

Role as Resource in the Hollywood Film Industry¹

Wayne E. Baker
University of Chicago

Robert R. Faulkner
University of Massachusetts—Amherst

The theoretical concept of *role as resource* is introduced and illustrated. The concept combines critical elements of the structural, interactionist, and network approaches to role. A role is a resource in two senses: it is a means to claim, bargain for, and gain membership and acceptance in a social community, and it grants access to social, cultural, and material capital that incumbents and claimants exploit in order to pursue their interests. This article examines the impact of a major transformation—the rise of the blockbuster—on roles and positions in Hollywood filmmaking and discerns two processes underlying the growth and decline of roles in culture production. Through *adaptation*, filmmakers adopt role combinations with intrinsic capabilities of solving technical and organizational problems. Through *imitation*, filmmakers copy the role combinations associated with early blockbusters and gain legitimacy in Hollywood's institutional environment. These responses resulted in two fundamental trends: the increasing specialization of the producer and separation of the business and artistic domains, and the increasing fusion of artistic roles.

Role and position are fundamental concepts in sociology. They suffer, however, from fundamental divisions in definition, use, and meaning. Historically, sociological perspectives on roles have split into two broad

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streams, the interactionist and the structural (Turner 1985). A third perspective, the social network approach, has been used to attempt greater conceptual and methodological rigor (see, e.g., White, Boorman, and Brieger 1976; Boorman and White 1976). Each perspective makes valid and important contributions, but a more complete and realistic theory of roles should integrate all three. We propose one such synthesis by introducing a new theoretical concept—*role as resource*—and analyzing the processes by which roles as resources are used to create new positions and social structures in the elite setting of Hollywood filmmaking.

By examining roles and positions over two distinct eras of filmmaking, the preblockbuster and blockbuster periods, we discern two processes underlying the growth and decline of roles in culture production. Through *adaptation*, filmmakers adopt role combinations with intrinsic capabilities of solving technical and organizational problems. Through *imitation*, filmmakers copy the role combinations associated with box-office success to gain legitimacy (and thus influence) in the investment and creative communities of Hollywood. Both processes are revealed in the responses of filmmakers to the rise of the blockbuster. The blockbuster altered the importance of technical and organizational problems, which changed the relative efficacy of various role combinations. In addition, particular combinations were associated with the first blockbusters, adding credibility to such forms. In response, filmmakers adapted to the exigencies of the new environment by shifting to certain role combinations and imitating forms that were associated with the early blockbusters. In the aggregate, their responses resulted in two fundamental trends: the increasing specialization of the producer, coupled with the separation of the business and artistic domains, and the increasing fusion of artistic roles.

In Section I we present our theoretical framework for the analysis of role dynamics. We point out connections between our framework and the structural, interactionist, and network perspectives on roles. The concept of role as resource is introduced, defined, and illustrated. Section II describes the processes of adaptation and imitation as responses to the rise of the blockbuster. Hypotheses about role change in Hollywood are presented. Section III presents data and methods. Main findings are presented and discussed in Section IV. Our conclusion is Section V.

I. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Roles, Positions, and the Combinatorial Problem

Our theoretical approach combines key features of the three perspectives on roles. As in structural role theory, we define role as a bundle of norms and expectations—the behaviors expected from and anticipated by one

who occupies a position (or status) in a social structure (e.g., Linton 1936; Gross, Mason, and McEachern 1958; Kahn et al. 1964; Banton 1965; Biddle and Thomas 1966). But we avoid the common confusion of role with position by adopting Winship and Mandel's (1983) clarification: role is a classification across social structures and position is a location in a particular social structure. Roles are "mechanisms by which people identify similar positions across different situations" (p. 316); they are social abstractions or generalizations that transcend specific social structures. Consistent with this distinction between role and position, we adopt the network definition of social structure as a pattern of positions and their relationships (e.g., Laumann 1966; Laumann and Pappi 1976), instead of the more abstract definition of social structure as a normative system.

Roles and positions are connected by enactment. In conventional treatments of role enactment, a role is thought to be enacted *from* a position: a person first assumes a preestablished position and then behaves (or learns to behave) in a role-appropriate manner. Whether a role is considered to be static and stable, like a script, or something that is made and remade (Turner 1985), a role is usually thought to be enacted from a fixed, preexisting position (e.g., Linton 1936, pp. 113–14). We reverse this process, arguing that roles are first claimed and then enacted *into* positions. Roles are used to *create* positions and their relationships (i.e., social structures). Social structures are created by concretizing (abstract) roles into real positions. Thus, like interactionist role theory, our view of enactment emphasizes that role behavior involves the purposive construction of relationships (and positions) and creativity in role playing rather than mere conformity to expectations (Turner 1985; Hewitt 1988).

To illustrate, consider the three key roles in Hollywood filmmaking—producer, director, and screenwriter. Conventional role theory, which presumes a preexisting "division of labor . . . [that] prescribes certain combinatorial patterns" (McCall and Simmons 1982, p. 119), implies that the configuration of positions would be invariant: three positions would be given in a film organization and a different person would assume each position and play its associated role. In Hollywood, however, combinatorial patterns are not fixed. Five distinct combinatorial patterns can be observed (fig. 1). In *role separation*, each role is enacted into a distinct position (P/D/S).² Business and artistic domains are separated, and artistic roles are split into separate positions (see fig. 2). The role composition of *Superman* (1978) is a prime example (Salkind as pro-

² We abbreviate the three roles as P (producer), D (director), and S (screenwriter). Enactments are indicated by the use of the slash (/) to represent the enactment of roles into separate positions. For example, P/DS means that the producer is one person and a second person combined the director and screenwriter roles.

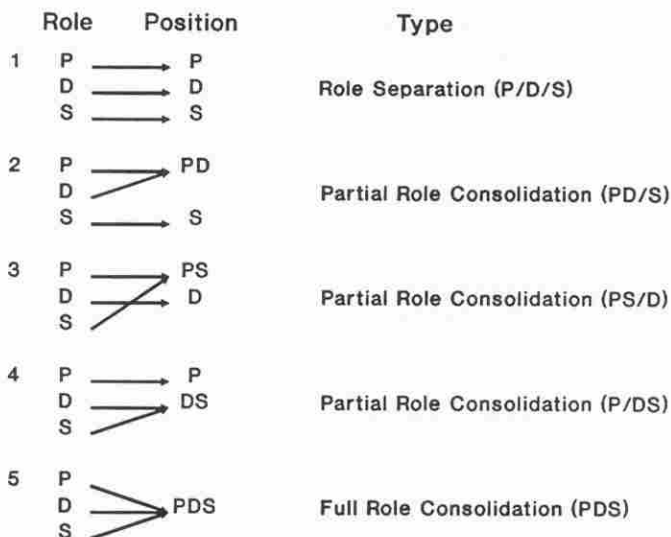


FIG. 1.—Five role enactments

ducer, Donner as director, Puzo as screenwriter). The opposite of role separation is *full role consolidation*: one position contains all three roles (PDS). All business and artistic role resources are claimed by one person and used to create a single, unified position. This pattern is exemplified by films made by Stanley Kubrick, Blake Edwards, and others. Between the poles of separation and full consolidation, there are three forms of *partial role consolidation*. Two bridge business and artistic domains, while the third keeps them separate (fig. 2). In one, the producer and

		Business and Artistic Domains	
		Combined	Separate
Artistic Roles	Combined	PDS	P/DS
	Separate	PD/S PS/D	P/D/S

FIG. 2.—A typology of roles and positions

director roles are enacted into one position, and the screenwriter role is enacted into a second (PD/S). *West Side Story* (1962), *The Sound of Music* (1965), and *The Sand Pebbles* (1966) are films for which Robert Wise jointly enacted the producer-director roles (PD/S). The second occurs when the producer and screenwriter roles are combined into one position, but the director role is another (PS/D). In the third form, the producer role is enacted into a separate position, and the two artistic roles are enacted into a second (P/DS). This form was used in the first blockbuster film, *The Godfather* (1972).

