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Loose Change and Governance: Cleveland's Evergreen Worker Owned Cooperative Initiative

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Loose Change and Governance

Cleveland, Ohio's Evergreen Worker Owned Cooperative Initiative

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Abstract:

Approximately 5-years ago, the city of Cleveland, Ohio embarked on a community development collaborative initiative designed to stabilize a declining region that existed at the outer boundary of an economically robust and growing area. The process involved social entrepreneurship engaged in bricolage amongst informal networks and anchor institutions to establish an authorizing environment in the absence of governmental policy. This project explored how the initiative got started and gained traction in the midst of seemingly uncontrollable social change brought on by economic and population decline. We discovered a loosely structured approach of using what was readily available to bring about change – loose change. What this meant was that social entrepreneurial bricolage is capable of leveraging resources across a diverse set of loosely connected networks to create the conditions of a high resource initiative within a low resource context. Literature corresponding to theories of New Governance and Bricolage were used to interpret the ways in which social entrepreneurship, operating within loosely constructed networks, involves playing around with ideas and structures to ultimately produce a tangible result.

Keywords: New Governance, business cooperatives, social entrepreneurial bricolage, networks, anchor institutions, resilience, community development

Introduction

This paper looks at an innovative form of community development within a legacy city through the lens of new governance and the role of social entrepreneurship exercising bricolage (making do with what is readily available) to bring about change. Here the focus is on the Cleveland Evergreen Worker Cooperative (henceforth Evergreen Cooperatives) occurring within a mid-western, post-industrial, legacy or shrinking city. We entered into this project with a relatively broad two-part question: How is it that a worker cooperative emerged within a legacy or shrinking community such as Cleveland and what does this say about the conditions necessary to facilitate a seemingly amorphous community development project? Through a series of observations and interviews supplemented by outside literature and case specific reviews of planning and program evaluation documents, we discovered a loosely structured approach of using what was readily available to bring about change. This concept of *loose change* rests on four primary aspects associated with the overall research question:

1. Within the Cleveland area, new governance models consisting of loosely structured networks rely upon diplomacy to establish an authorizing environment – *loose governance*
2. Legacy cities are enabling and maneuverable environments in which there tends be available space, underutilized assets, and reduced barriers of entry for social entrepreneurs – *loose space*
3. New ideas are decentered and emerge when actors play around with the rules in fundamentally transformative ways – *change unconstrained by rules*.
4. Because Legacy cities are less attractive to outside investment, social entrepreneurs must build on the resources at hand to create something new and do so as a form of bricolage – *change unconstrained by doxa*.

To properly situate the project, this article begins with a brief background and literature review to discuss what it is we mean by "loose" as it relates to legacy cities and new governance. It then moves inward to explore our first interpretation of the word "change" as a form of adaptation or transformation designed to flush out how

new concepts or ideas takes hold. It is then followed by our second interpretation of the word "change" – as analogous to currency (spare change) left over after paying for something. We aren't thinking of this application in terms of pennies, nickels and dimes, but instead as a sign or symbol of what is left over in Legacy Cities. We do this in order to discuss how social entrepreneurship engages in bricolage when structuring an idea to establish and authorizing environment in the absence of governmental policy and within a constrained resource environ of relative "spare change." It is worth noting that the theoretical development approach, without prior intent, ended up as an exercise in bricolage for the research team and represents an idea or concept that is continuously being worked out as we study the case of the Cleveland Evergreen Cooperative.

Theoretical Background

Loose and Legacy Cities

> "Legacy cities have many assets that can be catalysts for regeneration, including vital downtown areas, stable and historic neighborhoods, multimodal transportation networks, vibrant universities and medical centers, and rich artistic and cultural resources. To regenerate cities must capitalize on these assets to increase their competitive advantages and build new economic engines. This will require developing new forms in four ways—changing the physical form of the city to reflect its smaller population; restoring the city as a center of economic activity; building a change-oriented approach to governance and leadership; and forging stronger regional and metropolitan relationships" (Mallach and Brachman, 2013; p. 3)

During the early 1980s, Bluestone and Harrison (1982) observed that "shuttered factories, displaced workers, and a newly emerging group of ghost towns" (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; p. 6) were left behind by the industries that were leaving and who systematically disinvested and closed their American plants. They explain that during the boom-years, the US-companies expanded to the suburbs or abroad due to the perceived danger of new international competitors (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; p.15). Cities like

Detroit, Cleveland, Buffalo, Milwaukee, and Pittsburgh were left behind and became known as rustbelt cities - Northeast and upper Midwest cities that had lost the basis of their manufacturing based local industry (Bluestone & Harrison, 1982; p.25). Connected with the movement of plants was the job loss in the community and the rising need for public services. Additionally, in search of new jobs, people left (Bluestone, 1982; p. 48).

The result is that one in four cities with at least 100,000 in population worldwide is shrinking (Rieniets, 2004). As Robert Beauregard writes: "By the 1950s, U.S. cities -- particularly the central cities of the industrial heartland -- have clearly entered a period of decline" (2003, p. 6). When Beauregard (2003) talks about decline, he refers to population loss, as well as the de-industrialization and resulting spatial vacancies of inner-cities such as Cleveland or Detroit leading to disinvestment into the cities and a distressed local fiscal situation.

