Social Bricolage in Arts Entrepreneurship: Building a Jazz Society from Scratch

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SOCIAL BRICOLAGE IN ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP: BUILDING A JAZZ SOCIETY FROM SCRATCH

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Abstract

This paper applies the social bricolage construct to arts entrepreneurship, utilizing an in-depth case study for illustration. The importance of six key elements including: making do, a refusal to be constrained by limitations, improvisation, social value creation, stakeholder participation, and persuasion, are identified and discussed in light of the recent formation of the Grand River Jazz Society. Bricolage is shown to be a process whereby entrepreneurs with local knowledge and access to local resources are best able to create enterprises using the materials at hand, rather than overextending their efforts with externally directed attributes requiring unattainable resources. As such, entrepreneurial process elements may be emulated from successful social bricolage examples, recognizing that each context, community, and circumstances will require their own unique solutions.

Introduction

Bricolage has become one of the leading emergent theories within the entrepreneurship literature (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Fisher, 2012). Originating with anthropologist Lévi-Strauss, bricolage reflects the spirit of "making do with what is at hand" (1966, p. 17) when solving problems and uncovering opportunities and has been adapted to areas as diverse as education, art, business, and law (Fisher, 2012). In entrepreneurship literature, bricolage asserts a more constructivist start-up approach within constrained resource environments, as compared to the more objectivist views, which dominated entrepreneurial thinking in previous decades (Duymedjian and Rüling, 2010).

Entrepreneurial "bricoleurs" are argued to take an action-oriented, improvisational approach to business formulation, refusing to acquiesce to standard norms and expectations within industries (Tracey and Phillips, 2007). Traditional entrepreneurship perspectives, that is, "causal" models focusing on planned, rational, and linear processes (Sarasvathy, 2001), have given ground to more adaptive theories, including elements of improvisation, effectuation, and bricolage (Fisher, 2012). These approaches suggest that entrepreneurial opportunities are more enacted than discovered (Baker and Nelson, 2005).

Bricolage holds promise in the field of entrepreneurship for both descriptive and normative reasons. Emerging research suggests that bricolage represents a more authentic portrayal of entrepreneurial process as it occurs in practice, enabling stakeholders in and around the entrepreneurial world to better grasp the realities of start-up processes and behaviors (Fisher, 2012). Arguably, this more accurate depiction can lead to better systems, supports, and incentives to encourage entrepreneurial activity. Further, the bricolage metaphor is potentially a more accessible approach for would-be entrepreneurs evaluating start-up opportunities, where challenges are conceptualized within the grasp of individual capabilities, rather than postulating unreasonable requirements as externally imposed.

The concept of "social bricolage" has been recently applied to particular challenges concerning social enterprise start-ups (Di Domenico, Haugh, and Tracey, 2010). Special attention has been given to topics such as community engagement, stakeholder participation, and maintaining external legitimacy, all within the particularly resource-constrained area of social enterprise entrepreneurship (Gundry, Kickuo, Griffiths, and Bacq, 2011). Social venture

literature tends to focus on nascent organizations addressing such areas as poverty alleviation, environmental degradation, literacy, and health care issues (Zeyen, et al., 2013).

Within this context, organizational challenges related to arts and culture are not always a natural fit. Organizations in this sector typically enrich entire communities across the socio-economic spectrum, yet may be seen as serving the privileged and elite, rather than the downtrodden (Feder and Katz-Gerro, 2012). This combined with the unique challenges of managing within the arts and culture sector (Preece, 2005), can result in these organizations becoming conceptually marginalized and neglected from a research standpoint (Smith, Besharov, Wessels, and Chertok, 2012). With this in mind, this paper seeks to initially confirm and reinforce the emerging "social bricolage" model forwarded by Di Domenico, et al., (2010). It further seeks to broaden the theoretical application of the social bricolage model as it applies to the arts and culture sector.