The “combinatorial problem” must be solved each time a film is organized. It is particularly severe due to the nature and dynamic context of Hollywood filmmaking. Unlike large hierarchies, composed of (relatively) stable combinatorial patterns, a film is made by a temporary organization deliberately created for a limited purpose and disbanded upon its completion.³ These “single-project organizations,” or SPOs (Faulkner and Anderson 1987), form in the volatile context of market-based free-lance contracting (Faulkner 1983; Christopherson and Storper 1989), not the stability of hierarchical staff arrangements, as in television writing (Bielby and Bielby 1986). Elements are combined, taken apart, and recombined in a continuous process of organizational formation and dissolution. In this tumultuous context, positions and relationships are never given, but must be actively constructed as participants struggle to enact roles and pursue careers.

The combinatorial problem exists by degrees in settings far beyond Hollywood that include informal social groups, organizations with flexible structures, like professional service firms (e.g., Baker 1990; Eccles and Crane 1988), and organizations undergoing rapid or fundamental change. But even at the top of large hierarchies, like *Fortune* 500 corporations, combinatorial problems must be solved: the separation-consolidation of the chief executive officer (CEO) and board-chair roles is a perennial problem of corporate governance (Harrison, Torres, and Kukalis 1988). Thus, while we focus on culture production, our concepts and framework are applicable elsewhere.

Role as Resource

A role is a resource used to pursue interests and enact positions. It is a resource in two senses. First, as a social classification (Winship and Man-

³ Unlike the studio form of organization, the demise of which took place in the 1950s, “motion pictures are now only rarely made by a single major studio (such as Paramount Pictures, Twentieth-Century/Fox, or Universal Studios). Instead, the major studio acts primarily as a financial investor, and an independent production company organizes the production” (Christopherson and Storper 1989, p. 334).

del 1983), role defines and signals a person's social identity; it enables others to classify, understand, and anticipate a person; it is an answer to the question, "Who are you?" A role is a resource used to claim citizenship in a social community, with rights and obligations pertaining thereto; a person without a role is like a person without a country. Thus, in our view, a role is something that is *used* (similar to Swidler's [1986] notion of culture as a tool kit). The use of role as a resource to bargain for and gain membership, acceptance, citizenship, and access to resources (see below) is particularly important in a context characterized by flux and turmoil, like Hollywood.

Second, a role grants access to a variety of resources. It provides claimants and incumbents with the *means*—cultural, social, and material resources—to pursue their interests. A role is the *nexus* of these resources and the *key* necessary to access them; it is a means of achieving control over occurrences with high impact on events. This view is similar to some formulations of power as "control over valuable resources via possession" (Burt 1977) and, more broadly, as structural claims over resources that influence the directions organizing will take (Zald 1970; Perrow 1970; Pfeffer 1981; Fligstein 1985).

There are three general types of role resources: cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984; Collins 1988, pp. 360–64), social capital (Coleman 1988), and material capital. In Hollywood, cultural capital includes the use and manipulation of business and artistic symbols; claims on artistic properties, such as ideas, premises, and screenplays; and claims on the use of others' reputations. Social capital is a resource for action that inheres in the structures of relations between and among social actors (Coleman 1988); in Hollywood it includes the social networks associated with deal making, film production, and distribution. Finally, material capital consists of physical assets, facilities, equipment, and so on; in Hollywood, it includes financial capital and tools of production (e.g., sets, props, cameras, designs).

How are roles used? Like all culture productions, film projects are arenas in which people with various business and artistic interests compete and negotiate to shape the decisions and premises upon which culture production is collectively organized (Becker 1974, 1982). Roles provide the institutional and cultural means to compete and negotiate. Producers, directors, and screenwriters, like the professions (Abbott 1988), vie for legitimacy, scarce resources, and jurisdiction. Roles are a resource because they grant legitimacy, stake claims on various resources, and delimit jurisdictions.

Consider, for example, a common role claimant in Hollywood, the would-be producer. By claiming this role one gets "calling card" rights—access to significant others in the industry. The would-be pro-

ducer uses the claimed role to announce intentions to make a film; to solicit, purchase, and promote artistic ideas; and to seek out and compete for investors, directors, artists, and so on. Producer Marty Bregman summarized it well: "I either buy a book, or have an idea, or acquire a magazine piece which I believe will ultimately make a good film. After I acquire the rights, I 'cast' a writer who has the right sensibility for this specific material. . . . After I have a screenplay, I bring on a director" (quoted in Bales 1987, p. 50; see similar comments by Zanuck and Brown in *American Film* [1975, pp. 38–39]).

Some believe that claiming the screenwriter role is the best way to break into the business. For example, producer Don Simpson opined, "If someone asks me what is the easiest way to break into the movie business, there is only one answer. Write an original screenplay. There is no easier way. There is no quicker way, no cleaner way. There is no more certain way" (quoted in Litwak 1986, p. 125). Having a script (or premise or treatment) does not guarantee that one will become a screenwriter, but it helps in laying claim to the role. And after breaking in as a screenwriter, one might be able to claim the director role as well, as did writer Lawrence Kasdan (*The Empire Strikes Back*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark*) on *Body Heat*.

Of course, attempts to claim and exploit roles as resources may be disputed, contested, or simply ignored.⁴ Recalling an unsuccessful attempt at role claiming, one of our informants said, "This little dickhead came to me and said 'I'm a screenwriter' but all the little shit had was a three-page treatment!" In Hollywood, innumerable role claims are made—small armies are always competing to break into the business as producers, directors, screenwriters, composers, musicians, cinematographers, actors, actresses, technicians, and so on (see, e.g., Faulkner 1983, 1976)—but few role claims are ever fully realized.⁵ Only when roles are claimed and result in a film project, however, have they been fully enacted.

Roles are a particularly important resource in Hollywood. Unlike the professions, which experience periods of (relative) stability when jurisdictional conflicts are settled (Abbott 1988), Hollywood is always in flux. Part of this stems from Hollywood's free-lance market-based context, which induces movement and mobility; part comes from the short-term, project-based nature of filmmaking itself. In such a context of fluidity

⁴ We interpret Leifer's (1988) concept of "interaction preludes" to role setting as one of many competitive processes used in the enactment of roles (though this is not his emphasis).

⁵ Note that the concept of role as resource does not depend on the relative success with which resources are used. Roles are exploited as one attempts to move a film through its various stages, even if the film is never made and released.

and flux, roles provide stability and continuity.⁶ Roles persist, even as SPOs start up and end, people come and go. Positions, in contrast, change quickly and often in the rapid process of organizational creation and destruction.

Combinatorial Patterns as Solutions

Filmmaking is a tenuous enterprise. It occurs in a business and technical environment characterized by high stakes, risk, and uncertainty. It requires substantial investments of financial capital for properties, artists, and support personnel. And it entails high personal and career risks. As director Sydney Pollack said, "Anybody who tells you he isn't scared to death directing a ten-million dollar movie with major stars is a liar. . . . I don't care if you're a hundred years old, you're scared because you've got a reputation at stake" (quoted in Litwak 1986, p. 199).

As in any "art world" (Becker 1982), filmmaking is plagued by the intrinsic dilemma of commercial versus artistic interests (see, e.g., Faulkner 1976). This is represented by the classic struggles between the producer and the artists (or, to use Hirsch's [1972, pp. 641-43] distinction, between the entrepreneur-administrator, located in the managerial subsystem, and the professionals-artists, located in the technical subsystem). This dilemma results in classic principal-agent problems (e.g., Fama 1980). For example, the producer's interests (getting a film made on time and within budget) are in conflict with the director's (creating a work of art), and the director can misrepresent actual expenditures of time and money (see, e.g., the *Heaven's Gate* debacle in Bach [1985]).