Describing the post-industrial city in this way conjures up images of decay, high crime, strained fiscal environments, and reduced opportunity. At the same time, within these seemingly dark places there is a rich legacy connected to pockets of renewal in which new ideas and approaches to the city increase prospect. Vacancy, sometimes on a considerable scale provides spaces and structure at low cost and are viewed as a starting point for new ideas (Schwarz and Rugare, 2009) and innovative community development initiatives.

Therefore, legacy cities are not merely antiquated remnants of former industrial powerhouses and power structures. In many cases, the old power structures have

collapsed or diminished making way for new approaches to community development and governance.

Loose and Governance

New governance is built on the premise that traditional forms of direct governance are insufficient to meet the needs of modern society (Rhodes, 1997). In 2002, Salamon & Elliott (2002) suggested, "that government does not need to be "reinvented," as the new public management suggested (p. 8). Instead government had already been reinvented through the introduction of what he referred to as "third-party government" – third party partners placed into action to deliver services formally provided by governmental employees (Salamon & Elliott, 2002). For the public sector, this suggests a movement away from direct government imbued with sovereignty and toward collaborative approaches. It would involve a shift in doxa - one in which a new form of governance would replace: hierarchy with networks; command and control with negotiation and persuasion; management skills with enabling skills; and agency with tools and technology (Salamon & Elliott, 2002).

New governance recognizes and embraces the non-equilibrium and complexity paradigms offered by system theorists, ecologists, organizational and policy theorists that have been around since late sixties and early seventies. The complexity view sees the world as unpredictable, such that we cannot intervene to fix problems, but as non-linear, with interacting elements, unpredictable dynamics, and varying patterns of stability or instability (Innes, Booher, & Vittorio, 2011). This overall perspective finds a consensus in literature in terms of the recognition of the "wicked" nature of complex urban
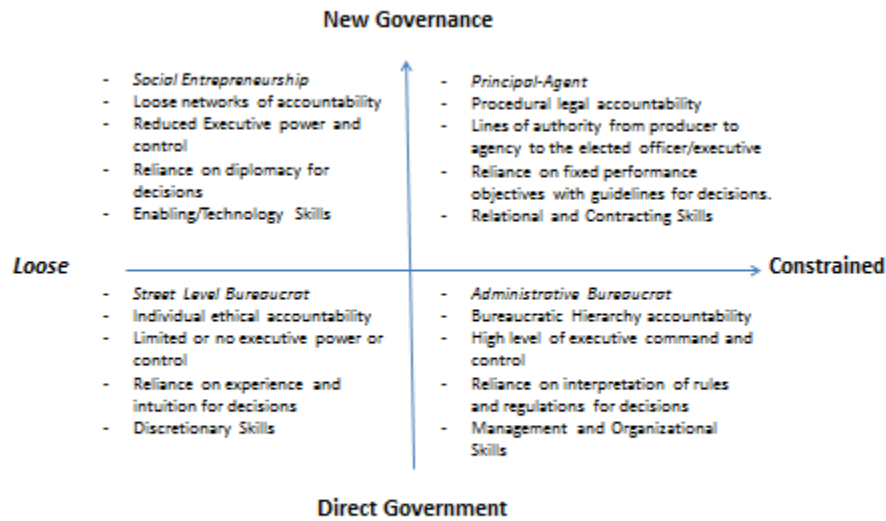
problems, and of the inability of the traditional linear and orderly process of problem solving used by the public sector to work through these complex problems. The linear thinking of understanding and defining the problem, and then working from problem to solution, is inadequate to encompass the interactivity and uncertainty associated with such problems. This perspective opens up the venues for innovative and flexible approaches within communities. It also entails change in the manner in which these problems are seen within communities and learns and reorganizes/self-organizes to accommodate the increasing adaptability and flexibility required to focus on the learnings and experiences of dealing with wicked problems (Conklin, 2006; Head, 2013).

The broad acceptance of the idea of new governance came from the consensus that government is actually not the place from which society is governed; administration, policy making, and governance within urban societies rather is generally an interplay between various actors. Within political science scholarship, this was demonstrated by a support of urban regime framework as opposed to classical pluralism in understanding local governance. Under regime theory the effectiveness of local government depends greatly on the cooperation of nongovernmental actors and state capacity working in combination with governmental resources. A regime is an informal yet relatively stable group with access to institutional resources and ability to make governance decisions. The informal basis of coordination is key here along with the recognized privileged position of businesses (those who hold and mobilize resources) in governance processes (Stone, 1993).

Governance has also been described as the 'directed influence of societal processes' and takes into account the interdependencies of public, private, and semi-

private actors (Salamon & Elliott, 2002). This aspect of governance refers to self-organizing networks. Such networks are a part of a pattern of institutional change, where players from inside and outside government are creating new practices of governance to deal with the growing complexity and uncertainty in urban regions. Metropolitan or urban systems can also be thought of as complex systems with non-linear internal dynamics and external factors that keep these systems in constant flux. Therefore within these systems, networks are critical. Much of the work within these networks is done informally without legislative or bureaucratic authority, and typically involves collaboration among diverse actors (Salamon & Elliott, 2002). Once set in motion, these networks are largely self-organizing; place-based; and made up of interdependent agents who see the possibility of joint gain from working together. Along with the state and market, networks of interdependent actors have emerged as a third form of organization alongside state and market (Rhodes, 1997; Salamon & Elliott, 2002). Within such networked forms of governance, actors are also entrepreneurial in nature. Such networks can increase coordination and understanding across jurisdictional boundaries, public agencies, levels of government, experts from different disciplines, and opposing ideological camps. After actors in a network formulate a plan, they draw on external linkages to access and mobilize a larger range of resources and people. An important characteristic associated with self-organizing governance networks, is that they can learn and adapt through experimentation, monitoring, and responding to feedback (Innes, Booher, & Vittorio, 2011; Innes & Rongerude, 2013; Klijn & Koppenjan, 2000).

