the social media specialist to fill in on contacting potential sales leads, because marketing efforts were generating more leads than the customer success staff could handle. The social media specialist is performing a sales role in addition to her marketing role, which is outside of her team's responsibility. She indicated that performing sales tasks has been positive, because it helps her see another side of the business and better understand the customer experience. However, it has become a stress point according to the manager. Because the specialist is now a shared resource between marketing and sales, role conflict is created. The role conflict occurs because, when the specialist is performing sales duties, she cannot complete her marketing work. Although she is helping to achieve company goals, she does not have enough time to fulfill both roles properly. According to the manager,

> We're willing to [take on some sales duties], but something's got to give because [the specialist]'s also being pulled in that other direction. So, we gotta make sure that we bring it back to we're making sure we're working on the right priorities.

Although there is conflict here, the manager indicated it is being addressed with the founder by trying to understand priorities and make sure all work is being handled properly.

Role ambiguity. Group 5 members did not cite role ambiguity as a large problem. Due to the small size of the company, people generally have well-defined roles. However, focus group respondents indicated that the entrepreneurial nature of the company, with two founders in charge, leads to role ambiguity at times. The respondents discussed times when the founders of the company, who set the strategic direction, can implement pet projects that have not been planned. The manager said,

> Because we are a smaller company, and because a lot of kind of the strategic directions coming from one person, occasionally, there can be pet projects or things that you know, might not be in a plan that sound like a good idea to him [the founder], and then we kind of have to execute on that pretty quickly. So I'd say that's probably the biggest pain point for me is kind of there's not as concrete of a quarterly or yearly plan that I've experienced at other companies.

Although the smaller company and entrepreneurial culture is seen as a benefit for reducing role ambiguity, it can also be a hindrance when the leadership can change direction and dictate decisions for all to follow without notice.

Factors Affecting Role Enactment

Group 5 members discussed factors that affect their roles, including shared resources. The shared resources important to the focus group participants are the design team, information technology resources, leadership access, and meeting time. In addition, focus group participants mentioned resources that are not available now but would be helpful in performing their roles. These desired resources include additional support personnel within their department.

Design team. The shared design team provides graphic design support for marketing and sales efforts. In discussing the design team, Group 5 members indicated that they easily share this resource. The manager indicated that "how well things work [with the design team] is great," and he said the relationship was a "two-way street."

Information technology. An information technology support group provides development of the company's application products and administration of the company's technology systems. According to the marketing manager, the relationship is "seamless." Group 5 members indicated that the IT support group is always on call, which provides on-demand support for the marketing team. Group 5 members said that the IT group has a positive and helpful attitude, so the groups interact well interpersonally.

Leadership. Group 5 members defined leadership resources as direction from executives and long-term planning set by the leadership of the organization. The participants indicated that the leadership resources are shared by all the employees in the marketing and sales side of the business as the project assignments and tasks come from the founder in charge of marketing and sales. According to the marketing manager, the founder helps the marketing teams "prioritize projects, come up with ideas."

Meeting time. Meetings were discussed as a resource during which decision-makers on projects came together to determine final direction on projects and agree to the direction of each project deliverable. The meetings coincide with the marketing group's six-week project cycle during which they plan and implement new marketing campaigns. Group 5 members described the meetings as a shared resource during which all the marketing and sales employees gather the information they need to conduct new projects. According to the respondents, the meetings are a "pretty set system" that is "kind of known by everybody that's what we're gonna do every six weeks and just kind of keep it moving."

Desired resources. In addition to resources the group shares, Group 5 members also mentioned issues with resources they did not have but need. These missing resources were aspirational in that Group 5 felt having these resources would help them do their job. The first is more people to process sales leads developed by the marketing team. The second is an online system to prioritize design projects. Both of these issues came up during discussion of stress points for the team. According to the marketing team, they are being asked to take on "a pure sales role" to follow up on leads the sales team cannot handle, which causes marketing work to be put farther down a to-do list. In addition, the tracking system is needed so that the current design team queue can be better managed.

Communication and Roles

Group 5 members indicated that their informal organizational culture benefits the enactment of roles because it allows for easy interactions with people who can help complete tasks. The informal culture also provides links between interdependent groups within the organization via formal meetings and informal interaction in the office. They cite that anyone they need to communicate with is easily accessible including the founders of the company. The manager said,

> The size of the company helps a lot with [our ability to do our jobs well] because we do have a process in place but we're not process driven to the point that we can't move quickly and address things that need to be addressed in terms of like priorities. I guess along with that comes good accessibility to some of the thought leaders in the company. So like, our president, I can drop by his office at any point and bounce an idea off of him or say I'm stuck on this part of the project and it works pretty quickly to kinda get the feedback that we need.

The specialist indicated that the size of the company and open communication helps her perform her role. She said, “That’s the benefit of a small company. Just turn around and there’s who you need, so that’s good.”

The manager cited open communication as a way to overcome the role ambiguity created when the specialist began taking on the sales role. The manager said that the team members were able to have a conversation with the person who heads the customer success and sales team and with the founder to discuss priorities. Through this meeting, they agreed to reduce some of the specialist’s marketing duties so that she can be free to work on the most pressing sales priorities.

In addition to the face-to-face communication, the participants talked about other informal communication that helps keep the organization connected. The communication is facilitated by an IT resource. According to the specialist,

> An informal thing that's working for us is another tool we use called Slack. And Slack is kind of like a, almost like an instant messenger type of thing where you can talk to different team members and that's good for kind of like the quick hit, day to day, like hey what's going on with this part of the project or I need this or can you send me that. That’s a good kind of like informal way for us to communicate.

The focus group participants indicated that Slack allows them to stay connected better and helps alleviate any confusion in their roles.

The only issue the focus group participants discussed as a negative is the lack of formal communication that would help their day-to-day processes function better. The participants named a new, technology-based, formal project tracking system that helps all stakeholders understand where the projects are in their life cycle. The manager explained,

> So Trello is a way to kind of track a project, you can create uh essentially a, a card for a project which has all the details on it, who owns the product, and what essentially the steps are in that project. And then as one person finishes their part,

> they you know essentially slide the card to the next person and they do their part and then they slide it to the next person. So in terms of formality, that, that's, we're kind of moving in that direction and it helps us a lot cause you essentially know exactly where a project is, who's got it, who's working on what. So it, it gives everybody more viability into like the tasks at hand.

However, the participants indicated that this communication process is new and needs to be utilized more to prevent specific issues of projects getting lost or being moved farther down the queue.

Other Observations and Questions

Although not part of the shared resources conversation, the participants discussed a cultural divide within the company that also leads to knowledge silos. The manager discussed that, although there is a cohesive culture and role integration on the marketing side of the business, there is not integration with the IT and programming side of the business. Because the founders lead the marketing side and the IT side of the business, the groups do not fall under the same leadership. Therefore, according to the focus group participants, there is a clear divide between the groups. The focus group participants indicated that, although the IT side of the business is invited to sit in on bi-weekly marketing status meetings, they rarely do. But the marketing manager has attended IT meetings. The manager indicated that this divide could be a problem, because it makes good business sense for everyone in the company to see what is happening with the products from development to marketing to customer experience. The manager said,

> I think that it would help me be more effective. I think it would help us both be more effective. So for instance, we're putting a lot of energy behind our social presence right now. So like on Twitter, on LinkedIn, and a couple other channels and one of the things we want to talk more about are like cool things that are going on with the product, cool things that are new enhancements, you know, changes that have taken place that will affect our users. So I think having more visibility into those specifics would help and I think it's gonna happen. So I think it's gonna be like a priority for us.

By closing this knowledge gap, the manager sees an opportunity for more effective role enactment. Given this discussion, it seems as though knowledge, or the lack thereof, is an important intangible shared resource that should be further investigated in future research. When asked why the knowledge divide exists, the manager said, “I think that there's definitely a different cultural feel between the two teams. I would say that we're a little bit louder. A little bit more social sometimes.”

Summary of Group 5

Group 5’s company is by far the smallest and youngest in the study. The members of this group did not report many role issues. The company’s size and entrepreneurial spirit give Group 5 members the motivation to do whatever is needed to complete their work. The group did not report experiencing encroachment. However, they do see a need for better communication across business units to enhance productivity and effectiveness. This group seemed to address any role issues as they occur, as evidenced by the recent change to one participant’s job to take on some sales duties. Effective communication with leadership seems to help Group 5 avoid any major issues with their roles.

Group 6 Analysis

At the beginning of my focus group series, I decided to conduct two sessions in one company – one with the public relations group and one with the marketing group. Group 1’s manager gave me a contact for someone in his company’s communication department. Group 1 went through a restructuring shortly after my meeting with them, so my meeting with the communications team in that organization never materialized.

My contact in Group 3 (marketing) passed along an invitation to her colleagues in communication, and I was able to return to Group 3’s company to meet with its public relations team. The goal of doing this companion focus group was to see how people in public relations and marketing assessed each other. Because Group 6 (public relations) is in the same company as Group 3, I will refer to some of the differences from what Group 3 discussed. However, the focus of this section is on Group 6 as a separate analysis.

Even though Group 6 (public relations) and Group 3 (marketing) are in the same company, the issues discussed were unique to Group 6. Group 6 members' biggest issue is the tight control of information by business partners due to the conservative culture of the company. Group 6 also struggles with regulatory processes within the company that delay their work.

Background on Group 6

Group 6 is in the same company as Group 3. Group 6's company calls itself a global technology company. It is a publically held conglomerate with nine distinct divisions organized by product offering. A Fortune Global 500 company, the conglomerate operates in more than 190 countries and employs almost 400,000 people. Headquartered in Europe, the conglomerate's history dates back almost 200 years.

Although my contact for this meeting manages the external communications team, he invited colleagues who work on the internal communications team to the meeting as well. The external communications team handles public relations, media relations, and social media for three global business units and all of North America. The internal communications team includes employee and executive communications as well as creative services. These two teams have separate managers, but they report to the same executive team. For a summary of the responsibilities of Group 3 and Group 6, see Table 2.

Table 2

Responsibilities of Group 3 and Group 6

Group 3	Group 6
Marketing communications (external)	Public relations (external) Media relations (external) Social media (external) Employee communications (internal) Executive communications (internal and external) Shared Services (internal design resource used by other departments)

Group 6's meeting was held in a conference room with windows in the company's newly renovated, three-story headquarters building in the suburbs of the city. The meeting was set for 9 a.m. My contact for the meeting was suggested to me by my contact from Group 3. Group 6's contact was a stranger to me, and we only discussed the meeting via email prior to the focus group session. My contact met me at the front desk and escorted me to the conference room. Some of the participants were already there waiting. I provided bagels, water, and coffee for the meeting. The participants eagerly partook in the refreshments and chatted among themselves as I prepared. One participant asked if I was a student at Temple and asked if I knew a certain professor there. I did know her and we chatted about that professor as the others took their seats. The group was jovial and very talkative. My contact was gregarious and set the tone for the meeting in terms of open communication. I felt I did not have to prove my insider status because my contact set me up as an authority when he introduced me, but I was also an insider because he mentioned to the group that I knew their colleague in Group 3 and that I had worked in corporate communication.