Production and creative processes for producing a hit (the "right ingredients") are poorly understood. As one of our artistic informants said, "I don't know a more cutthroat business than this one. It's partly so because we're dealing with what are the instabilities inherent in a creative process. And it's also because we're playing in an enormously high-rolling crap game." The production of innovations (films) necessitates leeway and discretion among project controllers and artists. The forms of coordination found in complex hierarchies (formal rules, performance audits, day-to-day accounting, etc.) are relaxed or absent in the filmmaking organization. Because search procedures for artistic problems are complex and choices among actions involve a high degree of experimentation, there must be a great deal of mutual coordination between those

⁶ Of course, roles change. The point is that roles typically change very slowly, relative to changes in the configurations of positions (which change from project to project). Indeed, foreshadowing one of our conclusions, we speculate that a new role may be emerging in Hollywood, the so-called writer-director hyphenate (see Sec. IV).

who supervise the transformation of "raw materials" and those who provide the expertise and talent for this process. Thus, coordination of role players is a pressing problem.

Finally, in addition to technical and organizational problems, the institutional environment (Meyer and Rowan 1977; DiMaggio and Powell 1983) of Hollywood must be managed. The SPOs require legitimacy and credibility to attract creative and financial resources, perhaps even more than other types of organizations, due to Hollywood's high stakes, uncertainty, ambiguity, and lack of consensus about professional competence (DiMaggio 1977). One of the filmmaker's critical problems, therefore, is to find ways to gain legitimacy.

Combinatorial patterns offer solutions, real and perceived, to the problems of filmmaking. Choice is not a neutral exercise because each pattern represents different jurisdictions, relationships, and distributions of power and rewards, making the combinatorial problem a prime focus of competition and negotiation among role claimants and incumbents. Each pattern (see fig. 1) has advantages and disadvantages (which vary with circumstance and condition). Combinations that bridge commercial and artistic domains (PDS, PD/S, PS/D) reduce agency problems, holding other factors constant, and enhance the power of business interests. But forms of dual occupancy, where boundary spanning by the producer results in combined commercial and artistic responsibilities, might cause patterned ambivalence. Filmmakers in a dual commercial-creative position are subject to the industry's famous contradiction: Is film business or art? Coordination is simplified by consolidating roles (PDS, P/DS, PD/S, PS/D), but pressures for specialization created by technological change, greater administrative load, and so on, encourage the separation of business and artistic domains (P/DS) or full role separation (P/D/S). To control artists, producers may use divide-and-conquer tactics (P/D/S, PD/S, PS/D), but successful directors or writers will attempt a consolidated artistic position (DS) to guard individual autonomy and artistic properties (Brady 1981; Chase 1975; Mamet 1987). Finally, combinatorial forms vary in legitimacy, making it more or less difficult to obtain resources. Those who use and champion the "right" forms will be better able to do so.

II. ADAPTATION AND IMITATION IN RESPONSE TO THE BLOCKBUSTER

The Rise of the Blockbuster

The years prior to blockbusters were relatively quiescent; in contrast to the blockbuster era, relatively little is written about this period. By the beginning of the preblockbuster period, the well-known studio system,

organized around mass-production principles (Christopherson and Storper 1989), had been defunct for more than a decade; Hollywood had already made the shift from the studio's long-term, hierarchical arrangements and had settled into a market-based system of free-lance contracting. Blockbusters had yet to disrupt the system.⁷

But fundamental changes were underway in America's culture-producing industries (Coser, Kadushin, and Powell 1982; Garvin 1981; Powell 1979; Whiteside 1980).⁸ Markets grew dramatically due to an expanding population with more discretionary dollars (Garvin 1981). Multimedia mergers and conglomerate ownership fostered an environment in which books, films, and so on were conceptualized and promoted as an integrated package (Coser et al. 1982, pp. 29–35). The change included the active pursuit of expensive projects, with a sharp upswing in fixed and variable costs. And it involved ever-larger sums, running into millions of dollars, that paid for artistic properties and the services of persons with proven records of commercial accomplishment.⁹ In particular, it produced the "blockbuster strategy" now prevalent in most culture-production industries—films, theater, television, and book publishing (e.g., Bach 1985; Coser et al. 1982, pp. 30–35, 214–22; Garvin 1980).

The first blockbuster film, *The Godfather* (1972), was the harbinger of the new era in Hollywood. The first blockbuster in Hollywood surprised and puzzled everyone when it appeared (as first blockbusters did in book publishing and elsewhere). When *The Godfather* eclipsed every box-office record, some industry observers saw a one-time occurrence. But the film business has never been the same after that weekend in June 1975 when *Jaws* opened around the country and demonstrated that a movie could gross \$8 million in just three days. Before *Jaws*, producers and directors saw indications of a growing audience for film entertainment, as *The Exorcist* and *The Sting* enjoyed enormous (and surprising) gross reve-

⁷ *The Godfather* appeared in the middle of 1965–80, so we divide the span into two equal periods, the "preblockbuster period" (1965–72) and the "blockbuster period" (1973–80). (For convenience, we also call the periods time 1 and time 2, respectively.)

⁸ Our purpose is to outline the essential features of and changes in the Hollywood filmmaking industry while avoiding excessive detail. Sources cited in the text provide further details.

⁹ Consider the published budgets for these projects (M = million): *Godfather* (\$6M), *Star Wars* (\$9M), *Godfather II* (\$13M), *Towering Inferno* (\$14M), *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (\$19M), *Jaws 2* (\$21M), *Meteor* (\$21M), *The Black Hole* (\$21M), *Popeye* (\$21M), *Sorcerer* (\$22M), *Hurricane* (\$22M), *The Empire Strikes Back* (\$22M), *King Kong* (\$23M), *A Bridge too Far* (\$24M), *The Blues Brothers* (\$27M), *Ragtime* (\$25M), *Apocalypse Now* (\$31M), *Moonraker* (\$30M), *For Your Eyes Only* (\$30M), *Heaven's Gate* (\$35M), and *Star Trek* (\$42M) (figures from Thompson 1981; Dempsey 1981; Michener 1974; Orth 1974).

nues. But when the Zanuck-Brown shark tale grossed \$200 million, it was clear that the "right ingredients" could capture huge audiences. The nine-figure grosses of such hits as *Godfather II*, *Jaws 2*, *Star Wars*, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Grease*, *Animal House*, *The Empire Strikes Back*, *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, to mention only a few, clearly signaled that Hollywood had moved into a new era—the "New Hollywood" (Keyser 1981; Bates 1978; Madsen 1975; Bach 1985; Hoberman 1985).

In this new and intense commercial environment, entrepreneurs, artists, deal makers, and contractors were weaving and reweaving the social arrangements by which films were made. They were also working and reworking action frames or conventions and shared understandings for filmmaking. In the 1970s, new goals, practices, strategems, and claims emerged. For instance, some focused on the volatile subsidiary rights and subsidiary income area, where earnings are made from sources other than direct film sales. Others started to rely on properties already successful in other media, buying "ideas" and "material" with proven commercial values for conversion into films. Increasingly, sequels and orchestrated tie-ins of paperbacks-movies-television were used in attempts to "manage" blockbusters (see, e.g., Coser et al. 1982, pp. 218–19, 266–69; Mayer 1978; Dempsey 1981; Garvin 1980). In similar attempts to reduce risk, some bought "insurance" by using established stars or artists. Still other filmmakers moved toward costly development deals with major studios to act as distributor, product promoter, and champion for the independent filmmaker. Most became aware that they could more easily recoup their huge investment by squeezing advance guarantees from the many picture-hungry theater owners (*Newsweek* 1977).