Figure 1 – Loose Governance

New Governance

- *Social Entrepreneurship* - Loose networks of accountability - Reduced Executive power and control - Reliance on diplomacy for decisions - Enabling/Technology Skills	- *Principal-Agent* - Procedural legal accountability - Lines of authority from producer to agency to the elected officer/executive - Reliance on fixed performance objectives with guidelines for decisions. - Relational and Contracting Skills

Loose ⟶ **Constrained**

- *Street Level Bureaucrat* - Individual ethical accountability - Limited or no executive power or control - Reliance on experience and intuition for decisions - Discretionary Skills	- *Administrative Bureaucrat* - Bureaucratic Hierarchy accountability - High level of executive command and control - Reliance on interpretation of rules and regulations for decisions - Management and Organizational Skills

Direct Government

Adapted from Rush and Zingale 2014
Permission Granted

Social Entrepreneurship and Loose Governance

There are a number of variations, definitions and frameworks surrounding the meaning of social entrepreneurship. Underlying all is a social component and mission often emerging in communities and economically challenged regions the government has neglected and/or markets haven't see as profitable (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Dees, 1998; DiDomenico, Haugh & Tracey, 2010). At the same time, with an increase in private socially driven enterprises along with the expanding role of non-governmental organizations the lines between business and social entrepreneurship can become blurred (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006; DiDomenico, Haugh & Tracey, 2010; Dees, 1998; Mair & Marti, 2006; Gundry, Kickul, Griffiths, & Bacq, 2011).

For purposes of this project we describe social entrepreneurship as a process to create social value, rather than personal wealth (e.g., Zadek & Thake, 1997) characterized by

innovation and the creation of something new rather than simply the replication of existing enterprises or practices (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006 p. 2).

Both business and social entrepreneurs require resources to take on projects; however, because the emphasis for social action is structured by social returns rather than financial, social entrepreneurs often experience difficulty finding financial support (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006, p.7).   As a result, social entrepreneurship might mean changing the context of an issue to include a wider array of relationships, investor/funder expectations and alternative measures of success (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006).   In doing so, innovative social value creating activities tends to occur within or across a network of nonprofit, business, and/or government sectors (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006).   In addition, because social entrepreneurship tends to take hold within a resource constrained context, the process frequently involves playing around with existing resources, structures, models and ideas to bring some degree of change - whether than be as a form of adaptation or transformation.

Change as Adaptation and Transformation to Doxa

The literature is rich on change as a form of adaptation and transformation and therefore it is necessary to be clear on what part of this literature is applied to this project. Because we are most interested in change associated with loose conditions, our curiosity has been triggered by gaining a better understanding how the realm of rules and the realm of ideas are associated with adaptation and transformation. Therefore, we enter into this discussion less inclined toward the psychology literature and more heavily invested in phenomenology and doxa.
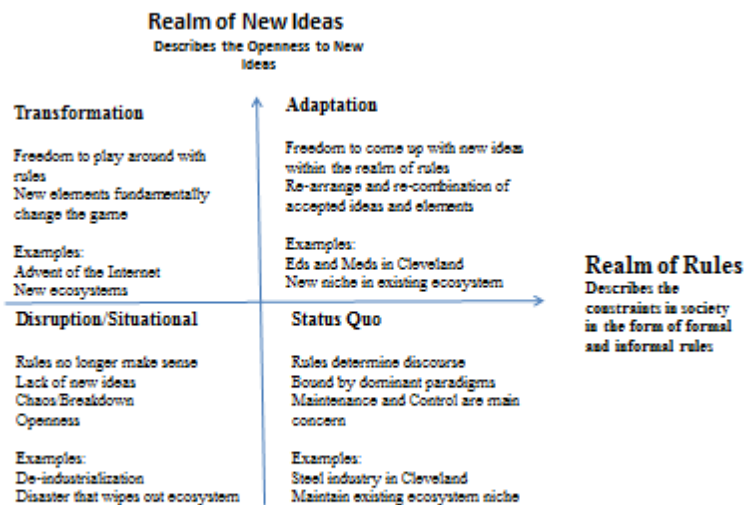
Anthropological studies point toward a similar flow in human development as ostensibly long periods of relative sameness separated by rather abrupt periods of significant social upheaval. Throughout periods of little change generally accepted mental models tend to atrophy into a culture in what Pierre Bourdieu, borrowing a word from the Greeks, referred to as doxa and Heidegger argues as enframing. To Heidegger (1977), enframing "demands that nature be orderable" as a way in which "the real reveals itself as standing-reserve" (p. 23). Doxa is similar to enframing and can be thought of as deeply held understandings about the "sense of one's place" in which individuals voluntarily establish limits of what it possible so much so that they become deprived of new ideas. Within doxa, the imagination's free play is constrained to a perceptual state of mind whereby experiences are interrupted within mental structures [en]framed by an understanding of the existing rules. For example, gravity as a doxa to physics preordains how objects show up for use and exists in standing reserve to help explain an understanding of situational phenomena.