Using details and data from a recent case study, this paper examines the start-up experience first-hand through the lens of bricolage in the arts world. The case is built on the experience of starting the Grand River Jazz Society (GRJS), a non-profit arts organization presenting professional music in a venue called *The Jazz Room* in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Since opening in September 2011, the GRJS presented 80 weekend performances annually to over 6500 audience members per year, in partnership with The Huether Hotel. The author is a participant-observer in the start-up as founder and president of the society. While this dual role presents the expected challenges to objectivity and bias, benefits include access to an extraordinary amount of data and otherwise difficult-to-access information (Watson, 2011).

Social Bricolage In Arts Entrepreneurship

Drawing data from eight social enterprise start-up cases in the United Kingdom, Di Domenico et al. (2010) developed a theoretical framework for social bricolage. Using their model as a launching point for this paper, the six tenets of social bricolage include: making do, a refusal to be constrained by limitations, improvisation, social value creation, stakeholder participation, and persuasion. For purposes of this paper, we start with a conceptual discussion of each of these six components, followed by a description from the GRJS case including illustration, application, and discussion (see Figure 1).

Making Do

The entrepreneurial application of social bricolage theory suggests the concept of making do to assume one or more of three different forms: 1) creating something from nothing (a market or service emerging where there was previously none); 2) using discarded, disused, or unwanted resources for new purposes; and 3) engaging hidden, untapped local resources others fail to recognize, value or use (Baker and Nelson, 2005). Operating under the assumption of extreme resource scarcity (Peredo and Chrisman, 2006), emerging social enterprises also operate in fields where markets function particularly poorly (Di Domenico et al., 2010), creating a pernicious challenge for social entrepreneurs.

With traditional assets not readily available, the prospects of a functioning social enterprise will frequently be deemed unmanageable, comprising hurdles too formidable to overcome. In the social sector, alternative start-up measures require ingenuity and insight to find or uncover value through non-obvious sources. As such, these challenges require a kind of "opportunity arbitrage" (Arentz, Sautet, and Storr, 2012), drawing on the insight and experience

of the entrepreneur to envision value—both social and economic—that others neglected or failed to identify.

Figure 1. Principles of Social Bricolage Applied to the Grand River Jazz Society

The emergence of the GRJS included all three elements of making do (see Figure 1). Presenting professional jazz on a regular, weekend basis in a club format was something new in the local community. While jazz appeared in a variety of concert, festival, and dinner-music settings, the club presentation format and frequency was both untried and untested. The concept of a persistent and reliable flow of professional music performance, every weekend during the 10-month season created a consistent frame and concept to build the society. As such, the GRJS thrust a new service format onto a scene where there previously was none—essentially creating "something out of nothing."

Further, the new venue setting represented a largely abandoned and discarded resource, possessing significant repurposing potential. Part of a large hospitality complex of rooms within a historic hotel (including café, movie theatre, bar, billiards room, deck-patio, and restaurant), a substantial room (seating for 130) was sitting empty most nights of the year and suffered from neglect. For decades, the venue was used for a hodgepodge of purposes, including a several-year stint with exotic dancers, complete with stage, wall-sized mirrors, and brass pole. Once adult-entertainment had run its course, other short-lived efforts emerged, including one-off rock n' roll

shows and karaoke nights, though none persisted. Except for a smattering of special events throughout the year, the room stood empty, essentially discarded, disused, and unwanted (Di Dominico et al., 2010).

As a long-time city resident and aware of the hotel's various offerings, the founder of the GRJS was aware of the room, though it was not until an active search for a shared-space venue took place that the inspiration to convert to a jazz club occurred. It took substantial imagination to transform the room from a dodgy strip club to a classy jazz venue, including rethinking floor plans, installing curtains, relocating the stage, and painting the walls. These changes, combined with the installation of sound, lighting, and a house piano, completed the transformation of an all but discarded building into a lively functioning entertainment venue.