Group 6 members discussed how they work with both the centralized global groups, which is called the factory by those within the company, and the support structure, which is called the region by those inside the company. Although the group was split between the external and internal teams, the discussion provided insight into their use of shared resources, role enactment, and communication. Because Group 6 works with Group 3, which was the marketing communications team, the discussion addressed the divide between public relations and marketing. Throughout the focus group session, Group 6 members made it clear that they did not respect or value Group 3 members' contributions to the communication efforts of the company. More about this is mentioned in the findings for this group.

The managers of both the public relations and the internal communications teams attended the meeting, but they did not seem to affect the discussion, because the conversation was about resources outside the two teams.

Since Group 3's session, the company restructured its communications functions. This restructuring affected Group 6 by putting them under a new leadership team. The company created a marketing sales support and communications team that consolidates the marketing communications, public relations, and other communications functions. The company implemented this change about six weeks before Group 6's session.

Results of Group 6's Focus Group

Public Relations and Marketing

Group 6 members did not indicate any conflicts with the marketing team. When discussing people responsible for the marketing communications in the business, Group 6 members indicated that marketing communications does not positively affect their work. Group 6 members said that, when they try to get information from the marketing communications team about new product launches, marketing communications does not have any information. Instead, the marketing communications people act as project managers, and they are go-betweens for the public relations and business partners. One participant said, "We ask our marcomms [marketing communications people] what's coming up…what's new? What are we showing at this next trade show? [They say], let me go talk to product marketing, and then they come back and tell us, and then the process begins."

Group 6 members provided a very different assessment of Group 3 (marketing communications) than Group 3 had of themselves. Group 6 members' view is that marketing communications does not provide valuable support to the organization through strategic communication. Instead, as a result of staffing changes and hiring weak candidates, Group 6 members said that Group 3 is not a valued partner in the company. One participant said,

> And how aggressive they are and how willing they are to learn plays a huge role [in how we see Group 3 and how we work with them]. And if they're rather passive and they don't really want to invest in the business and see this as a stepping stone to something else, that's the quality of communication you're gonna get. I started here a little over 5 years ago, so I was at that point ... [another focus group participant] mentioned [earlier] a transition from the kind of older school marcom to the new model and I've seen a precipitous drop overall in, in the quality of my interaction with them because they just aren't as knowledgeable

> and that's a real frustration for me. That is exactly what it is ... constantly chasing, following up, and because they often don't know and they have to ask other people.

Another participant added, “Or they delegate, then, to their interns and contractors and that becomes a huge issue and then it's just ridiculous. Then it's just a mess.” What is notable is that Group 3 (marketing) members did not mention Group 6 (public relations) at all during their focus group session. Group 3 members’ major concern was their internal business partner clients. It seems as if Group 6 members had a broader view of the business, whereas Group 3 members struggled with their internal clients.

Role Issues

Group 6 members did not report overwhelming problems with ambiguity or conflict. The ambiguity and conflict they do experience is caused by the culture of the organization and its matrix structure. Details on ambiguity and conflict follow.

Role ambiguity. Group 6 members discussed how their team structure causes confusion with clients. The group discussed how internal clients think that anyone in the department can do any type of communication and often ask them to take on tasks outside of their roles.

In addition, the lack of internal information sharing leads to the ambiguity. For example, an internal communications specialist told how he is often asked to draft press releases, which is not his responsibility. He said,

> So I was supporting the senior vice president of [a business unit] … and I had to sign a non-disclosure agreement…[my boss the head of public relations] wasn't on the [NDA] list. [The head of internal communications] wasn't on the list. Our VP was not on the list. So, in theory, technically I'm not really allowed to discuss it with my boss. Furthermore, I was the communications lead and I said well, I don't handle PR. I handle the internal, so can we bring [public relations] in? No, we don't really want to have too many people signing NDAs. And as we're going along, they're [the business partner] like, Well, we want a press release. And I

> said, I don't...we have structures in place. We have processes in place. Like, I can't just say oh sure, I'll draft a press release and [my boss] can just sign off and we'll get it published. Like there's processes involved. [Global] has to review and things like that. It was, I think, the week before the deal was ready to close and they were like, hey, where are we with the press release? I'm like, I've been saying all along, I don't do this. And they're like, Okay, now you can bring him [public relations manager] in the conversation. And at that time, that was before [the public relations manager] had full responsibility for global, so then I had to reach out to our global counterpart who was out on family leave or whatever and then it was kind of one of those things, it was just kind of an example of, you know let's keep everything kind of close to our vest. Then all of a sudden, it was like, we need to do it. We need to do it. And then finally, you know, got it done. So I think that's, that's pretty typical.

Role conflict. Group 6 members discussed how the lack of information sharing leads to role conflict, because team members often do not know what they can share with their managers and peers. Therefore, keeping the information quiet conflicts with the ability to coordinate with their manager and teammates. One participant said,

> We regularly have calls with the internal communications people on their side to keep tabs on what's going on. For me, I get direction right from the VP for [the business unit]…and she'll come to me and be like, don't talk about this with anybody, it's confidential. So then it's kind of like when we go and have those meetings [with internal communications] it's like, okay, what do they know? What don't they know? What am I allowed to say? What am I not allowed to say? You know, are we all on the same page?" All internal ...we should all be on the same page from a timeline communications perspective, but that's one thing that I find interesting from that relationship perspective…and half the time everyone's on the same page. It's just no one knows that they're all on the same page because they don't talk about it because they've been told not to talk about it.

Overall, the company's culture and its emphasis on secrecy has created many issues for Group 6. The conflict and ambiguity they reported is not a function of the formal roles they have been given. The informal norms and strict policies create confusion and result in ineffective role enactment.

Factors Affecting Role Enactment

Group 6 members discussed culture, information sharing, and online project management systems as factors affecting role enactment. The culture was discussed at length, because it has a widespread effect on the Group 6's work.

Culture. Group 6 members pointed to the company's culture as the most challenging aspect of their job. The group described the culture as conservative, because of its European roots and its place in the tightly regulated healthcare industry. They said that the global teams, especially the people based in Europe, embody a very cautious culture. Because the company develops healthcare equipment, the culture is influenced by the engineering focus of its products. The group members shared how they compete against many formidable competitors, which causes competition internally to deliver results. The group said "everything needs to be done yesterday."

Group 6 members discussed how the company's conservative culture makes it risk averse. One participant said,

> [The company is] very risk adverse vis a vis an American company. Very much a culture of no surprises; even good surprises, we don't want to know. We don't want any surprises, even if they're great. And the kind of culture of, you know, the, the mind of an engineer. If you keep those things in mind, some of the craziness actually kind of starts to make sense. I'm not saying I agree with it, but, you know, if you approach a problem and you're like, 'Okay, how would a serious engineer who doesn't like any kind of surprises ... How would that person react?' If you come up with that profile in mind, you generally do well.

The aversion to risk affects Group 6's members' jobs, because they are often told they are not allowed to communicate information, which makes their efforts weak compared to competitors.

Information. Group 6 members discussed how the conservative culture affects information sharing between business units and the communications teams. The participants said the factory, the internal name of the centralized global team, is reluctant to share information on new products and other initiatives that need to be communicated to customers. They talked about how the information is so tightly controlled that they have to sign internal non-disclosure agreements. A non-disclosure agreement is a legal document that prohibits the signer from discussing information with others inside or outside the organization. One participant said,

> And so the factory tends to keep information very tight, and I've never worked in a company in my life where we have to sign internal NDAs to really find out anything. Legal NDAs to even find out basic things to then do your job…It's typically around new product introductions or business strategy topics.

Group 6 members attribute this tight regulation to the desire for control by the centralized global factory team. One participant said, “I think it's really around secrecy and control,” which leaves the team scrambling to keep up with new developments and communicate them in a timely way. The comments on a closed culture in this organization raise the question regarding the openness of Groups 3 and 6 to share information with me. As a communication insider who has worked in corporate communications, I was able to build rapport and add sympathetic comments to show that I could understand their frustrations. This helped to create an openness in the group, which manifested in blunt talk about other groups in the organization and even the executive team management. As with any human subjects, participants probably held back some of their thoughts and feelings. However, I was able to empathize, which facilitated an open dialogue.

Online project tracking systems. Group 6 members talked about online project tracking systems. The group used different systems for projects depending on the business partner. The group discussed how the systems came along with companies their company acquired over the years. Therefore, the systems were fragmented.

Group 6 members discussed how the project-tracking tool works well to route projects. However, the review process for communication projects is cumbersome based on the company's requirements for regulatory control. Group 6 members need to get their projects approved by subject matter experts within the organization and by lawyers for the company. The group members discussed how oftentimes there are too many people involved in reviews and sometimes the reviewers are uncooperative. One participant said,

> It's a necessary evil … in terms of regulatory and legal review. Like, they make sure that we're saying the right things about the products and making sure that we're not contributing to anything off-label. So it's a necessary evil, but I think where it gets challenging in my perspective…is in how many people not necessarily need to, but are added onto that review process for sake of CYA [cover your ass] purposes. So you can have a list that's 11 people long, when you really you only need legal regulatory because all these other people should have had input earlier on in the process.

Another participant said, "They keep adding more people, so she's got, in some instances, 25, 30 people that have to see something, which is insane…[the other] main problem is [we've] got difficult people who don't want to do their jobs" and review the materials.

Communication and Roles

Because of the rigorous approval process and the scarcity of information, Group 6 members indicated that they rely on internal communications networks to do their jobs. The participants discussed how they are able to form these relationships easily. One participant indicated that he makes time for face-to-face, personal conversations with those who regularly review materials. He said,

> Even if it means….walking over a mile every once in a while [to our neighboring building] to where our regulatory people sit and chatting with them or talking to them on the phone...doing them favors when they go to a conference and need 11 tchotchkes with the company name on it, I'll contact somebody here and get them and give them to them. But it all, it all works. Sitting with legal and listening to his stories about hunting, which I could not care less about, but, you know, he bagged the big one and so cool.

Group 6 members indicated that another way to get projects approved is to be “the squeaky wheel” and directly contact the people in the review process. One participant said, “So it's whoever's in the face of legal and regulatory that day complaining, their things get approved and then, you know, that's kind of how they operate.” Informal communication helps Group 6 members deal with the difficult sharing of resources.

Similarities and Differences between Groups 3 and 6.

Groups 3 (marketing) and 6 (public relations) both struggle with the culture and structure of their organization. But members in both groups understand the importance of developing and maintaining informal relationships to work around the roadblocks of the highly regulated processes.

Besides the different assessments of Group 3’s effectiveness, other differences emerged between the groups. Group 3 members never mentioned Group 6 as a problem. Group 3’s major problem was business partners, because Group 3 relies on the business partners exclusively to do their jobs. Group 3 does not need information from Group 6. However, Group 6 needs information from Group 3 and from others in the organization. Therefore, Group 6 members see Group 3 as a challenge, because Group 3 members are not informed enough to partner with Group 6 to complete projects. Although just one data point, this difference between these two groups could help explain why the public relations literature focuses on the negative effects of marketing relationships more than marketing literature focuses on public relations literature. Public relations professionals need help from marketing professionals most of the time, while marketing only occasionally needs help from public relations.