New ideas are capable of emerging within or outside of doxa; however, they are equally constrained by doxa. To generate something entirely new, doxa must be revealed. As such, the freedom to imagine something entirely new stands closest within the happening of revealing doxa. As such, doxa is in contrast to episteme and can limit what can be experienced as "new" to those things within existing contexts. A move to reveal doxa and then consider that which exists outside of doxa is defined by Baecker as a "new" that goes past context barriers (Need source). Context barriers are common rules in society and according to Baeker those rules are often times framed in binarity - as good

and bad. Therefore, he introduces the concept of "third values" to describe the idea of bringing in elements to break the binarity to shift past the existing context.

In the case of adaptation there is merely a recombination of ideas and elements constrained within the realm of exiting rules; but in the case of transformation it is not just recombination but also addition of new ideas and elements that emerge from playing around with rules.

Figure 1 – Realm of Rules and Ideas

Realm of New Ideas
Describes the Openness to New Ideas

Transformation	**Adaptation**
Freedom to play around with rules New elements fundamentally change the game	Freedom to come up with new ideas within the realm of rules Re-arrange and re-combination of accepted ideas and elements
Examples: Advent of the Internet New ecosystems	Examples: Eds and Meds in Cleveland New niche in existing ecosystem
Disruption/Situational	**Status Quo**
Rules no longer make sense Lack of new ideas Chaos/Breakdown Openness	Rules determine discourse Bound by dominant paradigms Maintenance and Control are main concern
Examples: De-industrialization Disaster that wipes out ecosystem	Examples: Steel industry in Cleveland Maintain existing ecosystem niche

Realm of Rules
Describes the constraints in society in the form of formal and informal rules

Doxa as Status Quo

We are born into a world not of our own making and therefore face existing conditions and concepts (doxa). Because individuals simply inhabit a place, there is a general acceptance of traditional cultures, customs, beliefs and thoughts. Inescapably bound to these perspectives, we are often trapped by the very perceptions that seem vital for living, thinking and being. In all we do there is a continuously bringing together of things that are already there to guide and direct us into what we should do next. In this

world, we are highly constrained to the dominant social paradigms that shape an understanding of the rules and what can be imagined. In this place, we are capable of creation; however, much like the jester in the Kings court, there are limits. As a result, the realm of ideas conforms to existing conditions and to what is possible within the dominant understanding of the rules and how they are applied.

Doxa as disruption

What happens when our world of perceptions no longer hold – when doxa is disrupted? When a disturbance shakes the very foundation of our understanding of how things work and fit together we face choices. We can escape physically and even emotionally and wait for someone else to find a solution, we can hold tight to the past and look for signs and symbols to reaffirm our old perceptions, or we can become a handy-man that either looks toward adaptive or transformational ideas for how to cope with the changing conditions. When facing a disruption in doxa, the realm of ideas is disturbed as we seek grounding. It is within this quadrant that tinkering around with what is already there and either looking to recombine existing elements in adaptive ways or pull in elements from the outside in a transformative way begins. Within disruptive doxa, anything is possible and nothing is possible. Traditional understandings of the rules no longer make sense as we seek alternatives. If we look to alternatives within existing doxa then there is tendency toward re-arranging existing elements for adaptation; however, when we seek to reveal doxa the possibility for transformation emerges.

Doxa as adaptation

In his recent book *The Myth of Progress*, Wessels (2006) offers a surprisingly simple message: The scientific principles governing the forest also govern us. With populations expanding and energy use growing even faster, human social systems are dangerously out of balance. "It's not a matter of whether this current economic system will fail," he writes. "It is simply a matter of when it will fail." An economy reliant on a few dominant corporations, like a forest dominated by a few species, is particularly susceptible to disturbance.

Wessels' (2006) ecological stance on society points out the necessity of diversity for adaption which leads to overall stability. He argues that socio-economic systems designed for head to head competition are inefficient and wasteful in terms of energy. In addition, they are at high risk breakdown and susceptible to collapse. After all, most successful species in nature spend more time and energy adapting to new niches, instead of fighting over those pre-existing.

The realm of ideas as an adaptive process functions within the contextual understanding of the rules, while tinkering with how these rules are applied to a given situation. Adaptive doxa tends toward figuring out new ways to play by the existing understanding of rules.

Doxa as transformation

Modern society can be considered radically decentered thereby lacking centralized agencies and perhaps even centralized concepts. One interpretation of this phenomenon suggests an incongruent society desperately looking for a way to cling together as a means of comfort and survival. Quite the opposite view is one of a societal

collage in which hierarchies and dominant paradigms give way to that which exists in the periphery as a seemingly endless array of unbounded possibilities. Doxa as a form of transformation means having the freedom to pull in ideas from outside of existing constraint and rules – to play around with the fundamental understanding of the rules. What Kant (Kant & Höffe, 2010) refers to as "lawfulness without laws." This is the ability to introduce ideas and elements from outside existing paradigms and refers to making judgments about what is possible as purposive without a purpose (Burnham) and not based in any clearly defined concept. Instead, the ideas are a type of sensation that engages the imagination in a rule-governed way, but without being governed by any particular rule. In other words, the free play associated with doxa as transformation involves using the imagination to respond to a situational fit of an idea without evaluating its overall purpose.