The "blockbuster strategy" was a major response to the new environment. Blockbusters heralded the potential for extraordinary financial gain, though it was recognized that few properties are so dramatically successful. Most attempts to make blockbusters fall short; the odds against repeat success are staggering. Yet blockbusters were pursued like the grail. The pressures to produce them stemmed from multiple sources. Noted critic Pauline Kael (1980) argued, for example, that culture production had moved "into the control of conglomerates, financiers, and managers who treat them as ordinary commodities" with its cardinal focus on "the numbers." Bach (1985), who worked for United Artists when it was owned by Transamerica, reports that corporate boss Andy Albeck's chief objective was the "locomotive"—the big-budget, blockbuster-potential films that would drive profits.¹⁰ Overall, Holly-

¹⁰ Garvin (1980) offers a supporting economic argument, claiming that the blockbuster is a *conservative* economic goal because one huge success outweighs numerous losses.

wood was reorienting itself in pursuit of the blockbuster. As one of our informants said in 1975, "There is now an emphasis on the big film, quote-unquote. Many people in this town are now trying to go after the major, big-hit project. This influences how they go about their work, of course. It affects the ideas they get. It affects who is up for the project [who is considered]." And, as producer Harry Ufland observed, "I think it has become a home-run business. Everybody is looking for home runs [blockbusters]" (quoted in Litwak 1986, pp. 89-90).

The blockbuster offered a new rationale filmmakers could use to advance careers. It was a new cause to champion, a new banner to unfurl, a new way to promote projects, attract financiers, and persuade talent. The blockbuster changed the rules of the game, but it was also used to change the rules. The strategic actions of filmmakers who championed and fought for the blockbuster idea transformed it into reality. In the process, pursuit of the blockbuster influenced combinatorial solutions, shifted power among key roles, and reshaped Hollywood. Overall, the effect of the blockbuster strategy is seen in two fundamental trends in the combinatorial organization of roles: the rise of the specialized producer with the increasing separation of business and artistic domains, and the increasing consolidation of artistic roles.

Increasing Specialization of Producer Role and Separation of Business and Artistic Domains

Several pressures contributed to the increasing specialization of producers. First, the blockbuster focus made "the deal" and deal makers rise in prominence and prestige, so much so that one observer said that "it appears deal-making has replaced film-making as the principal activity of Hollywood" (Litwak 1986, p. 155). Second, more than ever, filmmaking posed more complex business problems, more elements to coordinate, and higher risks: huge sums spent on production, promotion, and distribution; critical decisions about property acquisition, financing, and inter-media tie-ins; and investments in high-priced, well-known, sought-after talent. The specialized producer, who avoids writing and directing, can concentrate on the deal, putting it together and pulling it off. Third, specialization enables the producer to develop expertise and experience in entrepreneurial activity, making budgets, and administering projects. It increases the producer's credibility, acceptance—and bargaining power—in the creative and financial communities.

The rise of the specialized producer is a result of adaptation and imitation. It was an effective response to the organizational, administrative, and technical demands of blockbusters, but it also conformed to emerging ideas about the "blueprint" for making blockbusters. The combinatorial

pattern used in *The Godfather* (P/DS) included a specialized producer. The use of this pattern in the first blockbuster might have been accidental or the result of a deeper readjustment to changing fundamentals in culture production. But whatever the reason, success spurs imitation (DiMaggio and Powell 1983), and we believe that filmmakers discovered that duplicating the blueprint was a way to gain credibility and legitimacy in blockbuster Hollywood.

Specialization put the producer in the center of Hollywood, a growing influence in filmmaking.¹¹ Indeed, the specialized producer became the initiator of films in ways that seem to evince disdain for artistic contributions. As producer Bregman put it, "I'm the one who brings the writer in, brings the director in. I people my projects" (quoted in Litwak 1986, p. 224). The blockbuster strategy concentrated power and "imperative control" (Weber 1947, pp. 324–63; Simpson 1971) in the hands of producers in the New Hollywood. It increased the value of the resources associated with the producer role; it gave a competitive edge to the specialized producer, who was now in an advantageous position to solve—or advance a claim to solve—the complexities and risks of filmmaking. Conversely, producers who did not specialize were put in a worse competitive position—less able to advance their projects, attract investors, or convince anyone that they had "the solution" to the problem of blockbusters. Far from a bloodless transformation, the shift into the blockbuster era helped those who championed, fought for, or followed the blockbuster call, but it hurt those who were unwilling or unable to do so.

Given the advantages (actual and symbolic) of the specialized producer and the disadvantages of the nonspecialized producer, the hypothesis of producer specialization leads us to expect an increase in the frequency of combinatorial forms that separate business and artistic domains (P/D/S), (P/DS) and a decrease in the frequency of the forms that bridge the two (PD/S, PS/D PDS), comparing time 1 to time 2. Further, if the combinatorial forms that separate business and artistic domains *did* help to solve the problems of making films in the blockbuster era, we should expect a corresponding shift in the distribution of outcomes. Outcomes, measured as dollar rentals to distributors (the social benchmark used in the industry), have two important characteristics: average rentals and the dispersion of rentals.¹² The best outcome set includes high average rentals

¹¹ Many observers have noted the growing influence of film producers in the New Hollywood (e.g., Bates 1978; Chase 1975; Keyser 1981; Madsen 1975; Monaco 1979; Pye and Myles 1979; Stanley 1978). Few, however, have moved beyond such observations to analyze the underlying dynamics and mechanisms of the change.

¹² Unfortunately, profit and budget data are not systematically available, which makes it impossible to analyze profitability or costs.

(many blockbusters) with low dispersion (few flops); the worst set includes low average rentals with high variability. Within the preblockbuster period, we hypothesize that the combinatorial forms with separate producers (P/D/S, P/DS) will *not* outperform those with bridged business-artistic domains (PDS, PS/D, PD/S). Within the blockbuster era, however, we hypothesize that the forms with separate producers will be the best performers. Similarly, we expect that combinatorial forms with separate producers will show improvement in performance across periods, while those that bridge business and artistic domains will show a decline in performance across periods.

Increasing Consolidation of Artistic Roles

The blockbuster era is associated with the rise of the consolidated director-screenwriter role (DS). It has been variously noted by Hollywood commentators as the rise of the "writer's cinema," the "auteur film" (e.g., Corliss 1975; Brady 1981), and the so-called artistic hyphenate (e.g., Brady 1981, p. 22; Chase 1975, p. 66).¹³ The blockbuster strategy encouraged the formation of consolidated artistic roles. As the rise of blockbusters shifted power in favor of the specialized producer, it concurrently increased the bargaining power of directors and screenwriters with successful track records. The use of proven properties (a blockbuster from other media) and proven talent (hence the term "bankable star") was a major tactic to reduce the high risk of blockbusters. The writer of a successful screenplay, for example, was believed to be more likely than a newcomer to produce a hit. Therefore, successful directors and writers were in strong positions to bargain for consolidated positions (DS), and producers who relied on proven talent were susceptible to such bargaining tactics.

In a happy coincidence, the consolidated artistic position (DS) helps a producer manage some of the organizational problems associated with separate artistic positions (e.g., coordination) and manage the institutional environment. The fused artistic position, like the specialized producer, was associated with early blockbusters and could be used as a rationale to persuade risk-averse bankers and investors. In other words, the DS role became a more valuable resource. As P/DS became a statistical norm (used frequently) and yielded spectacular economic results, its legitimacy increased even more. Filmmakers could better advance their

¹³ The fused director-writer position is associated with some of the best-known names in Hollywood: Woody Allen, Mel Brooks, Brian DePalma, Terrence Malick, John Milius, Walter Hill, Lawrence Kasdan, George Lucas, Blake Edwards, Francis Coppola, Paul Schrader, Oliver Stone, Robert Towne, and others (Brady 1981, p. 22).

interests by using the P/DS blueprint in an appeal to prevailing norms. Similarly, Harrison et al. (1988) argue that the consolidation of the CEO and board-chair roles in *Fortune* 500 corporations has certain advantages, including legitimacy gained by conformity to prevailing norms and lower board-chair turnover.

By itself, our hypothesis of the increasing consolidation of artistic roles would lead us, in comparing time 1 and time 2, to expect an increase in the frequency of combinatorial forms with a fused director-writer position (P/DS, PDS) and a decrease in the forms that split the artistic roles (PD/S, PS/D, P/D/S). However, our earlier hypothesis (separation of the business and artistic domains) operates in the opposite direction for combinatorial forms that bridge business and artistic domains. The effects of both hypotheses are summarized in table 1.