The other comparison between Groups 3 and 6 has to do with creative services. Group 3 members did not talk about any issues with their own creative processes. However, it is possible no issues were raised because creative services was in the room during the focus group. It could also be because Group 3 controls creative services and gets their projects done faster than Group 6 does. The control of this resource may be especially beneficial to Group 3.

Other Observations and Questions

Comparing Group 3 and Group 6 shows that marketing team members have an easier time defining their role than does the public relations team. In this company, it seems as though this difference is due to the focus of their work. The marketing team is tasked with a pure marketing focus to promote new products to potential buyers. The public relations and communications teams are fragmented, with different people performing specialized roles such as media relations, internal communications, social media, executive communications, and creative services. Although these specialized roles are important for a robust communications department, the specialization can be confusing for those outside the department.

Group 6 members indicated that they get along well within their team. This subculture helps the team members deal with the issues they face from others in the organization. They share information easily among themselves, except when under NDAs, and work together to achieve their goals. Previous groups expressed the importance of a cohesive culture within their group.

Group 6 members’ discussion of staffing issues within Group 3 raised questions about individual competencies as an influential factor in role enactment. Group 6 members discussed how having a strong person in a communications role will make the communication efforts more effective, because that person can navigate the organization more easily than a timid person. Group 6 members also discussed strength of the manager as a way to alleviate role issues. Therefore, assertiveness in both peers and managers could be a factor in facilitating shared resources and mitigating role issues.

Summary of Group 6

Group 6 members did not express concern about encroachment from the marketing team. In fact, Group 6 members characterized the marketing team as ineffective. Group 6 members did experience role issues within their organization related to information sharing. Their role enactment was hindered by tightly controlled information on new products and efforts that need to be communicated to internal and external audiences. The organization's strict policy on project reviews also led to delays on Group 6's work, which hampers their ability to enact their roles effectively. Group 6 members pointed to informal work-arounds to complete their projects, such as forming relationships with those in charge of the review process and making sure they doggedly followed up with people when there were delays on projects.

This chapter has provided the report of the six focus groups conducted for this dissertation. The next chapter describes a number of themes that emerged from these focus groups and provides both implications and limitations of this research. The next chapter also indicates directions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

The previous chapter outlines the results of each focus group session. Each of the groups can stand alone as its own case study. However, taken together, these focus groups provide answers to the research questions guiding this study. The goals of this dissertation were to (a) investigate how shared resources affect role boundaries and role enactment that can lead to encroachment, (b) explain the concept of encroachment and how it affects role enactment, and (c) investigate the conflict between public relations and marketing that can lead to encroachment in the age of social media. Because this study was exploring encroachment without the guide of existing research on the phenomenon, the findings of the study create definitions and starting points for further exploration of factors affecting encroachment, shared resources, and role enactment. Although the findings are from public relations and marketing groups, the findings as outlined below can be extended to the study of any overlapping and interdependent roles in organizations. This chapter outlines the themes that emerged for each research question. Next, implications related to organizational role theory are reviewed, followed by directions for future research. After the findings, this chapter reviews implications for organizational practice. This chapter ends by outlining the limitations of the study and providing overarching conclusions of the dissertation.

RQ1: How is role overlap or encroachment perceived by people in competing functions in an organization?

The first step in this research was to understand how those experiencing encroachment perceived its existence. Although not every group experienced an acute overtaking of their roles, the focus group feedback featured two themes: task- and process-based encroachment.

The first theme related to this research question is task-based encroachment, which refers to perceptions of co-workers taking over responsibilities related to another person's expected role. This was the most common type of encroachment perceived by participants. To focus group members, it was clear that encroachment may be happening when outside groups or individuals inserted themselves and completed tasks that they should not be completing. The taking over of tasks did not have to be substantial and dramatic to be perceived. Sometimes the encroachment was subtle, like the completion of a mundane task of creating a flyer. However, more complex tasks were subsumed, such as taking over the operation and content of an externally-facing website. In both big and small task-based encroachment, the boundaries of the roles stayed intact, but tasks flowed between roles.

Another theme related to perceptions of encroachment was that roles could also be overtaken by organizational processes. In this instance, the organization set standards, such as project review processes, that must be followed. However, these processes did not always run smoothly, and took longer than expected by those following the processes. When these processes interfered with a group's or individual's ability to complete a task or project, the process was perceived as encroaching on the individual's or group's role. Within this theme of process encroachment, the encroachment was not perceived as intentional, but rather it was attributed to ineffective process design.

One influential aspect of this research should be noted here, which is that the perceptions of encroachment in this study were based on the people who felt encroached upon. This is a critical distinction because these people may have felt victimized by coworkers or by the organizational processes. Therefore, the findings of this study are a one-sided view, which is most likely typical because those encroached upon feel the effects while the encroachers may not think anything of their encroaching. Although Groups 3 and 6 were in the same company, they did not perceive encroachment by each other. Future research could attempt to discuss encroachment with one group that feels encroached upon and with the group accused of encroaching upon them. In other words, having both parties to the encroachment talk about the phenomenon would provide a fuller picture of perceptions.

The implications of these themes for organizational role theory are that encroachment should be added to the role theory literature as a phenomenon that should be viewed from the individual level first, because based on the focus groups, encroachment is in the eye of the beholder. Encroachment of tasks and processes are perceived by the individual first, before effects are felt at the organizational level. The perceptions have real consequences for how people perceive their role and how they feel about working in the organization. If someone feels encroached upon, whether real or imagined, that feeling has consequences, including creating stress, frustration, and output inefficiencies.

Although these focus groups provided insight into two types of encroachment perceived by individuals within departments, it is unclear how frequently people need to perceive encroachment before they react. Future research could focus on how frequent the perceptions need to be until they become an issue for the individual. In other words, future research could identify frequency of encroachment perceptions and find out how frequent the perceptions of encroachment need to be before the person being encroached upon reacts. For example, infrequent perceptions of menial task encroachment may be okay with some people, but if the encroachment is repeatedly perceived, the person being encroached upon may object or react in some other way. Identifying the threshold for reaction to encroachment would increase the understanding of how people perceive it, and provide a baseline for when encroachment perceptions begin to turn into actions that affect the individual and the organization.

RQ2: How is encroachment defined between people in competing functions in an organization?

The definitions of encroachment in this study arise from the perceptions of encroachment. These definitions are based on three factors: outsiders taking over tasks, outsiders providing uninvited advice or direction, and organizational processes being unmanageable.

First, encroachment can be defined as overtaking of one role's or department's tasks by another person or department. As noted in the discussion of RQ1, the taking over of tasks happened most often in these groups. Although it is possible to see someone taking over part of your job as helpful due a reduction in workload, participants described encroachment as negative. People defined task encroachment as negative, because it infringes on their own ability to complete assigned tasks, and it subverts job authority.

Encroachment can also be defined as one person or group providing uninvited strategic advice or direction for projects or tasks that are part of another person's or department's role. This type of encroachment is also negative, because it infringes on the person's final say in how their role is enacted and how their projects are managed. This strategic encroachment can happen when encroachers hold some kind of power in the organization. For example, executive leaders in a company can encroach at will because of their position at the top of the organizational hierarchy. Strategic encroachment can also occur when a group thinks it has more power in the organization, and sees fit to get involved in strategy outside their domain. This group gets involved in the work of other groups, even if they do not have legitimate power in the organization. For example, as in Group 4, when sales is seen as more valued to the company, it holds more power and can encroach easily on aspects of the organization.

Lastly, encroachment can be defined as the intrusion of organizational processes into the work of one role or group of roles. This intrusion was not seen as negative as the other two types of encroachment, because it was not perceived as intentional and did not involve another individual. Instead, this encroachment happened when organizational processes created hardships for a role to be enacted. In this study, focus group participants did not seem to blame anyone for the processes being broken. Instead, they talked about how they stayed within the processes, or worked around them to get their jobs done. Therefore, although processes are a major factor encroaching into their jobs, participants took these processes for granted and saw the processes as immovable. With process encroachment, those who feel encroached upon try to uphold or circumvent the processes rather than trying to change them.

The implications of these findings on organizational role theory are that role encroachment takes many forms, not just one role taking over another. These definitions that emerged from the focus groups indicated that encroachment operates on different levels. The task-based encroachment affects day-to-day work and who does what projects. The strategic encroachment affects the power of the people in the encroached upon role to enact their duties and have a say over final output. The process-based encroachment affects the way the encroached upon role can navigate the organization and get the job done. These implications lead to next steps that will gain a broader understanding of levels of role encroachment and their connections to existing organizational role theory.

These multi-leveled aspects of encroachment link to the branches of organizational role theory. First, within the organizational theory focusing on behavior in a role (Biddle & Thomas, 1966), encroachment can be examined based on how one person decides to do the tasks of the other person and how the person being encroached upon reacts. In this view, encroachment behaviors can be examined to determine what factors lead to someone choosing to encroach and when and how the person being encroached upon reacts. This dissertation did not focus on these behaviors, but results of the study did point to behavioral aspects of encroachment such as leadership providing unwanted strategic direction. Future research should identify behaviors and potential patterns that lead to encroachment.

Second, encroachment can be examined through a systems view (Katz & Kahn, 1978). This systems view of encroachment includes how roles are initially defined and how those role definitions are communicated through organizational networks. The infiltration of role boundaries within the system can be examined to determine how and why encroachment can occur. This dissertation did not ask participants for formal job descriptions or organizational charts, but results showed that position in a hierarchy affects encroachment. Future research should access this official organizational structure information to identify the formal communication networks in the organizational system in addition to gathering feedback from organizational members on their informal networks. Comparing the formal to informal will show how encroachment is defined within the system.

Third, encroachment can be examined through role-relationships within the organization (Hage & Marwell, 1968, 1970). Through this lens, strategic encroachment can be understood based on the relationships that lead to encroachment. This view of encroachment can look at dynamics between the encroacher and the roles and groups being encroached upon. For example, looking at role relationships affecting encroachment can examine types of power, such as legitimate power (French & Raven, 1959), and how it affects the way encroachment occurs and how people manage encroachment. To study encroachment at this level, future research could map pairs of roles within the organization to identify role relationships and how they affect and are affected by encroachment.

In all, encroachment operates on many levels, and role theory can help make sense of how and why encroachment occurs. Now that perceptions and definitions have emerged, gathering more information about roles at these levels will provide a deeper understanding of role enactment. Role theory can be used to characterize the complexities of organizational role encroachment to create a fuller picture of the phenomenon in studies building from this dissertation.

In addition, future research should focus on parsing differences between the types of encroachment: task, strategic, or process. This research can begin by focusing on the three types of encroachment identified in this study, and uncover how they are unique and related. Just as role theory itself focuses on different levels of role enactment, the future study of encroachment should focus on the levels of encroachment and how they affect roles and organizations.

RQ3: How does encroachment operate between people in competing functions in an organization?

Communication and the lack of communication was the main theme uncovered in relation to how encroachment operates. Encroachment operates through communication between individuals in departments and through the communication of organizational norms. Both of these communication elements permit encroachment and facilitate the ability for one person or department to encroach on another.