Change as bricolage – using what is readily available in new ways

A term from the French, bricolage, offers an appropriate conceptual framework associated with assembling something new from a diverse range of things that happen to be available. Within cultural studies, bricolage is thought of as the processes by which people, from across social divisions, combine objects and ideas to create new cultural identities. In his book *The Savage Mind (1967)*, French anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (1966) used bricolage to describe any spontaneous action out of the human imagination emerging from pre-existing things in the imaginers mind. Here things/objects that possess one meaning in the dominant culture are acquired and given a new form and meaning. Jacques Derrida (1978) extends this notion to mythical discourse in which stories are brought forward into the context of the present yet "the discourse is

the stated abandonment of all reference to a *center,* to a *subject,* to a privileged *reference,* to an origin, or to an absolute *arche'"* (Derrida, 1978; p. 278). In effect, Derrida's post-modern position on bricolage is that of freeplay in a "field of infinite substitutions in the closure of a finate ensemble." In other words, we use what we need, when we need it, how it seems most beneficial for the task at hand rendering attempts of totalization as relatively useless - especially when facing temporary and changing conditions. Levi Straus (1966) and Derrida (1978) express this phenomenon as an ever shifting sensibility of what things can mean to different situation as a tension of freeplay.

> "Besides the tension of freeplay with history, there is also the tension of freeplay with presence. Freeplay is the disruption of presence. The presence of an element is always a signifying and substitutive reference inscribed in a system of differences and the movement of a chain. Freeplay is always an interplay of absence and presence, but if it is to be radically conceived, freeplay must be conceived of before the alternative of presence and absence; being must be conceived of as presence or absence beginning with the possibility of freeplay and not the other way around" (Derrida, 1978).

Gilles Deleuze and Guattari (1983), in their book *Anti-Oedipus*, identify *bricolage* as the characteristic mode of production of the schizophrenic producer by arguing that desire is a positive process of production that produces reality on the basis of three passive syntheses: partial objects, flows, and bodies. Building from Kant's (Kant & Höffe, 2010) transcendental apperception, where the self and world come together, Deleuze and Guattari (1983) argue that desire produces reality and is not separated from an object, but instead intimately connected to that which is already there allowing a synthesis of self and object as necessary for a meaningful experiences

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1983; Kant & Höffe, 2010). The implications of this stance on bricolage suggest that desire is not limited to the affections of the subject and is continuously seeking new channels and different combinations as a real, productive force. In this way, desire functions to appropriate that which is outside oneself by incorporating into oneself what is other than oneself to create an almost self-organizing flow, what some have referred to as autopoiesis (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983; Kant & Höffe, 2010). In this case, an autopoietic system is to be contrasted with an allopoietic system, such as a car factory, which uses raw materials (components) to generate a car (an organized structure), which is something *other* than itself (the factory). Deleuze, Massumi, and Guattari's (2008) take on flow is directly related to the temporality of space and autopoiesis. He submits that all bodies are in a continuous flow but just at various speeds. He finds support in this stance from the world of physics in which Einstein's empirical theories point to a universe that is expanding and is never finished and always changing (Einstein). This position suggests that flow and change is ever present even when observing apparently sedentary and stable objects like mountains and rocks. (Deleuze, Massumi, & Guattari, 2008).

Current theoretical applications of bricolage extend beyond the philosophy of Levi-Strauss (1966), Derrida (1978), and Deleuze & Guattari (1983) and into the business sector and is presently discussed in various other fields from business, to the arts, architecture, fashion design, education, the internet and it has even been used to describe the format of some favorite television shows – especially those associated with creative escapes of innovative protagonists. These contemporary interpretations on bricolage hint at a struggle with doxa, particularly in the business entrepreneurial literature. For

example, Brunner (1983) describes bricolage as "figuring out how to use what you already know in order to go beyond what you currently think" (p. 183). Weick (1993) discusses bricolage as improvisation when describing the actions of one lone fireman to create a fire within a fire to stay alive while fighting the Montana Mann Gulch forest fire, in which 13 men died when applying traditional approaches of survival. To Wieck "bricoleurs remain creative under pressure, precisely because they routinely act in chaotic conditions and pull order out of them" (Need to find exact Page).

Bricolage has also been applied to the doxa of traditional business within the social entrepreneurial literature and has been argued as an approach of recombining limited resources (Venkataraman, 1997; Garud, Kumaraswamy, & Nayyar, 1998) to solve social challenges (Di Domenico, Haugh & Tracey, 2010; Gundry, Kickul, Griffiths, & Bacq 2011) with innovative solutions. Gundry et al (2011) discussed bricolage as an intervening form of entrepreneurship designed to bridge efforts between the infrastructure necessary for creating social value with the processes of providing "good enough" solutions to social challenges. Their research questions the bricks and mortar approach of social investment to suggest more attention be given to change agents rather than the outcomes. Predictably their recommendations argue for greater attention and training be focused on developing "social change makers – bricoleurs" (Gundry et al, 2011). Their work is complemented by Di Domenico et al (2010) who argues that bricoleur's tend to focus on approaches designed for creating social as opposed to commercial value and therefore tend to work with an extended network of stakeholder while applying skills of persuasion to meet community needs (Di Domenico et al, 2010).

For purposes of this research, bricolage is thought of as the free play (tinkering) of ideas, occurring in a place and either constrained by doxa or revealing doxa. In this way, bricolage is a scalable activity ranging from the rule bound status quo to the "free lawfulness" of transformation described by Kant as the harmonization of the imagination and understanding without the constraint of cognitive understandings (doxa).

