

Author

1. **What problem or issue does this paper address?** Enterprises that operate in resource-constrained settings often rely on bricolage (“making the best out of what is at hand”; Baker & Nelson, 2005), which has traditionally been regarded as a way to temporarily “get by” (and to negatively affect growth and performance if continued more broadly over time). Surprisingly, we encountered a South African social enterprise that was able to scale across a number of resource-constrained settings by developing and replicating heuristics that helped them use bricolage at scale. We provide a novel conceptual model of *scaling bricolage* as a low-cost replication process of bricolage, enabling fit with a diversity of local environments, as well as cross-unit innovation, learning, and impact.
2. **What have prior studies overlooked about this problem or issue?** Prior studies tend to focus on bricolage as a local phenomenon that can rarely be scaled, based on the assumption(s) that there are insurmountable barriers such as lack of effectiveness, learning, and quality standards. This paper shows that, how, and why these barriers can be overcome by developing particular heuristics that promote organizational learning and effectiveness.
3. **What is the paper’s focal research question?** How and why can bricolage be scaled? (And more broadly: How and under what conditions can enterprises scale in resource-constrained settings?)
4. **What is the paper’s primary answer to this focal research question?** Bricolage can be scaled via particular heuristics that promote organizational learning and effectiveness. More broadly, enterprises (and social enterprises in particular) can scale up in resource-constrained settings by using particular bricolage heuristics that allow them to learn and adapt across different settings.
5. **Why is the paper’s methodology appropriate for answering the focal research question?** We used an inductive case study approach (Eisenhardt, Graebner, & Sonenshein, 2016), as theory building from cases can be an effective approach to reveal new logics of organizing and complex patterns over time (Yin, 2003). Diving deeper into the individual units and comparing them with each other in a more granular way allowed us to derive underlying dynamics that we would not have been able to identify had we tried to formulate (and later test) hypotheses a priori.
6. **What concerns did reviewers/editor raise about the paper’s methodology?** A major reviewer concern was: Is a qualitative case study of a social enterprise in a resource-constrained setting “transferable” to other settings, or is it too “idiosyncratic”? We argued that it represents an interesting “extreme case” (Eisenhardt et al., 2016) that can reveal a particular focal phenomena/process that is likely to be present in other resource-constrained contexts as well. We also used a number of ways (for example, comparing different units to each other, and thus using a “comparative case study” design instead of a “single case study” design) that allowed us to be confident in the mechanisms that we identified across units.
7. **Why is your empirical setting appropriate for answering the focal research question?** We studied a context characterized by severe resource-constraints, which made it an intriguing “extreme setting” for studying questions around enterprise development and scaling in resource-constrained settings. This was based on the assumption that some patterns might be more pronounced in “extreme settings”, thus allowing to identify “novel” approaches and dynamics that might be less obvious in other settings. (For example, the enterprise in our study had to organize many of its activities around the approach that we identified simply to survive/achieve its impact, making it very “visible” to the observer that this approach was being employed).

8. **What concerns did reviewers/editor raise about the paper's empirical setting?** Given that we published this paper in a strategy journal (SMJ), reviewers wondered if a social enterprise operating in Sub-Saharan Africa would provide enough relevant insights for companies and their strategies more broadly. We addressed this point by discussing transferability, as well as boundary conditions (we for example discussed that we assume that our theory is more applicable in contexts of severe resource-constraints – for example, when multinational companies enter new resource-constrained contexts with a low budget – than in less resource-constrained settings).
9. **What does this paper leave unanswered about its focal research question?** There have been some great papers on how social impact can be created by using bricolage over time, and how resource-seeking can go hand in hand with bricolage (e.g., Bacq et al., 2015; Reypens, Bacq, & Milanov, 2021). This paper does not answer some intriguing related questions, for example, how exactly “scaling bricolage” mechanisms might differ in commercial vs social organizations (if at all); if they might apply to different degrees in smaller vs larger enterprises; or what potential “hidden costs” of a “scaling bricolage” approach might entail (e.g., exhaustion of managers, etc.).
10. **What would you do differently if you started this paper over again?** This paper took us a very, very long time to develop and publish (we started working on it in 2011/2012, and it was accepted for publication in 2020). I was very naïve when I started this process, assuming that a paper focused on social entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa would be relatively easy to publish given its timeliness and relevance – I had to learn how to develop papers/contributions in a way that focused more on “strategy” and “transferable aspects” than on how exciting the context itself was/is. If I started this paper over again, I would either “anchor” the study earlier on in relevant entrepreneurship/strategy conversations and try to avoid “being carried away” by the (exciting!) context/enterprise/data, or try to find a way that would allow for the context itself to be a part of the core contribution (along the lines of “xyz approach/dynamic is different in this context, which questions xyz theory that emerged in xyz “traditional” management research context).