One way communication affects encroachment is when there is a lack of understanding of one role by people performing another role, and this gap in understanding is not communicated between the people in those roles. For example, in the focus groups, there were cases of a business partner not understanding the role of the communications person, so the business partner just did the communication work himself. On the other hand, encroachment is prevented when others in the organization know the definitions and boundaries of their roles and others and are able to communicate about their roles effectively. When roles are defined and role boundaries are enforced by those serving in the roles, encroachment is prevented. Individual-level understanding of role boundaries and upholding those boundaries through communication help prevent encroachment.

Another way encroachment functions is through communication of and adherence to the organization’s cultural norms. In these groups, norms related to information sharing and executive power led to encroachment. Cultural norms within organizations dictate how roles are enacted, even with formalized role expectations. In the case of these groups, norms overrode the job descriptions of the people in the departments, thereby allowing encroachment. Communication of these norms and the ways organizational members adhere to them either allows or prevents encroachment.

Based on the focus group feedback, encroachment functions through communication in the organization. By not sharing information needed to do a job or by the communication of and adherence to organizational norms that invite encroachment, taking over of other roles’ responsibilities is enabled. Communication can prevent encroachment by making sure everyone understands the boundaries of a role and how those boundaries should not be crossed. Communication about and adherence to organizational culture can also lead to or prevent encroachment. For example, when the accepted culture encourages encroachment based on organizational power, encroachment can permeate the organization. When the accepted culture is based on strict adherence to policies and processes, encroachment is prevented, because role definitions and boundaries are widely understood and respected.

The implications of these findings on organizational role theory is that communication processes need to be understood in relation to role enactment. Previous research on role enactment proposes that communication is vital to the functioning of an organizational system (Katz & Kahn, 1978). Therefore, a deeper understanding of communication practices related to encroachment will uncover how roles are defined and role boundaries are accepted. Looking at the formal and informal communication channels of interdependent departments and roles can identify where breakdowns are occurring and how to fix them. Therefore, organizational role theory development about encroachment should also focus on communication between those in the roles and those who are encroaching. Understanding what type of communication may alleviate or foster encroachment will add to the understanding of how roles interact.

In addition, future research should focus on characterizing the organizational cultural and its effects on encroachment. Organizational culture is prominent in organizational communication theory (Miller, 2016). Most scholars agree that organizational culture involves sharing of norms, values, beliefs, and meanings within the organization (Denison, Nieminen, & Kotrba, 2014; Schein, 2010). More discussion on organizational culture and its role as a shared resource is below under RQ4 and RQ5.

RQ4: What factors affect the existence and intensity of encroachment between people in competing functions in an organization?

The major themes that emerged about factors affecting encroachment were the effects of company culture and role ambiguity. Organizational culture can create expectations of how encroachment can operate. For example, a results-oriented culture allows more encroachment, because results are more important than organizational structure, including the structure of role boundaries. On the other hand, a process-driven culture places a premium on following rules and step-by-step processes, which helps role boundaries stay intact and not be breached by those outside the role. Organizational culture can also dictate how information is shared. If the culture is closed and information is hard to come by, then encroachment may happen more easily, because those with the information use that information to perform another person's or group's tasks. Therefore, company culture can enable or prevent encroachment.

Role ambiguity also affects encroachment. Role ambiguity is "uncertainty about what the occupant of a particular office is supposed to do" (Katz & Kahn, 1978, p. 206). In other words, people suffer from role ambiguity when they do not understand their own role or others' role. Role ambiguity occurs when a person does not have the necessary information to perform his or her role. Not knowing role boundaries can lead to overtaking tasks or strategic direction of another role, or encroachment. First, a person being encroached upon may not understand his or her own role and may let someone else take over tasks within the role unknowingly. This drift can happen when the organizational structure is in flux and is redefining roles. In addition, those outside the role may not understand the boundaries of the role they are encroaching upon and overstep their bounds. This lack of understanding creates role enactment issues, because not knowing where boundaries begin and end can result in people improvising their roles and taking over tasks outside their role.

The implications of these findings on organizational role theory are that encroachment is an extension of existing theory on role ambiguity (Katz & Kahn, 1978). It seems, based on the focus group, that if encroachment is both an extension and an outcome of role ambiguity. The two are related, and understanding how they are related will deepen the understanding of the operation of roles in organizations.

Future study of encroachment should focus on understanding role ambiguity's relationship to instances of encroachment. Because both processes involve unclear role boundaries, further exploration should be done to uncover causal factors between ambiguity and encroachment. Do unclear boundaries invite encroachment? Or does encroachment lead to uncertainty because many people are trying to accomplish the same tasks? Or do ambiguity and encroachment happen simultaneously? Understanding this relationship will uncover new directions in organizational role theory.

RQ5: How does the use of shared resources affect encroachment?

This study has examined how groups define their most important shared internal resources, which adds clarity to efforts to define organizational resources (Astley & Sachdeva, 1984; Ustuner & Iacobucci, 2012). The theme in these findings is that intangible resources dominate role enactment in these groups. The focus on intangible resources in these cases could be because the groups provide communication-based services to the organization and not physical products. However, the importance of intangible resources in these groups extends the understanding of organizational resources by providing more in-depth definitions of resource types than is currently available in organizational resource research (Andereggen, Zoller & Boutellier, 2013; Lin, McDonough, Lin, & Lin, 2013; Mudambi, Pederson, & Andersson, 2014; Tsai, 2000, 2002; Xu, Huo, & Sun, 2014).

Based on the discussion of resources by the focus group members, two categories of intangible resources emerged, which I have labeled macro and practical. Macro intangible resources are those that overlay the entire organization and include organizational culture and structure. These resources are defined and controlled at the organizational level. They are managed by the organizational system and people within the focus groups have no control over them. In the following section, these resources are described based on the focus group feedback. Practical intangible resources are those that are necessary to perform a role, and they include information and skill sets. These resources are controlled at the individual level within the organization and are affected by people who control them.

Discussions of shared resources dominated the focus group sessions. The following section describes the macro and practical intangible resources.

Macro Intangible Resources

Culture. The focus group participants discussed organizational culture as a ubiquitous, intangible force that affects all aspects of their work. Culture is a resource because all organizational participants take and use the written rules and unwritten norms generated by the culture. Many of the groups discussed the negative aspects of organizational culture that limit their ability to enact their roles. For example, Group 1 characterized their company culture as process-driven. The company relies on these processes and expects employees to follow them. However, the processes are broken because they take too long to get through in order to complete work. Therefore, Group 1's company culture prohibits the group from operating efficiently.

For focus group participants, culture sets the tone for their work. For example, Group 5's entrepreneurial and open culture allows employees to have on-demand, face-to-face access to anyone else in the organization. This access allows Group 5 to work efficiently with others. Organizational culture also encourages or discourages interference from other groups. For example, Group 4's family-owned, sales-driven organization permits others from outside Group 4 to attempt to do Group 4's work and derail their strategic plans.

In addition to the central culture of the organization, participants indicated that a strong, supportive subculture within their groups mitigates a restrictive central organizational culture. For example, Group 5 discussed how their department has a fun and open culture that helps them deal with pressures in their company. Manager 1 from the pilot group also indicated that his department is boisterous and tends to be more social, which helps build team camaraderie.

Focus group participants never discussed changing the culture or amending it. Instead, they discussed culture as a given aspect of the organization that needs to be accepted. Therefore, culture operates as a guiding force that needs to be either accepted or subverted.

Organizational structure. Structure is an intangible resource similar to culture. It can provide clear delineation between where roles are situated in the organizational system and create a fixed web of roles and titles that dictates how people work together. Organizational members need to navigate their connections in the system to do their jobs. As a resource, structure can help organization members understand their role based on how they relate to others in the system.

Participants shared how organizational structure keeps them from taking advantage of other resources in the organization. For example, Group 6 has creative services in their department. Group 3, which is in the same company as Group 6, was in a different department than the creative services. Group 6 had no difficulties using creative services. Group 3 struggled to get their projects completed. Therefore, having resources in the same part of the organization was beneficial to Group 6.

In the focus group sessions, structure was discussed as creating roadblocks for completing work. Changes in structure also created disruption to workflow. For example, one person in Group 3 discussed how she had six different managers at one time in the organization. Having this many people to report to created confusion in her approach to her work and delayed her projects.

One central aspect of organizational structure discussed was shared services departments. This shared services resource may be only applicable to the public relations and marketing groups. Because these jobs take information and transform it for various audiences, often they need outside help to communicate effectively with these audiences. Therefore, the shared services departments of creative, graphic design, and web are essential to facilitate the dissemination of public relations and marketing projects.

Shared services are a pool of tactical resources needed to complete work. Shared services can operate as either a conduit or a roadblock. For example, Group 1 discussed the difficulties in getting information posted through their web team, often causing missed deadlines. However, Group 5 discussed their design team as an efficient business partner in getting their work done.

Although most groups indicated that the shared services processes are not working well for them, none of the groups wanted to abolish the shared model. Instead, groups discussed issues with the processes of utilizing these resources, which tend to be cumbersome and difficult to navigate. Groups 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 all indicated struggling with lengthy design and review processes that lead to missed deadlines and unhappy internal clients. The participants seemed resigned to their struggles with shared services.

Practical Intangible Resources

Information. Focus group participants discussed information as a key resource necessary for their jobs. In this study, the focus on information is logical. Communication professionals communicate happenings from within the organization to stakeholder groups. To do this, professionals must gather information from those who are managing these happenings, such as top management and product managers. Therefore, for the focus group participants, information is the essence of their work.

Participants discussed that they need information for strategic planning as well as for tactical, reactive communications. For example, Group 4 discussed how they would like to change their processes so that everyone who has a stake in a project is in the same room during a project kick off, which would help them set boundaries for their work. Group 4's aspirations are Group 5's reality. Group 5 discussed how their organization prioritizes project kick-off meetings where all the key players for the project are in the same room hearing the same information and asking questions to ensure clear expectations among meeting participants.

Information operates as a resource that binds colleagues in a symbiotic relationship. Information held by one group is needed for another group to perform its role. Therefore, information becomes a crucial tie between people in an organization.

Skill sets. Skill set resources are intangible and can be defined as the ability to perform specialized tasks. In the focus groups, skill set was discussed as a resource that the participants possessed that enabled them to perform strategic and tactical communication work for the organization. Focus group participants also discussed skill set as a resource that other non-communication professionals believe they possess. Focus group participants indicated that many others within their organization believe that they can perform tactical communication work, such as creating a flyer or brochure. However, participants said that these perceptions are often wrong, because the output of those outside communication groups is substandard. In addition, others who perceive they can *do* communication lack understanding of the strategic use of communication.

Within the focus groups' organizations, skill sets operated as a point of contention between people hired to perform a job using the specialized skills and those who believe that their own skills were on par with the specialists. Manager 2 in the pilot session discussed how he sometimes must police the work of people outside the communication function who create communications that are not up to company standards. Perceived skill sets are often mismatched with reality and create a struggle for those who possess those specialized skills. Those with the specialized skills often struggle to explain to the others outside the departments that, although they may be able to put words on a page, that is not the same as strategic communication.