Method

We use the Cleveland Evergreen Cooperatives as our case study. Due to the deep analysis associated with the kind of theoretical framework that we propose, only one case study was selected. The Evergreen Cooperatives meets all of the conditions coming out of our proposed theoretical framework and helps us in both corroborating and extending our framework. The case of the Evergreen Cooperatives also warrants an in-depth analysis due to its very unique nature (Yin, 2009). We used a combination of document review and historical analysis along with interviews and observations to flush out the relationship amongst loosely formed networks conducive within new governance to the action orientation of social entrepreneurs engaged in bricolage.

We undertook an analysis of the Evergreen Cooperative at two different scales: societal and individual. The societal scale looks at how the fundamental concept of the urban cooperative as a process to improve the socio-economic conditions of disenfranchised individuals involved bricolage. As a part of this section, a document review combined with a historical analysis was completed for the Evergreen Cooperative to explain and map how they came into existence. This process outlined the inception of the Evergreen Cooperatives, how it gained political support, what were the resources required for

building organizational capacity, and how that ultimately shaped the formation, governing structure, function, and style of cooperative that eventually emerged. The document review also helped us in identifying the networks of organizations and actors involved in the Evergreen Initiative/ Process, and in corroborating some of the evidence that we received from the interviews.

An analysis at the individual scale was conducted through in-depth interviews. Semi-structured, open-ended interviews were conducted with key informants or participants for this part of the research. Key informants are people with firsthand knowledge of the events being studied who provide factual information about the process or phenomena under study from an insider perspective. In this study, the key informants are those who are most closely associated with not just setting up of the Evergreen Cooperatives, but also with the building of the larger network for the facilitation of the process of setting up such a business model. The interviews were conducted in a conversational style or as guided conversations, rather than in the form of structured queries. A semi-structured interview protocol was used to guide the interview process and was designed around the various themes coming out of the theoretical model (Yin, 2009).

The Cleveland Foundation was taken as a starting point of selecting interview participants for the study. The Cleveland Foundation along with the anchor institutions in the University Circle area played a key role in leveraging partnerships and institutional engagement, place based economic power along with intellectual and human resources. Therefore it was taken as a starting point for a snowball sampling technique to identify participants for this research. The authors identified members at the Cleveland

Foundation from the Board of the Evergreen Cooperatives, they were then asked to recommend others whom they consider really effective and key in the Evergreen Initiative. The purposeful selection of the informants for the first few interviews was guided by the motivation that the sample should be information rich (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Three interviews have been completed so far with several to be completed in the coming months. The interview participants that have been identified are affiliated to a variety of institutions and organizations ranging from Evergreen Cooperatives – Management, Green City Growers, Evergreen Energy Solutions, and Evergreen Cooperative Laundry; the four anchor institutions – Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland Clinic, University Hospitals, and VA Hospitals; Ohio Employee Ownership Center; and the City – Mayor's Office, Department of Economic Development, and Sustainability Office.

Analysis and Findings

Document Review - Worker Cooperative

"Cooperation is the simplest thing in the world to understand. There is nothing complicated about it. Cooperation in the sense of working together for a common result is as old as human nature. In the modern world, cooperation is the getting together of people to do their own business with their own money for their own mutual advantage."
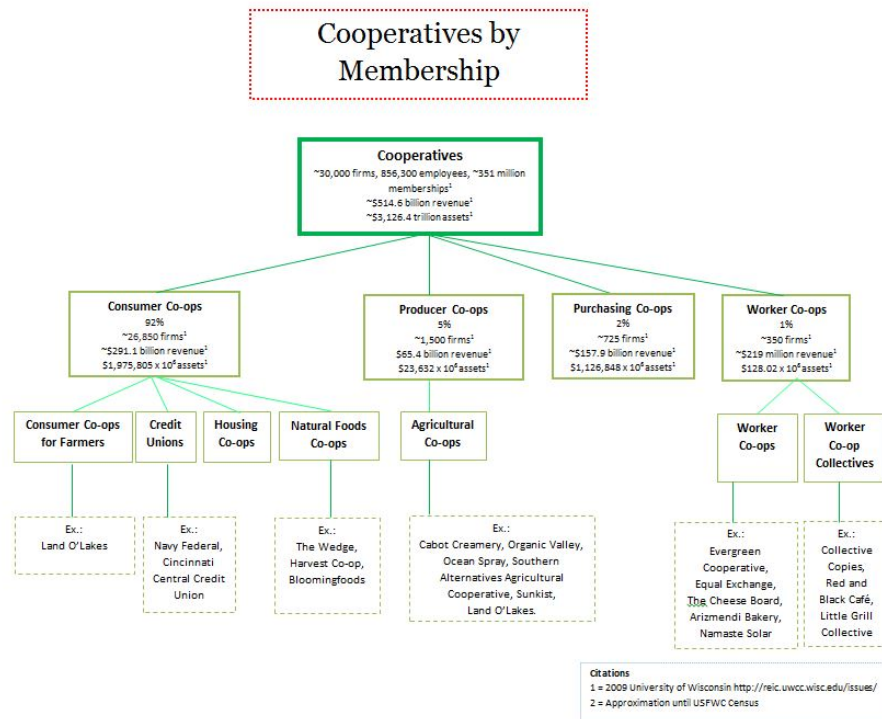--*Gerald Richardson, Director of Cooperative Division, Commission of Government. Newfoundland. 1940.*

There is a diverse array of co-operatives that exist in the United States. As Fairbairn (2004) describes, "The diversity of co-ops relates to the fact that they have emerged in many different regions, classes, communities, economic sectors, and time periods, with a wide variety of different approaches and ways of thinking despite some similarities in structure" (Fairbairn 2004 p. of book by Merrett and Walzer). Amongst the International Cooperative Alliance, the National Cooperative Business Association, and the USDA, Fairbairn notes that "What all these definitions have in common is that they stress the business focus of co-ops, combined with a democratic ownership/control linkage to a group of users and/or employees." (Fairbairn 2004 p.25 of book by Merrett and Walzer).