Depth (Disciplinary) Discussant

1. **What theories or phenomena does this paper most directly inform?** Entrepreneurial bricolage and entrepreneurial resourcefulness more generally, strategies of simple rules, organizational learning, scaling of social ventures.
2. **How specifically does this paper advance understanding of these theories or phenomena?**
Focusing just on one: It carefully combines prior work on bricolage and prior understanding of simple rules and heuristics to develop novel theory that challenges what much prior research has presumed to be limitations to growth (scaling) through bricolage.
3. **What other studies are most consistent with this paper's findings?**
From my perspective (which is focused on what presumptions are violated, rather than on process details), this is one of several exciting recent and emerging papers (e.g., Reypens et al., JBV, 2021; Kim & Kim, AMJ, forthcoming; new theory-testing work coming out of CAUSEE) that in my mind together challenge tired orthodoxies such as bifurcating resource-seeking *versus* bricolage and bifurcating parallel (which is an *extreme and distinctive form*) versus selective bricolage and thereby create space for the authors to generate novel and interesting theory that expands our understanding of how and when bricolage can produce positive results.
4. **What other studies cause you to question this paper's findings?**
None.
5. **What is the best way to validate this paper's findings?**
The paper's findings are already validated by its careful inductive methodology; its empirical generalizability could be explored by a qualitative study designed to challenge its findings or by deducing hypotheses and testing them quantitatively (there is already a good measure of bricolage; might need to develop some for simple rules, transfer of heuristics, etc.).
6. **What relevant mechanisms remain unknown about this paper's theories or phenomena?**
I'm more concerned with boundary conditions, but if I focus on mechanisms, the local contextualization process remains something of a black box.
7. **How would you refine the research question to study these unknown mechanisms?**
I would change the research question to: "When bricolage is scaled through sharing simple rules and heuristics, how does local contextualization work?"
8. **What empirical settings would be most useful to study these unknown mechanisms?**
Those where bricolage is shared through simple rules and heuristics, especially those where both (more or less) successful and failed efforts could be observed.
9. **What methods would be most useful to study these unknown mechanisms?**
Exploratory and especially qualitative methods since it's hard to pre-validate a measure of something nobody has yet discovered.
10. **What difficulties will scholars face in further advancing this area of study?**
Tenure and promotion clocks enforced by committees who haven't a clue about how long good qualitative work takes or how to value it.

Breadth (Non-disciplinary) Discussant

1. **What theories or phenomena in your discipline does this paper most directly inform?** (1) entrepreneurial bricolage, (2) venture growth, and (3) social entrepreneurship and impact scaling.
2. **How specifically does this paper advance understanding of these theories or phenomena?** This paper advances understanding of these theories by providing substantial evidence of how an early-stage organization alleviated the paradox between growth and bricolage, showing that indeed, ventures *can* grow (or scale) by means of entrepreneurial bricolage (as opposed to relying on more engineered forms of resourcing such as resource-seeking). In addition, this paper advances the social entrepreneurship literature by providing empirical evidence of replication, a well-established growth strategy in social entrepreneurship practice.
3. **What other studies in your discipline are most consistent with this paper's findings?** Reypens et al. (2021) provides in part consistent findings, with the main difference that these authors look at entrepreneurial bricolage *in combination with* other resourcing approaches. Desa and Basu's findings also provide consistency in terms of linking entrepreneurial bricolage to social impact.
4. **What other studies in your discipline cause you to question this paper's findings?** None, actually. It rather reinforces the need to go beyond the assumption that bricolage precedes other resourcing strategies.
5. **What is the best way to validate this paper's findings?** The best way to validate this paper's findings would be to test the use of entrepreneurial bricolage as a basis for venture growth in another context, another penurious environment, or even a resource-rich environment, which would help delineate the boundary conditions of Busch and Barkema's findings, as bricolage scaling could be applicable in low-cost, more resource-rich settings.
6. **What relevant mechanisms remain unknown about this paper's theories or phenomena?** A mechanism that remains unknown about this paper's contribution is contextualizing, precisely when it comes to the characteristics of local partners (e.g., are there characteristics of partners that impede the transferring of bricolage heuristics?) and the extent these partners themselves engage with the communities that will ultimately use the services provided by the organization.
7. **How would you refine the research question to study these unknown mechanisms?** Bricolage, or should I say entrepreneurial bricolage, is a resourcing strategy. Thus, to me the object of scale—what is being scaled—is not bricolage but the organization itself. I would thus pose the question in terms of organizational scaling, not scaling bricolage: “Can organizations scale through bricolage, and if so, how and why?” Yet the *answer* to the question could involve the concept of “bricolage scaling”—the process of organizational growing by transferring bricolage heuristics to other contexts.
8. **What empirical settings would be most useful to study these unknown mechanisms?** Empirical settings that combine (1) resource scarcity and (2) an impact orientation—as the authors write (p. 767), social enterprises “typically face localized, complex social issues.” Therefore, they are the more suited setting for further exploration of bricolage heuristics transfer and perennity.
9. **What methods would be most useful to study these unknown mechanisms?** A qualitative inductive study would be most useful to study these mechanisms of contextualization.
10. **What difficulties will scholars face in further advancing this area of study?** At least two come to mind: (1) the subjective aspect of resource scarcity in a globalized world, especially surrounding impact issues; (2) the challenge of coding bricolage appropriately and with precision.