Another needed resource was a concert grand piano costing over $50,000. This seemingly overwhelming capital expense during the initial start-up phase seemed insurmountable when resources were in dramatically short supply. Options were discussed, such as eliminating the piano, using an electric keyboard and employing a substantially smaller instrument, yet none aligned with the founding team's aspirations. Substantial networking in the community yielded information about a former theater concert grand piano, which had fallen into disrepair. The owner was a developer, supportive of the jazz club concept, and ultimately sold the piano to the GRJS for roughly half the cost of a new instrument, even after refurbishment. Once again, during its initial start-up phase, the GRJS was able to "make do" with an unwanted and underutilized asset.

Finally, there was the question of finding talent for the headline acts. An important component of the GRJS was to present top artists from nearby Toronto, other parts of Canada and beyond, including showcasing local artists. Given the dearth of existing performance opportunities available, it was difficult to know if there were enough jazz musicians in the area who possessed the capacity to headline on the weekends. There was a strong aspiration to keep the artistic level high for all headline bookings, thus requiring musicians with substantial training and experience. Once the club began operating, however, an abundance of highly talented, local jazz artists surfaced. It was an impressive cohort previously fragmented and unknown to the community, arguably due to the lack of appropriate venues. In retrospect, a major accomplishment of the GRJS was the enabling and galvanization of a scattered and unacknowledged local jazz "scene."

In sum, each of these three elements illustrates the theoretical frame for "making do" (Di Domenico et al., 2010). The act of constructing a weekly presentation in a club format created the structure for a regular art offering essentially "creating something out of nothing" (p. 689). The transformation of an abandoned strip club into a professional music venue represented "using discarded, disused, or unwanted resources for new purposes" (p. 691). Finally, galvanizing a formerly scattered and disparate community of jazz players drew on ". . . hidden or untapped local resources that other organizations fail to recognize, value or use" (p. 691).

Limitations and Constraints

The second conceptual dimension in the social bricolage framework is characterized by a refusal to be constrained by limitations (Di Domenico et al., 2010). This includes "trying out solutions to counteract limitations imposed by institutional/political settings," as well as "subverting limitations imposed by available resource environments in their ability to create social value" (p. 691). Social entrepreneurs are particularly subject to harsh resource constraints (Zahra et al., 2009). Limitations imposed either by traditional practice, sector norms, or

institutional rules are frequently formidable barriers to progress, arguably creating enough disincentive for would-be entrepreneurs to give up -- and are necessarily circumvented in order to achieve necessary progress. Relentless effort and creativity are essential to work through the barriers, complexities, and even paradoxes of achieving financial viability while maintaining a core social value focus (Smith, Besharov, Wessels, and Chertok, 2012).

For the GRJS, standard jazz presentation operating models, 90% of which were reported to be functioning with a for-profit organizational frame (Powell and Steinberg, 2006), were considered problematic. The traditional model where private sector bar owners ran venues selling food and beverages while also programming music was showing signs of strain, and even failure. Paying appropriate artist fees was proving difficult with audiences unwilling to pay adequate ticket prices, which necessitated food and drink sales to cover entertainment costs. Nearby Toronto with a population of 4 million, experienced the closing of two major dedicated jazz clubs in recent memory (both for-profit models) and despite the existence of a large number of talented performers, the club format had trouble flourishing, leaving some wondering if jazz as an art form was dead or, at best, floundering (Infantry, 2006; Teachout, 2009). Regardless of overall audience trends, the traditional model seemed broken, leaving potential jazz entrepreneurs no choice but to innovate around established norms.

The application of an alternative model was showing some promise in a least two other Canadian cities, Edmonton, Alberta and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, both operating as not-for-profits. However, in both those cases, these organizations were the beneficiaries of government grants where special building rental rates were provided at no cost by municipalities interested in encouraging cultural nightlife. The GRJS had no such luck in gaining these municipal support resources.

Recognizing the dilemma and unwilling to be constrained by limitations imposed by existing norms and practices in the jazz presentation world, the GRJS realized it needed to explore other options to contravene these constraints. One option was to consider the possibility of a shared space in order to avoid the high cost of building maintenance with the hope of some kind of organizational synergy. Numerous options explored included: existing restaurants, a community arts center, club buildings, and even an abandoned train station. One afternoon, while riding bikes around the city with the express purpose of searching for a venue, two of the GRJS team members happened onto what was essentially an abandoned hotel bar room and in a moment of epiphany, imagined its potential as a dedicated jazz venue.