Both hypotheses lead to the same expectations for all forms of partial role consolidation: an increase in P/DS and declines in PD/S and PS/D. They lead to contradictory expectations for the extreme forms, role separation (P/D/S) and full role consolidation (PDS). If the effects of the hypotheses are equal in strength, we would expect P/D/S and PDS to exhibit stability across time periods with no significant increase or decrease from time 1 to time 2. Differences in the strength of each effect, however, might be inferred if changes in the use of role separation and role consolidation move in opposite directions. An increase in P/D/S and a decrease in PDS would indicate, for example, that the effect of producer specialization was stronger than the effect of artistic role consolidation.

Within the preblockbuster period, we hypothesize that the combinatorial form representing both trends (P/DS) will not *outperform* any other form and that the forms violating both trends (PS/D, PD/S) will not *underperform* the others. The P/DS form should not do better because it did not confer special advantages, real or perceived, in the preblockbuster period. Even if full-time attention to business and administration was important in the preblockbuster period, it was not *as important* as it would be in the far riskier blockbuster years. Moreover, the presence

TABLE 1
HYPOTHESIZED EFFECTS OF TWO TRENDS IN HOLLYWOOD

	Producer Specialization	Consolidation of Artistic Roles
P/DS	+	+
P/D/S	+	-
PDS	-	+
PD/S and PS/D	-	-

NOTE. — + indicates increase in labeled activity; - indicates decrease.

of a director-writer hyphenate (DS) did not mean that proven artistic talents were working on the film (as we hypothesize it did in the blockbuster period) and, therefore, was not a signal that conveyed important positive information to bankers and backers. By similar reasoning, PD/S and PS/D are not expected to be poor performers because nonspecialized producers did not incur special liabilities and divided artistic roles did not convey negative information.

Within the blockbuster era, however, we hypothesize that P/DS would be the best performer of all. Similarly, not only do we expect this combinatorial form to show improvement in performance across periods, but to exhibit the largest improvement of all. In contrast, we expect that forms that violate both trends (PD/S, PS/D) will exhibit sharp declines in performance across periods. We hypothesize that the performance of forms that violate only one trend (P/D/S, PDS) will not improve or decline (unless one effect is stronger than the other).

If track records became important in the blockbuster period, we would expect to observe that more director-writers (DS) in the blockbuster period would have track records as a writer or director than would director-writers in the preblockbuster period. If so, then the blockbuster-inspired trend toward consolidation of artistic roles created new winners and new losers. It favored those with established track records but decreased the already meager odds of a newcomer breaking into the business. In effect, it heightened barriers to entry for those without a history of accomplishments, and, as an essentially conservative strategy, it constrained innovations as it minimized risks (see also Faulkner 1983, pp. 89-100).

III. DATA AND METHODS

Our strategy is to examine a small number of roles in a large population of organizations over two major periods. To develop theory and hypotheses, we use archival records (journalistic analyses, Hollywood commentary, secondary interviews, etc.) and ethnographic interviews that we conducted with 95 active participants in the motion picture and television film industry. These included major producers, directors, screenwriters, agents, and production personnel. To test our key hypotheses about patterns and trends, however, we must quantify our data. Information on the total population of SPOs, producers, directors, and screenwriters is needed to analyze and document role enactments, dynamics, and change. A substantial "running record" (Webb et al. 1981) is also required to properly examine short-lived organizations over a lengthy period, examining both successful and unsuccessful films and their makers. The film business fortunately records an abundant history of projects, partici-

pants, their joint involvements over time, as well as detailed information on projects with total domestic sales over \$4 million.

The pattern of role enactments is studied by using the focal point of the industry: the Hollywood produced and distributed film.¹⁴ The units of observation are movies made, released, and then reviewed in the Hollywood trade publications such as *Variety*, *Daily Variety*, and the *Hollywood Reporter*. These sources are supplemented by collections assembled at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, documents and interviews collected by the American Film Institute, and our own interviews with industry informants and participants.

Our population of SPOs consists of 2,381 films released by the industry between the 1965 production period (October 1965–September 1966) and the 1980 period (October 1980–September 1981). There are 1,238 films in the preblockbuster period (1965–72) and 1,143 in the blockbuster period (1973–80). The number of filmmakers with producer credits on films during the two periods is 758 and 635, respectively; with director credits, 635 and 633; with screenwriting credits, 851 and 871.

Rentals are adjusted by a price deflator based on the average ticket price in America per year, with 1980 as our base year (Vogel 1986, p. 369). We also used the consumer price index (CPI) as an economywide measure of inflation. Results based on each price deflator are quite similar, so we only report figures based on the ticket-price adjustment (a more precise industry-specific measure). Note that rentals are left truncated. The archival sources do not report rentals less than \$4 million (including losses). Rentals for these films are coded as zero. Left truncation does not introduce a bias that favors our results. Consider, for example, the hypothesized improvement in results from time 1 to time 2 for the P/DS combination. Truncating rentals below \$4 million cuts off the poorly performing films, which would have the effect of increasing the average in time 1, moving it closer to the time 2 average. In addition, it would decrease the relative variability of rentals in time 1. Thus, left truncation introduces a bias that makes it more difficult to find differences; if we find them, we can be confident that they represent true population differences. Price deflation has the same effect. By deflating rentals, we in effect exacerbate the left-truncation bias, lowering the measured average of time 2 (which had higher inflation) toward the time

¹⁴ Our interest is in *feature films made and distributed by Hollywood*. We do not include documentaries, films about rock concerts, foreign-made films, compilation screen classics, American Film Institute student films, or productions whose origins or makers are unknown (or uncredited in screen titles). Others include all or most of the above in their more expansive definitions of "a film" (see e.g., Vogel 1986). Our count of films for the 1980 season is 191 films; Vogel (1986, p. 45), for instance, reports a total of 235 films.

1 average. Deflation, like left truncation, works against finding differences. With such biases against our hypotheses, one can be more confident that differences found represent true differences.

IV. ROLE DYNAMICS: FINDINGS

Preblockbuster Period

The distributions of the combinatorial forms created by the enactment of roles into positions are presented in table 2 and displayed in figures 3 and 4. As shown in figure 3, full role separation (P/D/S) is the modal organization form in the preblockbuster period, used in half of all films made. The combinatorial form of partial role consolidation with fused producer-director roles (PD/S) was the second most popular form (20%), followed by PDS (13%), P/DS (11%), and PS/D (6%). In the period before blockbusters, two very different combinatorial solutions were favored: the specialized producer with separate artists (P/D/S) or the non-specialized producer who directed (PD/S). The form that would become best suited to the New Hollywood (P/DS) was quite unpopular in the preblockbuster years.

Arraying the five forms by the typology in figure 2 above permits role enactments to be analyzed as a contingency table. The two dimensions of the typology—business-artistic separation and fused artistic roles—are

TABLE 2
NUMBER OF FILMS AND AVERAGE RENTALS BY ROLE COMBINATION

Time Period and Role Combination	Number of Films	Average Rentals*	Standard Deviation	Relative Variation†
Time 1:				
P/D/S	622	4.20	12.52	.120
PD/S	246	4.38	15.79	.230
P/DS	131	2.96	14.42	.427
PS/D	79	5.47	16.16	.335
PDS	160	1.84	11.54	.497
Time 2:				
P/D/S	602	7.57	15.38	.083
PD/S	115	4.36	9.25	.199
P/DS	250	9.06	21.44	.150
PS/D	65	3.62	7.21	.249
PDS	111	6.89	23.66	.327

* Rentals (in millions) adjusted by deflator based on average ticket price per year, 1980 = base (Vogel 1986, p. 369).

† Relative variation is Martin and Gray's (1971) standardized coefficient of variation.