Use of Shared Resources

In all, the discussion of shared resources indicated two major themes related to how organizational members navigate the use of shared resources: positive versus negative outcomes and tactical versus strategic enactment. First, the use of shared resources can lead to negative and positive outcomes. For example, the shared services model, while logical in its design, failed to deliver results as implemented. Therefore, relying on this resource created negative outcomes for the teams using the services in terms of wasted time and missed deadlines. In addition, shared cultural norms can create negative outcomes for individuals and the organization as a whole. Group 4's executive team and owners created an atmosphere where they can give direction to anyone at any time. This culture not only frustrates the individuals being told what to do, it also has frustrated outside partners who no longer wish to work with the company. In addition, this culture wastes money because, after Group 4 completes a project, the owners can decide they no longer like the strategic direction or tactical decisions made by Group 4, so Group 4 has to start over again. This is a waste of time for Group 4, and it is also a waste of money, because the group is getting paid to work on projects that never get implemented. In addition, a difficult or ineffective culture can lead to negative organizational outcomes. In Group 4's case, the culture leads to distrust among departments and a lack of cohesiveness in company efforts. Group 4's company also is less competitive in the marketplace, because they take longer to introduce products than their competitors, which puts them at a disadvantage.

Shared cultural resources can lead to positive outcomes. For example, Group 5's start-up culture allows them to adapt to role enactment challenges by going directly to management for clarification. This ability to work directly with decision-makers allows Group 5 to quickly identify role issues, decide on fixes to these issues, get permission to make changes, and implement these changes. This allows Group 5 to have positive role enactment experiences and avoid role encroachment.

Further, the use of shared resources affects tactical and strategic levels of role enactment. For example, the perceptions of having a shared communication skill set operates on a tactical level, because it allows encroachment of tasks when a non-communication professional believes he can create a flyer or brochure because he has a word processing program on his computer. However, this perception of shared skill set by people higher in the organizational hierarchy can lead to more strategic encroachment. When senior leadership believes they have all the skills necessary to do any job in the organization, encroachment of strategic direction can occur, which can override the expertise in any given organizational area.

Summary of Shared Resources Findings

Overall, this research indicates that shared resources affect role enactment. People sharing resources must maximize the benefits of efficiently shared resources while navigating ineffective resource sharing processes. Often some shared resource processes are both positive and negative to people within the organization. For example, the shared services departments discussed in this study are positive on one hand, because they provide expertise that the focus group participants do not have but need to complete projects. However, these shared departments also create negative outcomes, because the resources are over utilized and unable to support projects in a timely way. In this way, one resource can be embraced and despised at the same time.

The implication of these findings for organizational role theory is that the inclusion of shared resources to the understanding of role enactment is critical. Previous research on sharing of organizational roles focused on sharing external resources (Husted, Allen, & Kock, 2015; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Pffefer & Salancik, 1978; Staw & Szwajkowski, 1975). However, internal resources in this study are crucial to the enactment of roles. Therefore, these findings show that research on organizational role theory should explore how internal resources affect organizational outcomes and individual role enactment. Linking internal resources, both macro and practical, to organizational outcomes will create a fuller picture of how organizational roles are enacted.

In addition, although organizational role theory has not created many concepts to understand organizational resources beyond tangible and intangible categories (Andereggen, Zoller & Boutellier, 2013; Lin, McDonough, Lin, & Lin, 2013; Mudambi, Pederson, & Andersson, 2014; Tsai, 2000, Tsai, 2002; Xu, Huo, & Sun, 2014), interpersonal research on resources can inform the study of organizational resources and roles. For example, Foa and Foa (1980) proposed six classes of resources exchanged in interpersonal interactions, which include love, status, information, money, goods, and services. Although these classes were conceived primarily for interpersonal interactions, organizational interactions seemingly exchange similar resources, as noted above in the discussion of information. Applying concepts from interpersonal research to organizational role theory can bridge understanding of human behavior across disciplines and deepen the understanding of how organizations and their members navigate their daily lives.

RQ6: What are the implications of encroachment between people in competing functions in an organization?

Themes of negative implications of encroachment emerged, related to individuals in the organization, their departments, and the organization as a whole. For individuals, encroachment led to stress, frustration, and confusion. In the cases of encroachment on individual tasks, focus group participants indicated that they felt that they could not do their job properly or support the organization as well as they could if they could control their tasks and role boundaries. This perception that they were being held back from fulfilling their duties led to stress because they saw their role diminished, and they questioned the value they could provide to the organization. In addition, people who were being encroached upon, especially via strategic encroachment, were frustrated at their lack of power to do their jobs. This frustration often was bottled up, however, because the encroachers were higher in the organizations' chain of command, which meant nothing could be done to stop the encroachment. Lastly, people felt confused, because role definitions sometimes were unclear or changing due to new management or organizational configurations. This confusion led to a lack of understanding of who should be completing which tasks and why and how boundaries in the organization were being breached or closed.

Encroachment affected departments by creating an *us versus them* atmosphere in some cases, which led to role conflict (Katz & Kahn, 1978). When groups were trying to satisfy business partners as well as maintain their identity as a communications department, the group members often needed to take sides. In some instances, the group would side with their communication management. In other instances, they would side with the internal business partners. Having to take sides created identity issues for the groups. They often needed to change sides as organizational demands dictated favoring the business over the department or vice versa. The result of this push and pull is that departments had fluid boundaries on purpose to facilitate their partners, but those fluid boundaries could lead to negative role encroachment when business partners saw places to encroach on those boundaries.

Organizational-level effects of encroachment included broken relationships with external partners, lack of organizational nimbleness, and increased organizational waste, especially related to strategic encroachment. When strategy is set by someone outside the group responsible for that strategy, it creates chaos not only for the group, but also for anyone supporting the group. For example, in Group 4, external agencies turned down contracts to work with Group 4's company because the agencies knew that their work would be encroached upon. In addition, when strategic encroachment occurred, groups needed to start projects over or wait for final sign off by the encroaching parties. Restarting and waiting create longer processes that do not allow the organization to be nimble and react to competitive pressures. Restarting and redoing projects also leads to wasting time and money, which are both detrimental to the long-term health of organizations. In this way, strategic encroachment is a liability for organizations.

The implications of these findings about effects of encroachment on individuals relate to models of stress and burnout in the workplace. Role conflict and ambiguity are known stressors that lead to negative outcomes and job burnout (Cooper, Dewe, & O'Driscoll, 2001; Katz & Kahn, 1978). Therefore, mapping encroachment to broader understandings of role stress can increase the understanding of the negative outcomes for organizational members.

Implications of these findings about effects of encroachment on departments can be related to role theory related to boundary-spanning roles. Boundary-spanning roles are positions in an organization that simultaneously serve the organization and an external party, such as a customer or client (Aldrich & Herker, 1977; Katz & Kahn, 1978). The role research in this area focused on spanning the boundary between the organization and groups outside the organization. However, boundary-spanning concepts are at play within the organization as well. Therefore, using these findings to expand the concept of boundary spanning to borders within the organization will expand the understanding of organizational role enactment.

As with findings related to role ambiguity, future research should find the links between role conflict and boundary spanning and encroachment. Previous research on conflict and boundary spanning show these two constructs are linked (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). However, adding encroachment to the picture will provide a deeper understanding of role enactment within organizations.

RQ7: How do people in competing functions in an organization deal with encroachment?

As noted previously, encroachment was perceived as a negative influence on the group members. Encroachment was also perceived as a stressor for group members. Focus group participants employed two major strategies to deal with the negative aspects of encroachment: social support and relationship building. These strategies helped department members feel less stress and helped the departments get work done within organizational process constraints.

Social support is intentional supportive behavior provided by one person to a person who is experiencing stress (Cohen & Willis, 1985; House, 1981). Social support has been shown to alleviate stress and improve overall health and wellbeing. Two types of social support were provided by group members in this study: emotional and informational. Emotional support includes expressions of love, empathy, and confidence in the person experiencing stress (House, 1981; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001). Informational support includes information and advice to help someone cope with stress (House, 1981; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001).

For emotional support, group members discussed how within their teams strong bonds are formed because everyone is very supportive of each other. Social support within the group helped them persevere in the face of encroachment. Group members discussed how team members help each other by being sounding boards for frustrations and advice. Group members also discussed how they promote their team and teammates as valuable strategic resources when speaking with others in the organization, which acts as internal cheerleading for their teammates. This emotional support boosts the morale within the groups and creates unity within the teams.

For informational support, group members shared critical project-related information with each other to combat times when they cannot get that information from their internal business partners. Group members discussed how they can sometimes struggle to find out information from internal business partners related to the work they need to complete. To combat this void in information, group members reported sharing everything they know with their teammates. This informational support helps the team members piece together vital information that can help them do their jobs without relying as much on difficult internal partners.

Both emotional and informational social support help people overcome stressful situations and increase emotional well-being (House, 1981; Zellars & Perrewé, 2001). The benefits of social support were noted in these focus groups and helped the groups overcome the negativity brought about by encroachment.

The second way group members dealt with encroachment was through forming relationships within the organization. Participants indicated that they were able to work around restrictive processes in the organization by building relationships with people who could help accelerate the projects through the process. Group members indicated that these relationships were sometimes the only way to get their projects finished. In addition, some group participants who had not been in the company long talked about how a lack of these relationships was detrimental to their own success in completing their work on time and within expectations.

This coping mechanism is consistent with research related to social capital being a critical resource in organizations (Bozionelos, 2003, 2008; Coleman, 1988; Kwon & Adler, 2014). Social capital consists of the resources a person can accumulate (such as status and information) through the ties with other people within the organization (Bozionelos, 2003). Social capital itself is an intangible resource that can be utilized to succeed in an organization, because organizational members who are better connected are able to navigate requirements of their jobs better than those without connections (Coleman, 1988). Within these focus groups, participants relied on their relationships with other people to get access to information needed to complete projects. They also relied on the relationships to circumvent processes. Therefore, these relationships can be characterized as instrumental network resources (Bozionelos, 2003), because they provide support that enables someone to complete their tasks. These relationships can also be characterized as a mix of peer relationships, as defined by Kram and Isabella (1985). The categories of peer relationships are information peers, who serve to promote information sharing, and collegial peers, who provide strategic support for navigating their roles. Within the focus groups, these relationships provided key coping mechanisms for both personal and professional success.

The implication for role theory of these findings is that focus should be given to interpersonal solutions to systemic problems within the organization. This result ties into future research in this area. By understanding the mechanisms people use to enact social support as well as accumulate social capital, role theory on encroachment can bridge a gap between management and interpersonal research on role enactment. Future research should measure aspects of social support in a department that has been encroached upon to understand what aspects of social support are most useful to organizational members. In addition, as with the communication networks mentioned above, networks of social connections between the encroached upon departments and their colleagues can be examined to reveal how social capital is accumulated and utilized to prevent or overcome encroachment.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this research indicate that encroachment is a force that affects role enactment within organizations, which has not been explored fully in organizational role research. Encroachment is linked to variables identified within existing role theory that can be explored further using knowledge gained in this study. Role conflict, role ambiguity, and boundary spanning role theory relate to encroachment. Resource theory, which previously focused on external resource use by organizations, can be expanded to evaluate the internal use of resources. Cultural resources related to encroachment can be further explored to understand what dimensions of organizational culture encourage or prevent encroachment. In addition, theory from interpersonal communication, such as social exchange theory, social support, and social capital, can be applied in future studies to further develop an understanding of the factors leading to encroachment and how people facing encroachment cope with their roles being infringed upon. The findings from this dissertation indicate promising directions for further development of theory about encroachment and role enactment, beyond the context of public relations and marketing, to examine any roles that are interrelated and interdependent.