In an effort to subvert traditional norms, the GRJS business model was taking shape. Not only would it benefit from the not-for-profit model, it would also benefit from a shared space arrangement that would essentially create a for-profit/not-for-profit partnership. The hotel would manage all building maintenance (security, insurance, wait staff, cleaning, upkeep, etc.) in exchange for food and beverage sales on the premises. The GRJS would use the venue without paying a fee, securing and paying for musical talent, while also raising funds from ticket sales, government grants, and corporate sponsorships; both saw the arrangement as mutually beneficial. More than two years into the operation, the model was working extremely well with The Huether Hotel seeing a steady flow of customers on Friday and Saturday nights (as well as a variety of miscellaneous users on off-nights), while the GRJS received full use of a venue rent free and not burdened with providing food and beverage service.

Breaking free from the idea that the venue needed to be constructed from scratch, or operated with full ownership and control, the GRJS was able to envision an arrangement that would include a substantial collaborative element. In the words of Di Domenico et al., (2010)

the GRJS was " . . . subverting limitations imposed by available resource environments in their ability to create social value" (p. 691).

Improvisation

The third component in the social bricolage model suggests creative thinking through improvisation is necessary to counteract environmental limitations. Improvising in this context occurs by "initiating a range of projects and constantly responding to potential opportunities" (Di Domenico et al., 2010: p. 694). This approach enables the social enterprise organization to evolve and grow in an organic way, seizing opportunities to achieve organizational effectiveness as opportunities arise, while also expanding social value when possible.

For the GRJS, the start-up process required numerous improvisational decisions. While consultation and advice was frequently sought, there was no reliable template for this type of organization. It was recognized early on that not all the answers were clear, but that action was required. Attempts were made to "get things right" yet the final bias was towards "getting things going" and improvising along the way. Musician compensation serves as an example of this improvisation. As an initial impulse, the founder originally intended to pay all artists the same fee across the board. In consultation with those experienced in the entertainment industry, fixed financial obligations associated with a consistent payment schedule could be risky, inflexible, and onerous. Playing with possibilities, it was determined that while the bands from out of town would need enticements to perform for a fixed fee (including travel expenses), local performers could be conceptualized differently.

A suggestion was made that local bands possess a local following and could therefore—with some motivation—convince their supporters (relatives, friends, colleagues, etc.) to attend performances. To initiate this, there would be a minimal flat fee provided to local players, in combination with a portion of "the door." If the musicians were successful in bringing in a crowd, they would walk home with substantially greater compensation. This improvised alternative to high fixed artist costs, also motivated a kind of partnership with local artists to market themselves (and the club), which encouraged a deeper engagement with the society and minimized financial risks. Interestingly, this flexible approach to compensation resulted in strong audience numbers compared to visiting artists.

Other improvised efforts included the concept of opening acts (6:00-8:00pm) prior to the headline performances (8:30-11:30pm). It was determined that an opening slot for musicians during the dinner hour would give emerging artists (not quite ready for headline status) an opportunity to perform and gain experience; the problem was paying these artists. Various experiments ensued, including "passing the hat" for these opening act, an activity that cheapened the experience for both musicians and audiences, and later abandoned for that reason. Subsequent permutations included gaining grants and sponsorships dedicated to paying these emerging artists for their performances, a concept that resonated well with donors. This approach to experimentation, adjustment, and evolution embodied the spirit of improvisation for the GRJS from the start, eventually solving these challenges through trial and error.

Other improvised efforts of varying success included: workshop/clinics, jam sessions, participation in a summer jazz festival, and collaboration with other arts groups (e.g., visual artists, authors). In each case, attempts were made to achieve the best outcome, while iterating until the arrangement "felt right." As a volunteer-driven, not-for-profit, the GRJS is willing to expand its operations while taking on new initiatives and activities as individuals step forward and champion efforts. Not all ideas work. Regardless of the result, all improvised efforts are put

forward in good faith and are seen as both creating social value, as well as raising the profile of the GRJS and its various activities.