Impact (Practical) Discussant

1. **What practical problem or issue does this paper most directly address?** The paper challenges the traditional perception of ways to scale a social venture such as inefficiencies, leaning inability, limited reliance, by focusing in merging bricolage and heuristics in scenarios of low-resources/cost organizations, involving community skills growth and a bit of improvisation in order to scale by being more flexible and community-oriented.
2. **How does this paper help managers understand how to address this problem or issue?** It helps out in feeling identified, I sure did, since I have been using bricolage often (without really knowing there was a word for that) and getting good results and somehow connecting in a flow (that appeared to have a very thought through strategy); that not all needs to be perfect, have immense funding to get this going, but starting and growing with what you have, and not by being limited that you don't have enough (or as much as others that are doing great work).
3. **Are any parts of the paper unnecessarily confusing or jargony?** Since I know French, bricolage in French means something completely different than the term used here, so I was a bit confused; then with heuristics I needed a "cheat sheet" to remind me what it meant; however, both terms were very insightful to learn (and being surprised I've been doing that, and that is a commonality in social entrepreneurs, yayii!)
4. **In what ways are the findings consistent with what happens in practice?** It's exactly right, and what we are doing here too; it makes me think at what point should I do something riskier in order to achieve my goals, but also considering the questions asked (i.e. do I really need this, can I get it differently, partnerships, community orientation?). Somehow there might be a point when the learning/knowledge is transferred throughout generations and in the community, there needs to be a secure path to be sustainable, that can happen along the way (not all needs to be planned since there are always some unexpected turns, for the good or worse).
5. **In what ways are the findings not consistent with what happens in practice?** Perhaps the expansion to different hubs, since all places, in the same country or abroad are always different, historic and cultural context, trust within those who are part of the team, and then external factors out of your control - for example war legacy, gangs, etc.
6. **What specifically does this paper overlook about the realities of this problem or issue?** Perhaps it overlooks the difference between a venture that is growing with bricolage and heuristics, compared to one that is not (given it's following the traditional scenario), and see where they meet, if some of them have adapted some practices of the other; and also, until what point should one focus solely on bricolage heuristics, when to integrate a more thought through plan, or even work with both. Is it bricolage more when you are working and co-creating alongside the communities?
7. **How would you revise the research question to make the study more practical?** Perhaps ask them if they know that their way of functioning or even growing, scaling has a name, what do they call they growing "practice" or "strategy", and when do they mix bricolage in planning ahead with limited resources with some improvising, what happens when they meet their goal or ideal, will they still be doing that or any other way?
8. **What other empirical setting would allow a more realistic assessment of this problem or issue?** If it varies within countries, socio-economic and historic baggage? For example this was done in a post-Apartheid zone, somewhat forgotten or stereotyped place, when getting through and above is done out of necessity; is this still applicable in higher-income countries with less marginalized groups, or even in those countries with communities that have been ethnically excluded? (i.e. now in the US instead of being called food deserts, they are called food apartheid).

9. **What other papers or books have helped you to understand this problem or issue?** “Poor economics: a radical rethinking of the way to fight global poverty” E. Duflo, A. Banerjee (especially the part of entrepreneurs by default). Glad it was mentioned on serendipity “The Serendipity Mindset” C. Busch. And plenty of Accelerator programs, bootcamps, fellowships, conferences, and community experience on-site.

10. **What related issues do you think would benefit from further academic study?** Perhaps to really understand the value of the community, their history, perception, learnings, and being open to collaborating jointly in solutions with other partners, and how innovation can be within all walks of life.