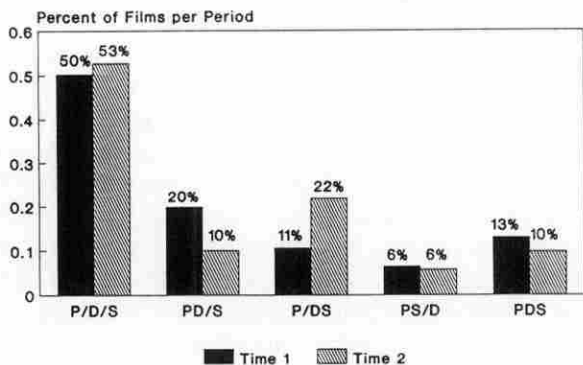
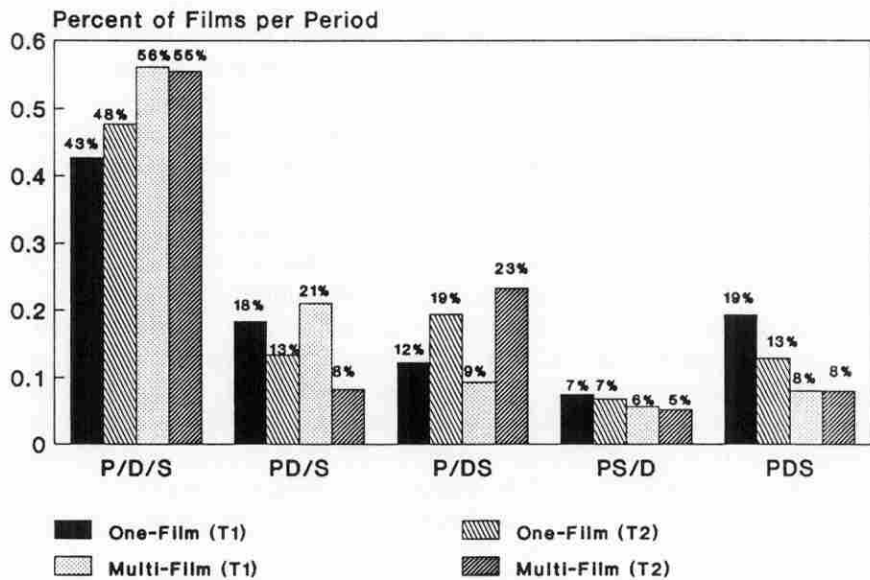


FIG. 3.—Total population of films



Note: Some percentages reflect rounding.

FIG. 4.—One-film versus multifilm producers

clearly related in the preblockbuster period ($P < .001$; $\chi^2 = 39.9$). There is a significant tendency for artistic roles to be fused when the business-artistic domains are bridged (PDS) and for artistic roles to be divided when the business-artistic domains are separated (P/D/S). Both role consolidation (PDS) and role separation (P/D/S) occur more frequently than expected, while the three forms of partial role consolidation (P/DS, PD/S + PS/D) occur less frequently than expected. Thus, the forms that violated only one of the two hypothesized trends (P/D/S, PSD) were relatively more popular in preblockbuster Hollywood than forms that represented or violated both trends (P/DS, PD/S + PS/D).

Hollywood is stratified by productivity (film credits) into tiers of players with different outcomes (Faulkner 1983). Exploring the possible differences between low- and high-productivity filmmakers helps to reveal successful and unsuccessful strategies (where success means getting to make more than one film). To analyze this, we divided the population of films into two subpopulations, those made by one-film producers (only a single film in a period) and those made by multifilm producers (two or more films in a period).

As shown in figure 4, films made by one-film and multifilm producers exhibit similar patterns overall, but there are some noteworthy differences. Both one-film and multifilm producers used role separation (P/D/S) more than any other form, but it was more popular among multifilm producers (56%) than among one-film producers (43%). Roughly 20% of all films made by both groups utilized consolidated producer-director roles (PD/S), but one-film producers used full role consolidation (PDS) much more often than did multifilm producers (19% vs. 8%).

Though getting a film made is one measure of success, the principal social gauge in Hollywood is gross film rentals (shown in tables 2 and 3 and figs. 5 and 6). As hypothesized, the combinatorial forms with separate producers (P/D/S, P/DS) did *not* outperform those with bridged business-artistic domains in the preblockbuster years, with the exception of full consolidation (PDS), the worst performer of all. Using one-way analysis of variance to test for differences in means, we find no significant difference ($P > .05$) in average rentals for all pairs of role combinations except role consolidation (PDS), which has statistically lower ($P < .05$) rentals than P/D/S and one combination with bridged business-artistic domains (PS/D).

There are substantial differences in the relative variability of rentals in time 1 (table 2). Though average rentals associated with role separation (P/D/S) are not statistically different than the other combinations (except PDS), this form yielded the lowest variability, only 12% of its maximum (Martin and Gray's [1971] standardized coefficient of variation varies from zero to one and may be interpreted as a percentage of its maximum).

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF FILMS AND AVERAGE RENTALS BY ROLE COMBINATION FOR ONE-FILM AND MULTIFILM PRODUCERS

Type of Producer, Time Period, and Role Combination	Number of Films	Average Rentals*	Standard Deviation	Relative Variation†
One-film producers:				
Time 1:				
P/D/S	230	2.57	10.03	.258
PD/S	99	3.74	21.35	.577
P/DS	66	.65	2.61	.498
PS/D	40	2.20	6.97	.507
PDS	104	1.82	13.90	.753
Time 2:				
P/D/S	197	4.28	11.59	.193
PD/S	55	2.70	6.50	.328
P/DS	80	4.69	9.30	.223
PS/D	28	2.93	6.55	.430
PDS	53	.85	3.09	.504
Multifilm producers:				
Time 1:				
P/D/S	392	5.16	13.70	.134
PD/S	147	4.81	10.57	.182
P/DS	65	5.30	20.11	.474
PS/D	39	8.82	21.52	.396
PDS	56	1.87	4.83	.348
Time 2:				
P/D/S	405	9.17	16.70	.091
PD/S	60	5.88	11.03	.244
P/DS	170	11.11	24.97	.173
PS/D	37	4.14	7.72	.311
PDS	58	12.52	31.73	.336

* Rentals (in millions) adjusted by deflator based on average ticket price per year, 1980 = base (Vogel 1986, p. 369).

† Relative variation is Martin and Gray's (1971) standardized coefficient of variation.

The other form with specialized producers (P/DS), however, is the second-most volatile, obtaining 43% of its maximum. The most volatile form is full role consolidation (PDS), which obtains 50% of its maximum. The enactment of the producer, director, and screenwriter roles into one position (PDS) is associated with the worst outcome set (lowest average and highest variability) in the preblockbuster era.

For films made by one-film producers, average rentals for the various role combinations are not statistically different ($P > .05$), though P/DS, hypothesized to be the best performer in time 2, had the lowest preblockbuster average (see fig. 6). Similarly, for films made by multifilm producers, there are no significant differences ($P > .05$) in average rentals