Creation of Social Value

A defining element of social entrepreneurship, in contrast to the broader field of entrepreneurship, is the central purpose of creating social value (Di Domenico et al., 2010). While social enterprises possess numerous formats, purposes, and business models (Zahra et al., 2009), the common denominator is contributing to solve a social problem. As mentioned earlier, the broadest sweep of these types of organizations come from what would be "the creation of social value for disenfranchised members of society" (Gundry, Kickuo, Griffiths, and Bacq, 2011). Arts and culture organizations, however, serve to enrich the social landscape for individuals from across the spectrum, emphasizing inclusion, cohesiveness, and societal enrichment for the broader community.

While there are many university-aged entertainment services available in Waterloo, Onterio, the GRJS provides an exceptional cultural amenity in a city where such opportunities are limited for adults over the age of 25. Urban planners have long recognized the value of such amenities to the perceived liveability of cities (Bailey, Miles, and Stark, 2004). Not only do citizens have a place to hear quality music, they also benefit from living in a city where such activities take are present and supported.

Art spaces such as theaters, venues, galleries and the like are—in addition to serving the specific artistic delivery—physical manifestations of culture with substantial symbolic value to both regular citizens and, even more significantly, to artists who have the option and potential to live and conduct their art anywhere. Municipalities that sustain and encourage such artistic spaces send a signal that art is valued and that the work of artists matters. Even if the work or events are tangentially related to their daily work and art, the existence of artistic amenities have a proportionately large impact when it comes to welcoming artists, integrating artists into the broader community, and forging a robust and healthy cultural identity (Cohendet, Grandadam, and Simon, 2010).

The commitment of the GRJS to promoting local artists generated substantial impact in galvanizing a local music scene. What was previously fragmented, isolated, and largely hidden, now moves towards cohesiveness, collectivist and pride, due in part to the availability of an exceptional performance venue. One indicator is the high level of audience attendance as local artists' family, friends, colleagues, and associates can now publically support these ensembles. The ripple effects for this dynamic are many: helping sustain artistic careers, forwarding the reputation of the club, keeping overall venue revenues up, enhancing a sense of "a scene," stepping up performance professionalism and enriching the appeal of the art form.

Broader reputation also factors into the creation of social value. Maintaining a venue that becomes renowned beyond its borders contributes to a pride of place that infuses a city with a sense of value and cohesion. Being known for something positive beyond municipal borders creates many spillover effects, not least of which is a collective sense of community pride and identity, as well as impacting the tourism and hospitality industries (Deeke and Walter, 2011). In a very short period of time, the GRJS has risen to the top of select Canadian jazz venues for major national and international talent. Adherence to top quality production values, relatively sophisticated audiences, and respectable artist fees propelled the GRJS and The Jazz Room to amongst the elite clubs in Canada (Knowles, 2014; Toman, 2014).

Word can spread quickly in the art world, filtering back through aficionados and then to the general public who may not be interested in a particular art form, but benefit from the city's reputation nonetheless. The social value created at the instigation of the GRJS is representative of the kind of contribution the arts can make in general. While the arts do not address social ills or the disenfranchised directly, it can encourage social cohesion, artistic expression and community health across the board (Kagan and Hahn, 2011).

Stakeholder Participation

Active involvement with stakeholders in the "creation, management, and governance of their social enterprise" is a uniquely critical component for social bricolage (Di Domenico, et al, 2010, p. 695). Stakeholder engagement has the dual advantage of enabling access to specific resources in otherwise difficult environments, as well as building interest in, and support for, what is being created. This is particularly important for an artistic endeavor, where resources are perpetually tight, but also where audience, reputation, and broader word-of-mouth is so critical to the well being and survival of the venture.