Cleveland Evergreen Cooperative

Cleveland Evergreen Cooperative is structured as a worker-owned cooperative. Worker cooperatives can be defined simply as, "productive firms that are democratically owned and managed by their workers" (Jackall and Levin 1984 p.3). It is described how, "…cooperatives straddle two worlds. They are committed to internal democracy but must compete in a marketplace that demands efficiency" (Jones in Jackall & Levin 1984 text, p. 52). In the United States today, there are approximately just over three hundred worker cooperatives, employing an estimated thirty five hundred people (U.S. Federation of Worker Cooperatives). Jackall and Levin eloquently describe how, "…in a society that speaks of democracy as its sacred bedrock but, in fact, practices it in a fairly narrow sense, worker cooperatives provide our system a way to engage the active, full

participation of men and women in the most fundamental public sphere of all – their work" (Jackall and Levin 1984 p.3).

Cooperatives by Membership

Cooperatives
~30,000 firms, 856,300 employees, ~351 million memberships[1]
~$514.6 billion revenue[1]
~$3,126.4 trillion assets[1]

Consumer Co-ops
92%
~26,850 firms[1]
~$291.1 billion revenue[1]
$1,975,805 x 10^6 assets[1]

Producer Co-ops
5%
~1,500 firms[1]
$65.4 billion revenue[1]
$23,632 x 10^6 assets[1]

Purchasing Co-ops
2%
~725 firms[1]
~$157.9 billion revenue[1]
$1,126,848 x 10^6 assets[1]

Worker Co-ops
1%
~350 firms[1]
~$219 million revenue[1]
$128.02 x 10^6 assets[1]

Consumer Co-ops for Farmers | Credit Unions | Housing Co-ops | Natural Foods Co-ops

Agricultural Co-ops

Worker Co-ops | Worker Co-op Collectives

Ex.:
Land O'Lakes

Ex.:
Navy Federal, Cincinnati Central Credit Union

Ex.:
The Wedge, Harvest Co-op, Bloomingfoods

Ex.:
Cabot Creamery, Organic Valley, Ocean Spray, Southern Alternatives Agricultural Cooperative, Sunkist, Land O'Lakes.

Ex.:
Evergreen Cooperative, Equal Exchange, The Cheese Board, Arizmendi Bakery, Namaste Solar

Ex.:
Collective Copies, Red and Black Café, Little Grill Collective

Citations
1 = 2009 University of Wisconsin http://reic.uwcc.wisc.edu/issues/
2 = Approximation until USFWC Census

Cleveland Evergreen Cooperative Structure

The Evergreen worker cooperative businesses are worker cooperatives based out of the Greater University Circle area in Cleveland, Ohio. The Evergreen worker cooperatives have developed within a broader organizational structure. The Greater University Circle Initiative - comprised of the broader network of the Cleveland Foundation, anchor institutions, the City, and others - launched the Evergreen Cooperative Initiative in 2008 as the piece of the Greater University Circle Initiative's economic inclusion component. From this Evergreen Cooperative Initiative, the

Evergreen Cooperative Corporation was formed as the holding company of the initiative. The Evergreen Business Services is set up within the Evergreen Cooperative Corporation to provide management and leadership to the Evergreen worker cooperatives and support business growth of the worker cooperatives. Also within the Evergreen Cooperative Corporation is the Evergreen Development Fund, LLC, which provides an investment vehicle focused on investing in the worker cooperatives, particularly in underserved neighborhoods. Within this broader framework, specifically under the Evergreen Cooperative Corporation, the three Evergreen worker cooperatives are situated. The worker cooperatives are Evergreen Cooperative Laundry, Evergreen Energy Solutions, and Green City Growers Cooperative (Evergreen Cooperatives website).
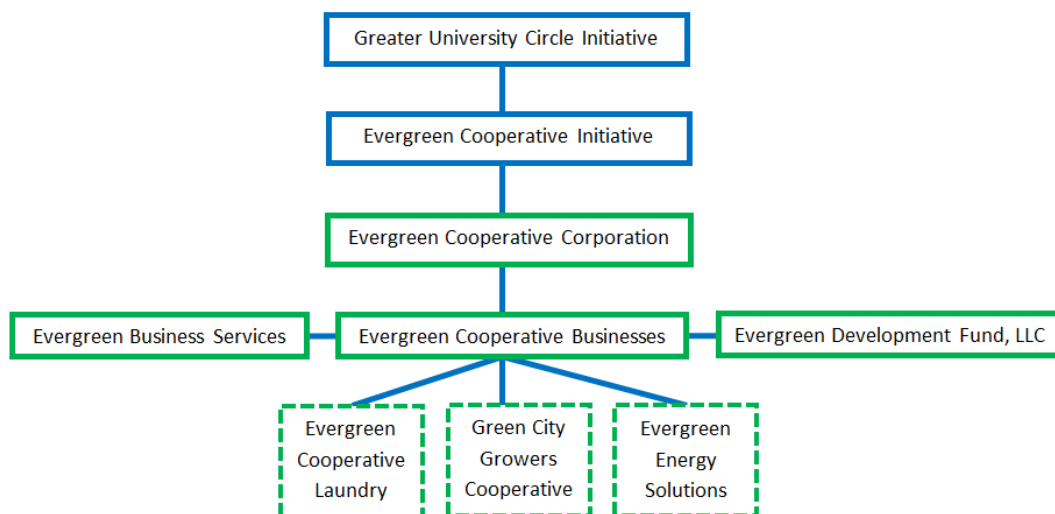
Observations at Evergreen