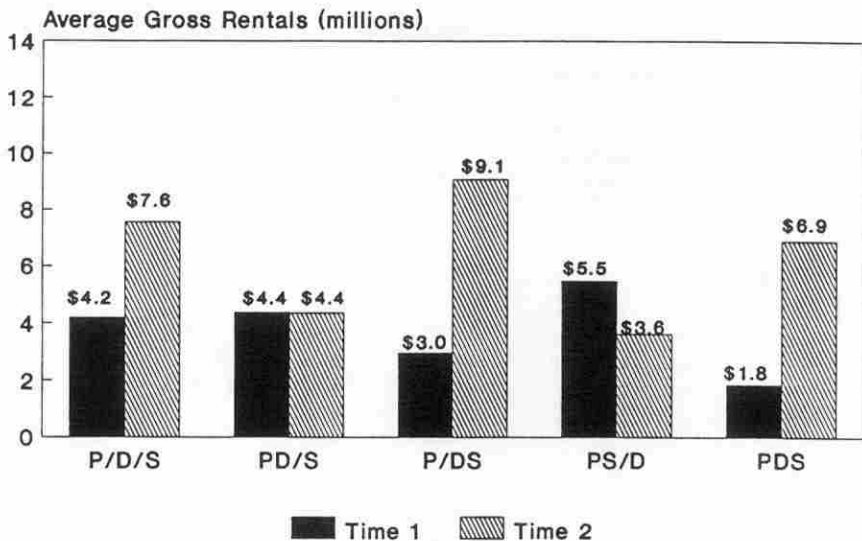
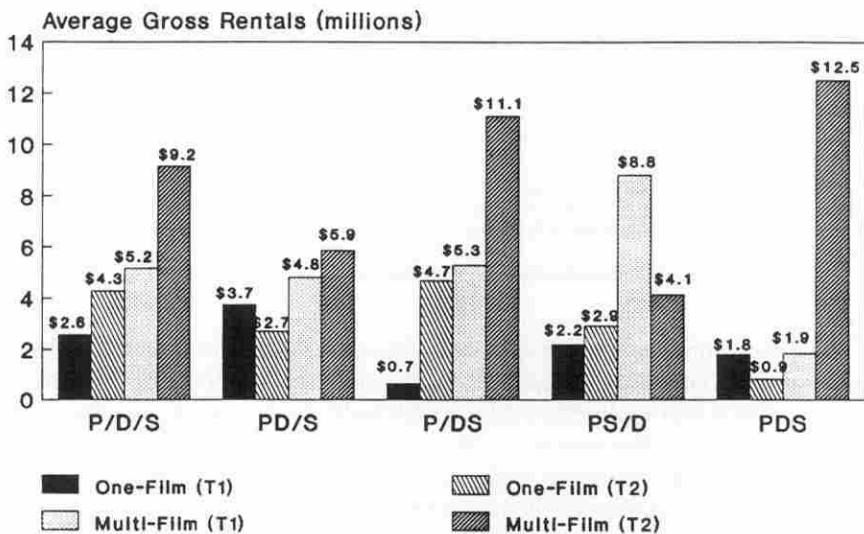


FIG. 5.—Average rentals by role combination



Note: Some amounts reflect rounding.

FIG. 6.—Rentals by role combination for one-film versus multifilm producers

among the various combinatorial patterns (except PDS rentals are significantly lower than PD/S and PS/D). Generally, the variability of rentals of films made by one-film producers is greater than the rentals of films made by multifilm producers (table 3). Forms with specialized producers (P/DS, P/D/S) yield the least-volatile rentals for one-film producers, while P/DS yields the highest and P/D/S the lowest for multifilm producers.

In general, the results support our hypothesis that combinatorial solutions with specialized producers (P/D/S, P/DS) would not outperform other combinatorial forms. (Role separation, however, is a good performer, judged by the criterion of low variability.) The form expected to be the best performer in the blockbuster era (P/DS) is a very poor performer in the preblockbuster era. These results are consistent with our argument that combinatorial solutions with specialized producers in general (P/D/S, P/DS), and the specialized producer with fused artistic roles in particular (P/DS), did not confer special advantages, real or symbolic, in the preblockbuster period. But things changed in blockbuster Hollywood.

Blockbuster Period

The growth and decline of combinatorial patterns are consistent with predictions (see fig. 3). The hypothesized trends of producer specialization and artistic role consolidation both indicated that P/DS would grow dramatically in the blockbuster period. Indeed, its use doubled, growing from 11% to 22% of all films made, to become the second most popular form in time 2. Both trends indicated that PD/S and PS/D would decline. In fact, PD/S declined substantially, from 20% in time 1 to 10% in time 2. The other form with bridged business-artistic domains (PS/D) remained a stable and minor form.

The two hypothesized trends exert opposite pressures on role separation (P/D/S) and role consolidation (PDS). Therefore, each form was expected to be stable, unless the effect of one trend was stronger than the other. The use of P/D/S increased slightly (from 50% to 53%) and PDS decreased (from 13% to 10%), suggesting that the effect of producer specialization was stronger than the effect of artistic role consolidation.

The ascendancy of the P/DS pattern is more pronounced for films made by multifilm producers than by one-film producers (fig. 4). Only 9% of films made by multifilm producers used the P/DS combination in time 1, but fully 23% used it in time 2. One-film producers also increased use of this combinatorial pattern, but only by 7 percentage points (from 12% to 19%). The decline of the PD/S form is also sharper for films made by multifilm producers. Multifilm producers decreased use of this form by 13 percentage points (21% to 8%), while one-film producers

reduced use of this pattern by just 5 percentage points (from 18% to 13%). Overall, producers who followed (and reinforced) the two trends underlying the transformation of Hollywood were more successful (i.e., able to make more than one film).

We hypothesized a simultaneous decline in the use of combinatorial patterns that violated both trends (PD/S + PS/D) and an increase in the form that represented the trends (P/DS). In effect, we expected a decrease in the lower-left cell and an increase in the upper-right cell of the typology (fig. 2). It is possible to test these two hypotheses simultaneously and draw an integrated conclusion. Comparing each type over time as two independent binomial proportions, we find that, for the total population, there is a significant increase in the use of P/DS by time 2 ($P < .025$), though not a significant simultaneous decline in the use of PD/S + PS/D by time 2 ($P > .025$).¹⁵ However, this varies considerably by subpopulation. For films made by one-film producers, neither change is statistically significant ($P > .025$). For multifilm producers, however, *both* are statistically significant ($P < .025$). Our hypothesis of a simultaneous increase in P/DS and decline in PD/S and PS/D is strongly supported for films made by high-productivity filmmakers. Successful strategies conformed with the underlying trend away from bridged business-artistic domains (especially PD/S) toward the specialized producer with fused artistic roles (P/DS).

These findings are given further support by the assessment of the independence of the two dimensions of the typology because they exhibit *weaker* departures from independence in time 2 compared with time 1. The dimensions are still statistically related for the entire population in time 2 ($P < .01$; $\chi^2 = 7.8$), but they are related for one-film producers only at the .05 level ($\chi^2 = 4.3$) and are statistically independent for multifilm producers ($P > .05$; $\chi^2 = 3.5$).

There is some quantitative support for our hypothesis about the growing importance of artistic track records and the use of track records by directors and writers to bargain for a fused position (DS). Recall that the

¹⁵ The null hypothesis is that the two proportions (for a given type) are the same in time 1 and time 2. The alternative hypothesis is that the proportion is larger in time 2 for P/DS and smaller in time 2 for PD/S + PS/D. The Z-scores are calculated as

$$Z = \frac{(P_1 - P_0)}{\sqrt{\frac{P(1-P)}{N}}}$$

where P_1 = proportion in time 2, P_0 = proportion in time 1, and P = overall proportion. The simultaneous test approach suggests that the critical value for significance tests should not be greater than .025.

use of integrated artistic roles doubled in blockbuster Hollywood (from 11% in time 1 to 22% in time 2). As expected, a higher percentage of director-writers worked on multiple films in time 2, compared with director-writers in time 1. Fifty-six percent of the 189 director-writers worked on more than one film, while 42% of the 113 director-writers in time 1 worked on multiple films. As expected, a higher percentage of director-writers in time 2 had worked previously as a screenwriter or director, compared with the proportion in time 1. Sixty-seven or 35% of the director-writers in time 2 had been writers or directors previously, while 29 or 26% of the director-writers in time 1 had been the screenwriter or director on his or her previous film.¹⁶ These results are consistent with our hypothesis that proven talent was preferred in blockbuster Hollywood, compared with the preblockbuster years, and that artists with track records could bargain for consolidated positions (DS).

Surprisingly, a much larger percentage of director-writers in the blockbuster period worked in a consolidated artistic position on their *first* films (39% in time 2 and 17% in time 1). Even without an artistic track record, it appears that would-be directors and screenwriters were better able to claim and secure a consolidated position (DS) in the blockbuster period than in the prior years. The increase in the appearance of fused artistic positions on first films might indicate imitative behavior designed to appeal to the blockbuster blueprint (P/DS) for box office success.