The GRJS opted for a completely volunteer-management model where only artists and technical support people are paid; the rest of the operation functions with unpaid volunteers. In addition to this format decreasing costs, it also builds a "volunteer ethic" into the cultural DNA of the operation. On the downside, there can be cracks where volunteer priorities can vary for individuals, though this is counterbalanced with an overall enthusiasm and commitment to create a successful venture.

Numerous levels of stakeholder participation propelled the GRJS during its establishment and growth. One key area of engagement was the contribution of in-kind donations by friends and acquaintances. Such efforts included: web-site design, logo development, posters and visual arts design, accounting, legal, book-keeping, and marketing—all donated by professionals and contributed with the intent of building a community arts resource. In addition, volunteers were solicited to take on numerous tasks such as putting up posters, taking tickets, managing web listings, staffing promotional booths, taking photographs, and organizing events. Feeling the venue to be a kind of "home" for the jazz scene, local bands are active stakeholders by recruiting audience members to their shows and those of their peers, essentially becoming partners in the venture.

An eclectic mix of other partners also contributed. The family who owns and operates the Huether Hotel (where The Jazz Room is housed) is obviously a key stakeholder in management and operation decisions. Other arts have also been pulled into the mix. A local visual artist painted three oversized murals depicting musicians performing live on stage, adding a unique level of "class," meaning, and aesthetic beauty to the venue. The paintings are for sale and when sold, are replaced with a similar work. A local literary quarterly also has an annual writer's festival event in The Jazz Room, collaborating on a theme straddling music and the written word. Finally, other music presenters use the venue on off-nights for other genres including contemporary classical and world music, among others.

The collective impact of these eclectic actors further cements the notion of stakeholder participation as the central guiding energy behind the overall endeavor. With an organization consisting of all volunteers (except musicians and technical support) there exists a communal culture encouraging individuals to "pitch in" and make it all happen. Stakeholder participation (both in-kind and financial support) is critical to the functioning of emergent social enterprises;

with social mission as a central tenet, individuals from many sectors are pulled into the collective effort.

Persuasion

Persuasion is central to any start-up and accessing resources via social assets such as friendship, liking, trust, obligation, and gratitude are key (Starr and Macmillan, 1990). Persuasion plays a particularly significant role in social bricolage—the sixth component outlined by Di Domenico, et al., (2010)—where stakeholders engage to dedicate resources, capital, time, expertise, and energy towards a social cause. Necessary conditions are set to bring about change through social legitimacy. This persuasive effort is relevant to individuals, private sector businesses, political players, employees, volunteers and all other stakeholders needed to piece together a social enterprise in the face of resource-poor environments.

Multiple levels of persuasion engaged stakeholders in the GRJS start-up process including an indefinable number of micro efforts such as: conversations, formal bids, speeches, emails, letters, facebook posts, etc. Conceptually defining these efforts, essential stakeholder supporters can be divided into four major groupings, along with the key success factor when it comes to persuasion towards support: governments/foundations respond to mission, individuals respond to vision, private sector businesses are most sensitive to action, and audience members seek connection (Preece, 2013). We now examine these stakeholder relationships as encountered by the GRJS.

Initially, some government funders were wary of the ability of GRJS to achieve its aspirations. The Ontario Arts Council turned down their first grant application, suggesting the program was too ambitious and should be scaled down. A revised grant proposal reduced the request amount, and more directly reflected priorities articulated by the provincial arts granting body. This was successful and subsequent application to municipal, provincial, and federal funders have been encouraging. In this context, persuasion centers on the ability to deliver on the articulated government mission.

Personal networks were lobbied to purchase an annual pass ($350 per year for unlimited access to the club). This is a substantial amount for many and success pivoted on both the pass' value (80 shows per year), but more importantly, on the ability to communicate a sense of a community's collective vision, which was articulated though media articles, presentations, direct conversations and correspondences.

Private sector businesses were persuaded to "give back," leveraging social responsibility and company reputation. A local construction company CEO with a particular taste for jazz emerged as the initial corporate sponsor. His enthusiasm and support, even amongst other sponsors, has been pivotal in securing broader private sector support. To give some definition to the "ask," the GRJS devised the notion of room sponsors (defined by three distinct sections in the venue) at the cost of $10,000 per room.