Given the findings of this study reviewed above, the following hypotheses are proposed as way to summarize the findings and provide directions for future research. These fifteen hypotheses demonstrate the richness of the findings in this dissertation research. There are many findings from this research that lead to the following predictions that provide a useful set of directions for further research about encroachment in organizational settings.

Regarding perceptions and definitions of encroachment, H_1 proposes encroachment occurs when individuals take over tasks of others. H_2 predicts that encroachment occurs when organizational processes take over tasks of individuals.

Regarding the operation of encroachment, H_3 predicts that the more role ambiguity exists, or lack of understanding of role expectations and boundaries, the more encroachment occurs. H_4 posits that the more communication occurs between individuals in competing roles related to task completion and organizational culture, the less encroachment occurs.

Related to factors that affect encroachment, H_5 predicts that the more entrepreneurial the organizational culture, the more encroachment there is because the culture favors results over step-by-step process. H_6 proposes that the more process-driven the culture is, the less encroachment occurs because the organization favors adherence to defined roles and processes over timely results. H_7 posits that more organizational structure affects encroachment by allowing or limiting access to resources needed to maintain role boundaries. H_8 suggests that the more open information sharing is within the organization, the less encroachment occurs because people will have the information needed to complete tasks. H_9 predicts that the more people see their skill set as interchangeable with other people in the organization, the more encroachment will occur.

Related to implications of encroachment, H_{10} proposes that individuals experiencing encroachment will experience stress and burn out. H_{11} predicts that encroachment will create an *us versus them* atmosphere between departments that encroach upon each other. H_{12} suggests that encroachment creates organizational-level effects of less organizational nimbleness and greater organizational waste.

Related to how people deal with encroachment, H_{13} posits that greater emotional social support lessens negative effects of encroachment on individuals. H_{14} proposes that greater informational social support lessens the negative effects of encroachment on individuals. H_{15} predicts that the more social capital one possesses the less negative effects of encroachment one will experience.

In total, these hypotheses summarize the findings of the study and provide directions for future research. This dissertation has demonstrated that encroachment affects individuals and organizations in specific ways. Future studies related to these hypotheses will provide a more detailed explanation of how encroachment works and how it affects organizations, adding to the theoretical understanding of organizational roles.

Implications for Organizational Practice

One implication of these themes for organizational life is that workers and managers need to be aware when boundaries are breached or when processes are impeding progress. Even the smallest overtaking of menial tasks can be perceived as encroachment and can lead to negative outcomes for the individual, the department, and the organization. By recognizing how boundaries are breached, organizations can become more efficient by addressing these breaches and find ways to make role boundaries more stable.

Another implication for practice is that management should be sensitive to the ways roles and processes interact. Inefficient processes should be identified and fixed. People overstepping bounds should be refocused on their own tasks. Management should monitor these relationships within the organization to find and fix instances of encroachment to minimize negative effects on the organization.

Management also should understand how they are communicating their organizational structure and expectations. After identifying how expectations are communicated, organizations can then examine where there might be confusion over roles. Implementing best practices from process-driven organizations that enable strong role boundaries can also help eliminate negative effects of encroachment. Effort should be made so that people in interdependent roles understand what the others do in the organization. This effort can be accomplished through team building or cross training, for example. By making sure people understand what their coworkers do, organizations can successfully avoid the negative aspects of encroachment.

Lastly, organizations should foster relationship building across departments and place a premium on social connections. As noted in this study, participants overcame task-based and process-based encroachment by forming relationships with people who could help them get their jobs done properly. Having these relationships is critical to successful operations, and, therefore they should be promoted as a way to ensure organizational success.

Theoretical Implications Regarding Public Relations and Marketing

One implication of this research on theory related to public relations and marketing is that public relations and marketing cannot be studied as monolithic groups. These functions within organizations have many different configurations, as noted in the results of the study. Therefore, researchers who look at this relationship in the future should be specific and operationalize the focus of study. Just focusing on marketing does not indicate whether product marketing versus marketing communications is being studied. Focusing on public relations does not indicate media relations, employee communications, or social media management. Specificity is needed to understand the roles within and across these functions.

In addition, this study broadens the focus of what causes tensions for these departments. Rather than focus on the fight between them, research should focus on what shared struggles these groups have. Both groups struggle with status and access to information to do their jobs. Focusing on these commonalities will help them overcome issues.

The implication of this research on theory about shared resources and public relations and marketing is that shared creative services create pain points of tension within organizations. Although it is unclear from these focus groups whether public relations or marketing is the main culprit for the issues, it is clear that shared creative resources are a significant challenge for these groups. Therefore, research on this relationship should focus on this resource to understand its function within communications departments.

From the one pair of groups from the same company (Groups 3 and 6), the misunderstanding of their roles by others in the organization points to possible benefits from having integrated communication functions. This insight indicates that the groups may benefit from a united front within the organization. Therefore, the study of integrated communications should include research on how integration can help bolster communication functions' reputations in an organization.

Practical Implications

This study has implications across organizational functions, as well as for public relations and marketing professionals. The purpose of the next section is to outline how organizations could consider their own processes in light of the findings from this study. To do this, the section outlines general implications for any organization. Then, the section discusses implications for public relations and marketing groups.

Implications for Organizational Life

For organizations, it is important for leadership to understand the effects of company culture on efficiency. Many companies conduct employee surveys to understand their strengths and opportunities (Roberts & Levine, 2014). Using these surveys to investigate culture could help illuminate where the culture may be stifling employees and organizational growth.

Given the feedback on shared creative services, organizations should examine their shared processes to look for roadblocks and cumbersome practices. Beside shared creative services, companies could examine project management systems, shared internal IT systems, and other systems that require approvals or review processes.

Finally, due to the positive effects of personal relationships on stressors caused by role overlaps, organizations should examine their processes to ensure that employees have opportunities to form good relationships across the organization. With movement toward telecommuting in many organizations, this focus is even more important. Regular staff meetings and opportunities to socialize, as well as effective socialization into the organization, are crucial to form these relationships that help overcome the inefficiencies in organizational processes.

Practical Implications for Public Relations and Marketing

For public relations and marketing professionals, the findings from this study indicate that unlocking information resources will help foster organizational success through more effective collaboration. The focus group participants explained how access to the right information at the right time could facilitate better outcomes for the marketing and public relations departments.

Although not always welcomed, the idea of having an integrated function should be considered. Having all communication professionals in one department could help with internal identity for the organization. Integration would also encourage information sharing among team members as well as foster more even sharing of creative services.

Further, in a matrix organizational structure, public relations and marketing professionals need to advocate for establishing open lines of communication between people with vital information. This effort should include open communication between communication colleagues and understanding that goals overlap within communication functions.

Public relations and marketing departments should consider formal efforts to explain the difference between tactical and strategic communications to their business partners and internal clients. By explaining these parameters, public relations and marketing professionals may alleviate some of the perceptions that anyone can do communications. Public relations and marketing professionals should also consider regular updates to business partners to show results in strategic communication. It is easy to get wrapped up in the day-to-day tactics, especially in departments that need to deal with communication crises. However, taking time to promote their strategic work could help lessen the perception of shared skill sets by those outside these specialized functions.

Lastly, because social media resources were not an issue in these groups, it seems that having social media managed by dedicated internal or external teams is an effective management effort. For all the organizations studied, having dedicated social media staff helped them be successful in their outreach via those media.

Limitations

Recruitment

The biggest obstacle faced in the study was recruitment of participants. Public relations and marketing departments are often fast-paced environments where the latest organizational need or deadline dictates a professional's to do list. Many times, organizational crises arise unexpectedly, and public relations and marketing professionals are obligated to react to these events before all other activities. In addition, marketing and public relations are deadline-driven functions with projects coming due regularly. Due to these factors, the original plan of recruiting individuals from different companies to come to a meeting did not work out as expected because people were not available for meetings. People were interested in meeting with me, but they wanted to have individual phone interviews. Some people wanted to attend, but they had deadlines that pushed their availability out several months. Others said they could help me, but business constraints prevented them from scheduling the meetings; such constraints included a planned merger and an unexpected department restructuring. I overcame this obstacle by reworking the recruiting process by going to an office and sitting in on a team meeting.

Going to the groups' locations during work hours was much easier for the participants because they could carve out an hour to meet with me. The unexpected advantage of this amended recruiting process was that it provided details on organizational culture that might not have been possible if several different organizations had been represented via the original recruiting plan. Future research should account for this challenge by understanding that groups in one company would automatically share certain traits, such as operating under a shared culture. This is not necessarily detrimental to future study, however, it should be acknowledged that teams in one company could focus more on encroachment issues particular to their company rather than general functioning of encroachment. However, based on the results of this study, it may not be possible to extricate organizational context from the occurrence of encroachment.

Even though the amended recruiting process was successful, the study was also limited by the types of organizations studied. Because I strategically reached out to people I knew would allow me to visit their team, I did not take into account the business type or industry of the organizations. The convenience sample resulted in the pilot group, Group 1, and Group 2 all representing the same, highly regulated health services industry. Because the results of this study show that culture affects encroachment, the overarching industry culture may also affect role enactment. Future research should consider study organizations in the same industry in order to extract the industry culture that might also factor into encroachment and sharing of resources. In addition to industry, studying organizations of the same type of structure, such as privately-held, international, start-up, could also be considered to uncover how these types of organizations might enact encroachment and share resources.

In addition, all the organizations studied were located on the East Coast. Because regions of the U.S. exhibit unique characteristics related to personality and other interpersonal factors based on regional culture (Harrington & Gelfand, 2014), the study is bound by those cultural factors as well. Future research could explore these geographic differences as well as industry culture.

Focus Groups versus One-on-One Interviews

The limitations of the focus groups were consistent with using this method in any study, including the possibility of groupthink or hijacking of the group by vocal members. As discussed in the Method chapter, I was sensitive to these issues due to my previous experience leading focus groups. In addition, the strength of a focus group is that it provides an environment where groups can tell their collective story (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011) in rich detail. The focus group also provided a way for me to uncover issues of organizational life that participant may have taken for granted during individual conversation. For example, when a participant provided an interesting insight, another member commented that he had never thought of that before the discussion. In addition, after groups concluded, and I was walked out of the meeting sites by my main contact in the group, many of my contacts indicated that the groups discussed items or issues that have not been discussed much before the session. Therefore, the focus groups provided a level of discussion that described experiences but also uncovered taken-for-granted assumptions about organizational life that were problematic and unexamined, which is consistent with the strengths of focus group research (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

Scope of the Study

This study was a first step to understand a phenomenon that unfolds in organizations in which different departments share resources. As with any qualitative research, the goal is thick description rather than generalizable results. However, these focus groups provided in-depth discussions of some of the factors leading to encroachment and offered detailed descriptions of shared resources. This study provided a clear direction for future research, which will focus on the encroachment and shared resource issues uncovered. Therefore, even though the results are not generalizable, they are descriptive and add to the theoretical and practical understanding of role enactment and encroachment, and provide a pathway to further investigation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation was to (a) investigate how shared resources affect role boundaries and role enactment that can lead to encroachment, (b) explain the concept of encroachment and how it affects role enactment, and (c) investigate the conflict between public relations and marketing that can lead to encroachment in the age of social media. In all, the findings of this study explain how people react when encroachment occurs due to other people taking over tasks or organizational processes preventing task completion. The findings also extend the understanding of organizational role theory by explicating instances of encroachment and illustrating how shared resources affect individuals and the organization.