The analysis of outcomes strongly supports our expectations that the combinatorial form with separate producers and fused artistic roles (P/DS) would be the best performer in time 2 (see tables 2 and 3 and figs. 5 and 6). In time 2, P/DS is associated with the highest average rentals, significantly greater ($P < .05$) than either form that bridged artistic and business roles (PD/S or PS/D). Further, outcomes were much less variable for this form, dropping from second highest in time 1 to second lowest in time 2. Rentals for the two forms that violated both trends declined (PS/D) or remained the same (PD/S), yielding the two lowest averages in time 2.

Each of the combinatorial patterns that violated a single trend, role separation and role consolidation, yielded higher average rentals in time 2, compared to time 1. But only the average rentals of role separation (P/D/S) are significantly greater than PD/S and PS/D ($P < .05$). Further,

¹⁶ Our method was to locate each director-writer and array the person's films in historical sequence in a given period; then, we examined the person's position (D or S) on the film before the film with the consolidated position (DS). Our analysis is left truncated for each period. We could solve this problem for time 2 by dipping into time 1, but we did not do this because we were unable to do the same for time 1 due to lack of data prior to 1965. (Note that dipping into time 1 does produce even stronger patterns in favor of our hypothesis.)

P/D/S exhibited the least volatile rentals in time 2, while PDS exhibited the most volatile. Thus, usage patterns (P/D/S used more, PDS used less) and economic outcomes suggest that the effect of producer specialization is stronger than that of artistic role consolidation.

There are some similarities and differences in outcomes associated with films made by one-film and multifilm producers (table 3 and fig. 6). Each group experienced a dramatic improvement in performance over time for the P/DS form ($P < .01$), but PD/S improved and PS/D declined for multifilm producers while PD/S declined and PS/D improved for one-film producers. Further, the average rentals for P/D/S increased for each group ($P < .05$, for multifilm producers only), while PDS rose dramatically for multifilm producers ($P < .01$) and declined slightly for one-film producers. (The relative variability of rentals for one-film and multifilm producers are similar, as is evident in table 3.)

The quantitative results are consistent with our argument. The rise of the blockbuster disturbed the social organization of Hollywood in fundamental ways. It shifted power into the hands of the business interests and increased the value of the specialized producer; simultaneously, it increased the value of artistic track records, enhanced the bargaining power of accomplished directors and screenwriters, and resulted in the rise of the artistic hyphenate. These trends—the separation of business-artistic domains and consolidation of artistic roles—found expression in the P/DS combinatorial solution to the problem of filmmaking. The popularity of this combinatorial form doubled in the blockbuster period and became the best economic performer in blockbuster Hollywood—even though it was one of the worst in the preblockbuster years.

The blockbuster created a new opportunity structure for those who perceived it and were able and willing to take advantage of it. In the competitive struggle to claim and enact roles, the blockbuster strategy became a new way filmmakers could attempt to advance and realize their interests. By doing so, they helped to sustain and further the transformation of Hollywood filmmaking. Their strategic actions show that role enactment is not the result of slavish conformity to norms and expectations; roles are “played,” as Mead noted, the unexpected can happen, and creativity is used in establishing social relations (see also Turner 1985). In the blockbuster period, the “unexpected” was the increasing—and increasingly lucrative—enactment of roles into the P/DS combinatorial form.

The P/DS combinatorial form became the formula for success. Indeed, it proved to be an efficient and effective form of organization, yielding superior economic performances in the New Hollywood. It became a highly effective way to marshal and exploit cultural, social, and material

capital. The P/DS form also had greater credibility and legitimacy in blockbuster Hollywood. Filmmakers who used the P/DS blueprint in an appeal to prevailing norms enjoyed competitive advantages. Filmmakers who ignored or were unable to adjust to blockbuster Hollywood suffered. Combinatorial “solutions” that violated the underlying trends in Hollywood, and their advocates, lost legitimacy and experienced poor economic results.

Our last point is speculative. The rise of the director-writer hyphenate may signal the emergence, albeit incomplete, of a new role in Hollywood. During the blockbuster period, the artistic “hyphenate” became part of Hollywood parlance (Brady 1981; Chase 1975), a linguistic usage that could indicate the evolution of a new social classification—a new role. That is, it became a social abstraction or generalization that transcended particular positions (social structures). Part of this process was the repeated enactment of the director and screenwriter roles into the highly visible hyphenate position, coupled with superior economic results. These changes created a new and propitious opportunity, for those who perceived it, to claim and use the “role” of hyphenate to fight for and advance their interests. It became a *resource* in itself that artists could use to protect their properties and interests. As Chase (1975, p. 66) noted, for example, “In recent years, a broadly-based effort by writers to control, or at least be consulted about the translation of their material has resulted in a marked increase in so-called hyphenates.”

Other art worlds contain similar examples. Kealy (1979), for example, describes the emergence of a hybrid type of studio collaborator—the “artist-mixer” in the production and reproduction of rock music. Generally, when art and craft worlds overlap, we might expect new positions and roles to emerge (Becker 1978, p. 866). In book publishing, for example, the subsidiary rights from a popular book were claimed by various departments until a new role crystallized to handle these transactions (“subsidiary rights director”). This role, as opposed to other possible jurisdictions, signaled the triumph of business types (finance and marketing) over creative (editorial) types (see Powell 1979, pp. 10–12).

In stable environments, “traditional” positions are produced and reinforced (White 1981), resulting in the reproduction of old or conventional roles (even though role making is a continuous operation [Turner 1985]). But in environments undergoing deep transformations, such as culture production, the likelihood that *new* roles can be created is much greater. In changing contexts, new roles can help create and sustain the transformation as social actors claim and use them to fight for their interests (see also Fligstein 1987). Such a process may be taking place with the rise of the artistic hyphenate in the New Hollywood.

V. CONCLUSION

This article provides a means to combine the structural, interactionist, and network approaches to role. To do so, we introduce the theoretical concept of *role as resource* and reverse the usual view of roles enacted from preexisting positions. As a resource, roles are used to pursue careers and advance interests in the struggle for power and influence. In particular, a role is used as a resource to create new positions and social structures.

We study the growth and decline of roles in culture production by examining the effect of a major transformation—the rise of the blockbuster in Hollywood—on the enactment of roles into positions. By doing so, we begin to redress Collins's (1988, p. 238) criticism that sociological theory has not progressed very far in the consideration of role change and the processes through which roles are transformed "either within a given situation or by a historical shift." In Hollywood, filmmakers *adapted* to the rise of the blockbuster by shifting to combinatorial forms that were better able to solve organizational and technical problems. In addition, they *imitated* the combinatorial forms that were associated with blockbusters as part of an appeal to emerging norms about the "right ingredients" for making blockbusters. Together these responses resulted in two fundamental trends: the increasing specialization of the producer and separation of the business and artistic domains, and the increasing fusion of artistic roles. The combinatorial solution that represented both trends (P/DS) fared the best in blockbuster Hollywood.

The usefulness of our approach is shown by four theoretical contributions. First, a role can be conceptualized and analyzed as a social resource. Second, roles are claimed and enacted *into* new positions in unique combinatorial forms; roles, as social generalizations, are concretized as they are used to create new social structures. Third, role dynamics are shaped and influenced by transformations in environmental conditions. Fourth, role enactments are consequential: shifts in the use of combinatorial forms are associated with redistributions of economic outcomes.

There are several directions for future work. The utility of the concept of role as resource should be explored by focusing on the uses of roles in other settings. We examined simple organizational structures (single-project organizations). The use of roles as resources in more complex organizations should be considered. Such extensions would include analysis of the emergence of new roles, with specifications of the conditions and circumstances that foster or impede their emergence. Finally, role theory should consider more explicitly the economic consequences of role enactment.

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