Finally, audiences were persuaded. There was little initial indication as to what they would be willing to pay, however. Some suggested anything over $10 was too much, while others thought $20 was a bargain given the quality of the club. The GRJS now charges each audience member between $10 and $20 per show, while reserving the right to adjust pricing over time. With audiences averaging around 80 per performance, this proved to be the correct decision. Audiences are responding to the exceptional production values (lights, sound, stage, etc.) and in many ways, needed training as to the value of the performances.

As discussed, the entire process of social bricolage is a non-stop stream of persuasive effort. Convincing key stakeholders to devote resources towards a legitimate social good that achieves public benefit, while also remaining fiscally viable (or even profitable) is the essential job of any social entrepreneur.

Discussion

This paper presents case study data further validating the social bricolage model put forward by Di Domenico et al., (2010) including the key elements of: making do, refusal to be constrained by limitation, improvisation, creation of social value, stakeholder participation, and persuasion. While intimate connection by the author to the focal organization creates challenges of perspective and bias, it counters with the benefit of data access and examples otherwise difficult to obtain. This paper also extends the social bricolage discussion into the arts and culture sector, an oft-neglected area of study within the social ventures literature.

Mentioned above, the initial years of operation resulted in a substantial level of success for the GRJS. A post-hoc conceptual analysis maintains that the core principles of social bricolage played a major role in achieving significant outcomes. This brings us to an important question possessing both theoretical and practical importance: to what degree might the insights from this research—and the experience of the GRJS—be transferable to other settings, organizations and new ventures?

Noted for embracing "hero" stories that sometimes perpetuate stereotypes and over-inflated perceptions, the entrepreneurship field has been doing little to encourage start-up activity in the real world (Warren, 2005). By uncovering the processes followed by the GRJS as an illustration using conceptual analysis, the attempt has been to peer behind the scenes and thereby providing encouragement to others who may follow a similar path. Identified as one of the brighter lights of success in a jazz sector (Knowles, 2014; Taman, 2014), the GRJS now encounters more good news than bad (James, 2013). Visitors from out of town inquire about replicating the GRJS' successes in their own communities. What should be the reply?

The key point is that social bricolage refers primarily to a process or conceptual approach that may be emulated, recognizing that each context, community, problem and set of resources will be different. A major assumption is that local knowledge enables the necessary adaptations once the bricolage process is initiated. This becomes an essential point within the bricolage framework: only those intimately familiar with the local context, local resources, and local community will be able to work the essential materials to piece together a successful arts start-up organization. For the formidable resource constraints confronting the arts, this is arguably the most viable route to start-up success. Successful examples can present potential ideas and act as inspirational starting points, yet do not represent a definitive formula.

In the case of the GRJS, its volunteer-driven, not-for-profit model was inspired by the Yardbird jazz venue in Edmonton, Alberta. At that venue, local government saw fit to bequeath a performance space to the local jazz society for one dollar a year, making the municipal government an important supporter in the venue. The GRJS had no such advantage and therefore needed to explore other options for support. Management at the Yardbird was also leery of engaging corporate funding with the baggage it might bring, at one point cheekily suggesting the only appropriate place for a corporate logo in the club would be at the bottom of the urinals in the bathroom. In contrast, the GRJS benefited by substantial corporate support, which enabled the club to thrive. Such differences illustrate the variety evolving within specific contexts while trying to solve similar problems, though each following principles of social bricolage uniquely.

Given the highly specific coupling of problems, resources and entrepreneurs exclusively shaped by the unique context, there is little likelihood for direct replication to make sense in another context. The emphasis, however, would be towards embracing a process for identifying problems and assembling resources within one's own unique context, with the end result being naturally tailored to each specific environment. For would-be arts entrepreneurs, the initial path is defined by the people, ideas, and resources immediately at hand, rather than following a prescribed formula and assembling a pre-conceived, perfectly-construed set of circumstances—a situation most likely to never exist.

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