Because the goal of the study was to explore a somewhat unexamined phenomenon, the study introduces concepts to be explored further regarding encroachment and shared resources. The implications of this research apply to and extend the use of role theory concepts, such as role ambiguity. The research also relates to psychological models, such as stress and burnout. The study also applies to interpersonal constructs, such as social support. Overall, the study provides a promising new direction in organizational role research.

From the focus group discussions, it was clear that people struggle personally with encroachment and sharing resources. As one participant in Group 2 said,

> It just turns into this big mess of who's now the actual owner of the project. Is it the initial lead? Is it now management? Is it the other departments? So it turns into a question of who's doing what, when? And, why can't we just do the work to get the ultimate goal of getting the communication out?

The frustration underlying this quote permeated focus group discussions across the organizations in this research. Most people wanted to be given a job with set responsibilities, and they wanted to execute that job in a successful way that provides a level of personal satisfaction. Encroachment prevents that from happening and causes stress for individuals. Understanding the effects of encroachment on individuals, their departments, and their organizations, and finding ways to overcome these issues, will help organizational members experience less stress on the job. Many people spend most of their waking hours at work or in some organizational role. Therefore, this research and further exploration of encroachment and shared resources concepts can potentially help organizational members enjoy their time at work a little bit more by alleviating one area of their stress.

REFERENCES

Aaker, J., Fournier, S., & Brasel, S. (2004). When good brands do bad. *Journal of Consumer Research, 31*, 1-16. doi:10.1086/383419

Aldrich, H., & Herker, D. (1977). Boundary spanning roles and organization structure. *Academy of Management Review, 2*, 217-230. doi:10.5465/AMR.1977.4409044

Alexander, J., Hearld, L., & Mittler, J. N. (2014). Patient–physician role relationships and patient activation the moderating effects of race and ethnicity. *Medical Care Research and Review, 71*, 472-495. doi:10.1177/1077558714541967

Andereggen, S., Zoller, F. A., & Boutellier, R. (2013). Sharing research equipment to bridge intraorganizational boundaries. *Research Technology Management, 56*, 49-57. doi:10.5437/08956308X5601082

Adler, P. S., & Kwon, S. W. (2002). Social capital: Prospects for a new concept. *Academy of Management Review,* 27, 17-40.

Astley, W. G., & Sachdeva, P. S. (1984). Structural sources of intraorganizational power: A theoretical synthesis. *Academy of Management Review, 9*, 104-113. doi:10.5465/amr.1984.4278071

Bhattacharya, C. B., & Korschun, D. (2008). Stakeholder marketing: Beyond the Four Ps and the customer. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *27,* 113-116. doi:10.1509/jppm.27.1.113

Biddle, B. J. (1979). *Role theory: Expectations, identities, and behaviors.* New York, NY: Academic Press.

Biddle, B. J. (1986). Recent development in role theory. *Annual Review of Sociology, 12*, 67-92. doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.12.1.67

Biddle, B. J., & Thomas, E. J. (1966). *Role theory: Concepts and research*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Bozionelos, N. (2003). Intra-organizational network resources: Relation to career success and personality. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis, 11*, 41-66. doi:10.1108/eb028962

Bozionelos, N. (2008). Intra-organizational network resources: How they relate to career success and organizational commitment. *Personnel Review, 37*, 249-263. doi:10.1108/00483480810862251

Broom, G. M, (1982). A comparison of sex roles in public relations. *Public Relations Review. 8*(3), 17-22. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(82)80028-3

Broom, G. M., & Dozier, D. M. (1986). Advancement for public relations role models. *Public Relations Review, 12(*1), 37-56. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(86)80039-X

Broom, G. M., & Sha, B.-L. (2013). *Effective public relations.* (11th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Broom, G. M., & Smith, G. D. (1979). Testing the practitioner's impact on clients. *Public Relations Review, 5*(3), 47-59. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(79)80027-2

Broom, G. M., Casey, S., & Ritchey, J. (1997). Toward a concept and theory of organization-public relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 9*, 83-98. doi:10.1207/s1532754xjprr0902_01

Broom, G. M., Lauzen, M. M., & Tucker, K. (1991). Public relations and marketing: Dividing the conceptual domain and operational turf. *Public Relations Review*, *17*, 219-225. doi:10.1016/0363-8111(91)90018-G

Carson, J., Tesluk, P., & Marrone, J. (2007). Shared leadership in teams: An investigation of antecedent conditions and performance. *Academy of Management Journal, 50*, 1217-1234. doi:10.2307/20159921

Carter, D. P. (2017). Role perceptions and attitudes toward discretion at a decentralized regulatory frontline: The case of organic inspectors. *Regulation & Governance*. Advance online publication. doi:10.1111/rego.12143

Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film. (2017). *Advisory board*. Retrieved from http://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/advisory-board/

Cheney, G., Christensen, L. T., Zorn, T. E., & Ganesh, S. (2004). Organizational change and change-related communication. In G. Cheyney, L.T. Christensen, T. E. Zorn, & S. Ganesh (Eds.), *Organizational communication in an age of globalization* (pp. 313-343). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Chernev, A., & Blair, S. (2015). Doing well by doing good: The benevolent halo of corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *41*, 1412-1425. doi:10.1037/e620972012-120

Christensen, L. T., Firat, A. F., & Cornelissen, J. (2009). New tensions and challenges in integrated communications. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, *14*, 207-219. doi:10.1108/13563280910953870

Cohen, S., & Wills, T. A. (1985). Stress, social support, and the buffering hypothesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *98*, 310-357.

Coleman, J. S. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *American journal of sociology*, *94*, S95-S120.

Cooper, C. L., Dewe, P. J., & O'Driscoll, M. P. (2001). *Organizational stress: A review and critique of theory, research, and applications*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cornelissen, J. P., & Harris, P. (2004). Interdependencies between marketing and public relations disciplines as correlates of communication organisation. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *20*, 237-264. doi:10.1362/026725704773041195

Cornelissen, J. P., & Lock, A. R. (2000). The organisational relationship between marketing and public relations: Exploring paradigmatic viewpoints. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *6*, 231–245. doi:10.1080/135272600750036355

Cornelissen, J. P., Lock, A. R., & Gardner, H. (2001). The organisation of external communication disciplines: An integrative framework of dimensions and determinants. *International Journal of Advertising*, *20*, 67-88. doi:10.1080/02650487200111104877

Cupach, W. R., & Metts, S. M. (1994). *Facework*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*, 499-512. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499

Denison, D., Nieminen, L., & Kotrba, L. (2014). Diagnosing organizational cultures: A conceptual and empirical review of culture effectiveness surveys. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *23*, 145-161. doi:10.1080/1359432X.2012.713173

Dozier, D. M. (1988). Breaking public relations' glass ceiling. *Public Relations Review*, *14*(3), 6-14. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(88)80041-9

Dozier, D. M., Grunig, L. A., & Grunig, J. E. (2013). *Manager's guide to excellence in public relations and communication management*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Ecker, K. (2013). Public relations or content marketing? Wrong question. *Ragan's PR Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/Public_relations_or_content_marketing_Wrong_questi_15419.aspx

Evans, K. R., McFarland, R. G., Dietz, B., & Jaramillo, F. (2012). Advancing sales performance research: A focus on five underresearched topic areas. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *32*, 89-105. doi:10.2753/pss0885-3134320108

Ferguson, M. A. (1984, August). *Building theory in public relations: Interorganizational relationships*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Gainesville, FL. Retrieved from http://www.jou.ufl.edu/faculty/facultydetail.asp?id=mferguson

Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: Developing relationship theory in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *24*, 343-373. doi:10.1086/209515

French, J. R. P., & Raven, B. (1960). The base of social power. In D. Cartwright & A. F. Zander (Eds.), *Group dynamics* (2nd ed., pp. 607-623). Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson.

Fuller, J. B., Hester, K., Barnett, T., & Relyea, L. F. C. (2006). Perceived organizational support and perceived external prestige: Predicting organizational attachment for university faculty, staff, and administrators. *The Journal of social Psychology*, *146*, 327-347. doi:10.3200/SOCP.146.3.327-347

Galifianakis, N. (2015). A content meet and greet. *Public Relations Tactics*, *22*(11), 6.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York, NY: Anchor.

Goolsby, J. R., Rhoads, G. K., Singh, J., & Goodell Jr., P. (1990). Boundary spanning and burnout: Toward an understanding of burnout in marketing organizations. *Proceedings of the American Marketing Association Winter Educators' Conference, USA*, *10*, 4.

Grandy, G. (2010). Instrumental case study. In A. J. Mills, G. Durepos, & E. Wiebe (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of case study research* (pp. 474-475). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. doi:10.4135/9781412957397.n175

Grönroos, C. (1994). Quo vadis, marketing? Toward a relationship marketing paradigm. *Journal of Marketing Management*, *10*, 347-360. doi:10.1080/0267257X.1994.9964283

Grunig, J. E., & Dozier, D. M. (2003). *Excellent public relations and effective organizations: A study of communication management in three countries*. New York. NY: Routledge.

Grunig, J. E., & Hunt, T. (1984). *Managing public relations*. New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Ha, J. H., & Ferguson, M. A. (2015). Perception discrepancy of public relations functions and conflict among disciplines: South Korean public relations versus marketing professionals. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 27*, 1-21. doi:10.1080/1062726X.2014.924838

Ha, J., & Kim, D. (2009, May). Perception discrepancy of public relations roles and conflict among disciplines: Comparing public relations and marketing practitioners. *Proceedings of the International Communication Association*, Chicago, IL.

Hage, J., & Marwell, G. (1968). Toward the development of an empirically based theory of role relationships. *Sociometry*, *31*, 200-212. doi:10.1016/1048-9843(95)90036-5

Harrington, J. R., & Gelfand, M. J. (2014). Tightness–looseness across the 50 united states. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *111*, 7990-7995. doi:10.1073/pnas.1317937111

Havartin, S. (2013). Is a degree in public relations necessary for success? *Ragan's PR Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/Is_a_degree_in_public_relations_necessary_for_succ_15090.aspx#

Heath, R. L. (2010). *The Sage handbook of public relations*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

House, J. S. (1981). *Work stress and social support*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Husted, B. W., Allen, D. B., & Kock, N. (2015). Value creation through social strategy. *Business & Society*, *54*, 147-186. doi:10.1177/0007650312439187

Hutton, J. G. (2010). Defining the relationship between public relations and marketing. In R. L. Heath (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of public relations* (pp. 509-521). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Kaarbo, J., & Beasley, R. (1999). A practical guide to the comparative case study method in political psychology. *Political Psychology*, *20*, 369-391. doi:10.1111/0162-895X.00149

Kahn, R., Wolf, D. M., Quinn, R. P., Snoek, J. D. & Rosenthal, R. A. (1964). *Organizational stress: Studies in role conflict and ambiguity*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). *The social psychology of organizations*. New York, NY: Wiley.

Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1978). *The social psychology of organizations* (Rev. ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.

Kelly, K. S. (1993). Public relations and fund-raising encroachment: Losing control in the non-profit sector. *Public Relations Review, 19*, 349-365. doi:10.1016/0363-8111(93)90057-J

Kent, M. L. (2010). Directions in social media for professionals and scholars. In R. L. Heath (Ed.) *The Sage handbook of public relations* (pp. 643-656). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Kent, M. L., & Taylor, M. (1998). Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide Web. *Public Relations Review*, *24*, 321-334. doi:10.1016/S0363-8111(99)80143-X

Ki, E., & Hon, L. (2007). Testing the linkages among the Organization–Public Relationship and attitude and behavioral intentions. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, *19*, 1-23. doi:10.1207/s1532754xjprr1901_1

Kitchen, P., Brignell, J., & Jones, G. S. (2004). The emergence of IMC: A theoretical perspective. *Journal of Advertising Research*, *44*, 19–30. doi:10.1017/S0021849904040048

Kotler, P., & Mindak, W. (1978). Marketing and public relations. *Journal of Marketing*, *42*(4), 13-20. doi:10.2307/1250080

Kram, K. E., & Isabella, L. A. (1985). Mentoring alternatives: The role of peer relationships in career development. *Academy of Management Journal, 28*, 110-132. doi:10.2307/256064

Kusari, S., Cohen, D., Singh, J., & Marinova, D. (2005). Trust and control mechanisms in organizational boundary spanners' cognitions and behaviors. *Proceedings of the Academy of Management, USA*, *1,* D1-D6. doi:10.5465/AMBPP.2005.18779815

Kwon, S-W., & Adler, P. S. (2014). Social capital: Maturation of a field of research. *Academy Of Management Review, 39*, 412-422. doi:10.5465/amr.2014.0210

Landy, R. J. (2000). Role theory and the role method of drama therapy. In D. Johnson & R. Emunah (Eds.), *Current approaches in drama therapy* (pp. 65–88). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Lauzen, M. M. (1991). Imperialism and encroachment in public relations. *Public Relations Review, 17*, 245-255. doi:10.1016/0363-8111(91)90021-C

Lauzen, M. M. (1992). Public relations roles, intraorganizational power, and encroachment. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 4,* 61-80. doi:10.1207/s1532754xjprr0402_01

Ledingham, J. A., & Bruning, S. D. (1998). Relationship management in public relations: Dimensions of an organization-public relationship. *Public Relations Review*, *24*(1), 55-65. doi:10.1016/s0363-8111(98)80020-9

Lin, H. E., McDonough, E. F., Lin, S. J., & Lin, C. Y. Y. (2013). Managing the exploitation/exploration paradox: The role of a learning capability and innovation ambidexterity. *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *30*, 262-278. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5885.2012.00998.x

Linton, R. (1936). *The study of man*. New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

Marwell, G., & Hage, J. (1970). The organization of role-relationships: A systematic description. *American Sociological Review*, *35*, 884-900. doi:10.2307/2093299

Maurer, I., Bartsch, V., & Ebers, M. (2011). The value of intra-organizational social capital: How it fosters knowledge transfer, innovation performance, and growth. *Organization Studies*, *32*, 157-185. doi:10.1177/0170840610394301

McCarthy, E. J. (1960). *Basic marketing: A managerial approach*. Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, self, and society* (Vol. 111). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Merton, R. K. (1948). The bearing of empirical research upon the development of social theory. *American Sociological Review*, *13*, 505-515. doi:10.2307/2087142

Mudambi, R., Pedersen, T., & Andersson, U. (2014). How subsidiaries gain power in multinational corporations. *Journal of World Business*, *49*(1), 101-113. doi:10.1016/j.jwb.2013.02.001

Nath, P., & Bell, M. (2016). A study of the structural integration of the marketing and PR functions in the C-suite. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *22*, 626-652. doi:10.1080/13527266.2014.933443

O'Brien, M., Hill, D. J., & Autry, C. W. (2009). Customer behavioral legitimacy in retail returns episodes: Effects on retail salesperson role conflict. *Journal of Marketing Theory & Practice*, *17*, 251-266. doi:10.2753/MTP1069-6679170304

Parsons, T. (1937). *The structure of social action*. New York, NY: The Free Press.

Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. R. (1978). *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Poole, M. S. (1996). A turn of the wheel: The case for a renewal of systems inquiry in organizational communication research. *Organization–Communication: The Renaissance in Systems Thinking*, *5*, 47-63.

Rhoads, G. K., Singh, J., & Goodell, P. W. (1994). The multiple dimensions of role ambiguity and their impact upon psychological and behavioral outcomes of industrial salespeople. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *14*(3), 1-24.

Roberts, D. R., & Levine, E. (2013). Employee surveys: A powerful driver for positive organizational change. *Employment Relations Today*. *40*(4), 39-45. doi:10.1002/ert.21432

Ritter, T. (1999). The networking company: Antecedents for coping with relationships and networks effectively. *Industrial Marketing Management*, *28*, 467-479. doi:10.1016/s0019-8501(99)00075-9

Rizzo, J. R., House, J. R., & Lirtzman, S. I. (1970). Role conflict and ambiguity in complex organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 15*, 150-163. doi:10.2307/2391486

Rousseau, D. M. (1998). Why workers still identify with organizations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 19*, 217-233. doi:10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(199805)19:3<217::AID-JOB931>3.0.CO;2-N

Royce, M. (2012). The A to Z guide to content marketing. *Ragan's PR Daily*. Retrieved from http://www.prdaily.com/Main/Articles/The_A_to_Z_guide_to_content_marketing_13239.aspx

Schein, E. H. (2010). *Organizational culture and leadership* (4th ed.). San Fransisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons.

Schultz, D. E. (1993, April 26). Why ad agencies are having so much trouble with IMC. *Marketing News*, p 12.

Selman, R. L. (1971). Taking another's perspective: role-taking development in early childhood. *Child Development*, *42*, 1721-1734. doi:10.2307/1127580

Sheth, J. N., & Parvatiyar, A. (1995). Relationship marketing in consumer markets: Antecedents and consequences. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *23,* 255-271. doi:10.1177/009207039502300405

Singh, J. (1993). Boundary role ambiguity: Facets, determinants, and impacts. *Journal of Marketing, 57*(2), 11-31. doi:10.2307/1252024

Singh, J. (1998). Striking a balance in boundary-spanning positions: An investigation of some unconventional influences of role stressors and job characteristics on job outcomes of salespeople. *Journal of Marketing, 62*(3), 69-86. doi:10.2307/1251744

Singh, J. (1999). Some related individual and organizational moderators of boundary role ambiguity for sales and marketing professionals. *Proceedings of the American Marketing Association Winter Educators' Conference, USA, 10*, 4.

Singh, J., & Rhoads, G. K. (1991). Boundary role ambiguity in marketing-oriented positions: A multidimensional, multifaceted operationalization. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), 28*, 328-338. doi:10.2307/3172868

Singh, J., Goolsby, J. R., & Rhoads, G. K. (1994). Behavioral and psychological consequences of boundary spanning burnout for customer service representatives. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), 31*, 558-569. doi:10.2307/3151883

Soat, M. (2015). The native frontier. *Marketing News*. *49*(5), 34-43.

Staw, B., & Szwajkowski, E. (1975). The scarcity-munificence component of organizational environments and the commission of illegal acts. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 20*, 345-354. doi:10.2307/2391995

Stephen, A. T., & Galak, J. (2012). The effects of traditional and social earned media on sales: A study of a microlending marketplace. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), 49*, 624-639. doi:10.1509/jmr.09.0401

Stephen, A. T., & Galak, J. (2012). The effects of traditional and social earned media on sales: A study of a microlending marketplace. *Journal of Marketing Research (JMR), 49*, 624-639. doi:10.2139/ssrn.1480088

Tsai, W. (2000). Social capital, strategic relatedness and the formation of intraorganizational linkages. *Strategic Management Journal, 21*, 925-939. doi:10.1002/1097-0266

Tsai, W. (2002). Social structure of "coopetition" within a multiunit organization: Coordination, competition, and intraorganizational knowledge sharing. *Organization Science, 13*, 179-190. doi:10.1287/orsc.13.2.179.536

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2013). *Extended mass layoffs in 2012*. Retrieved from https://www.bls.gov/mls/mlsreport1043.pdf

Ustuner, T., & Iacobucci, D. (2012). Does intraorganizational network embeddedness improve salespeople's effectiveness? A task contingency perspective. *Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management*, *32*, 187-205. doi:10.2753/PSS0885-3134320202.

Verčič, D., & Tkalac Verčič, A. (2016). The new publicity: From reflexive to reflective mediatisation. *Public Relations Review, 42*, 493-498. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2015.07.008

Von Bertalanffy, L. (1950). The theory of open systems in physics and biology. *Science, 111*, 23-29. doi:10.1126/science.111.2872.23

Webster, J. E. (1992). The changing role of marketing in the corporation. *Journal of Marketing*, *56*(4), 1-17. doi:10.2307/1251983

Wernerfelt, B. (1984). A resource-based view of the firm. *Strategic Management Journal*. *5*,171-180. doi:10.1002/smj.4250050207

Wickham, M., & Parker, M. (2007). Reconceptualising organisational role theory for contemporary organisational contexts. *Journal of Managerial Psychology, 22*, 440-464. doi:10.1108/02683940710757182

Xu, D., Huo, B., & Sun, L. (2014). Relationships between intra-organizational resources, supply chain integration and business performance. *Industrial Management & Data Systems, 114*, 1186-1206. doi:10.1108/IMDS-05-2014-0156

Zellars, K. L., & Perrewé, P. L. (2001). Affective personality and the content of emotional social support: Coping in organizations. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86*, 459-467. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.459

APPENDIX

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. What is the formal structure of marketing (public relations) in your organization?
2. How would you describe your relationship with your marketing (public relations) department?
3. What defines your relationship? What are the things that work and don't work when it comes to working with marketing (public relations)?
4. What activities, resources, and tasks, if any, do you and marketing (public relations) share? (note: expect to hear social media as part of this)
5. What happens when you and marketing (public relations) share activities, resources, or tasks?
6. Why do you think that marketing (public relations) and you share duties, resources, and tasks?
7. What are the formal ways you are told to share tasks (job descriptions, etc.)? What are the informal ways?
8. What are the outcomes of shared activities, resources, or tasks?
9. Do you think your relationship with marketing (public relations) has changed at all in recent years? If so, how?
10. Do you see social media as an important part of your daily activities? If so, how? How much do you use it?
11. Do you and marketing (public relations) share social media duties?
12. How has the use of social media affected the relationship between you and marketing (public relations) related to the shared use of social media?