Because the purpose of the site observations was to gain a feel for operations, the site visits were exploratory and did not include interviews with cooperative members. Observations occurred on three occasions at two of the Evergreen operations (Laundry

and Greenhouse). The site visits occurred during regular daytime working hours and showed a relatively normal looking business operation consisting of workers, floor supervisors, managers and executives working in their roles. At least one of the observers had over 20-years of experience with the private sector and manufacturing environment and noted very little extraordinarily unique about the cooperative working place other than the workers seemed more inclined to show and talk to the observers about the operation, their function, and how it connected with others.

Interviews

The purpose of the interviews was supplement the document review and observations by asking key individuals and organizations involved with the Evergreen to tell of the story of how it can to be. As noted in the method, interviews were conversational in nature and produced the following summary:

From inception, the Cleveland Evergreen cooperative was not a stand-alone initiative. As described by one of the key procurers of the project, "the cooperative idea was cast into an already moving stream of community and economic development – *The Greater University Circle Initiative (GUCI)* (Cleveland foundation rep). GUCI began in (date) and consisted of four core issues one of which was concerned with economic inclusion of low-income workers. The interviews suggest that the history of the Evergreen cooperatives can be best understood as a series of amorphous stages in which ideas were floated and sometimes acted upon and other times dropped. The stages can be seen as interconnected and not necessarily completely isolated from each other.

Stage 1 - Changing leadership: On a much larger scale, in 2003, leadership at the Cleveland Foundation changed. Among other things a new goal at the philanthropic organization was set to increase collaboration in University Circle (which can be considered the second economic engine of the city after downtown). This also involved a reorganization at the Cleveland Foundation to separate funding from philanthropic requests thereby allowing representatives involved with engaged community development to focus on relationship development, idea creation, and network collaboration;

Stage 2 - Increased collaboration among anchor institutions: Talks among CEOs of the institutions and organizations in University Circle eventually led to the formation of the Greater University Circle Leadership Initiative that identified four core issues that they wanted to work on: (1) transportation, (2) employer assisted housing, (3) school system, (4) economic inclusion. Engaging anchor institution served to strategically connect the needs of primary institutions in the area with operationalizing the core issues of GUCLI;

Stage 3 - Tackling the issue of economic inclusion/ stabilizing space: The fourth topic of economic inclusion started to be addressed in 2006, through a "Community Wealth Building Round Table" involving 40 actors (such as anchor leaders, community development corporations, the ESOP president, the VA hospital, the economic development director of the city and greater Cleveland partnership). The 40 actors tried to address the issue of 'economic inclusion' on a quest for a new approach to economic development. Input to and moderation of the round table was provided by the Democracy Cooperative at the University of Maryland whose main area of research revolves around

the question of "how to stabilize place and communities at a time of escalating economics and increased worker mobility". An underlying assumption offered by at least one of the Cleveland Foundation managers was that "thriving democratic life starts with citizens - if the economic foundation is so eroded it [becomes] hard to be a strong democratic actor. Our aim was to build a "grounds up" policy based on "everyday lived experiences." This suggests that there are structures and institutional forms that are "rooted in place" that are inherently more stabilizing for economies than businesses. The Cleveland Foundation was working from the idea that:

- Anchor institutions that are less likely to leave the area and could be leveraged for social benefit;
- Broadening ownership of local owned capital meant increasing local wealth; and
- Community land trusts could be used to address escalating real estate markets in order to attract other businesses and the development of affordable housing.

Stage 4 - Studying the procurement of the anchor institutions - working along the supply chain: In 2007, a 6 month study on how to build community wealth using the assets of Greater University Circle (the institutions and the workforce) was conducted by the Democracy Collaborative. Focus of the study was the procurement of the institutions and a search for items that could be sourced locally and provided by a local workforce. Essentially, the research team conducted over 100 interviews in Cleveland and 20 all over the US. The research question was framed as: "how can we leverage anchor institutions to engage in community wealth building?" One interviewee of that study pointed to the issue of laundry that was being trucked miles away to a facility that was soon to be closed.

Stage 5 - Fishing around for ideas: Somewhat simultaneously to the study "fishing around for ideas" started. The first approach the research team developed was to work with the Community Development Corporations of the neighborhoods adjacent to University Circle. At that point, the CDCs were primarily focused on providing affordable housing in their communities. The initial idea was to add an additional task to the work of the CDC's based on a Newark model. For several years CDCs in Newark had been very successful in providing economic development services to their communities and in starting new businesses. As the idea didn't resonate with the CDC's in Cleveland, another approach needed to be developed. On a quest for a suitable business model, the collaboration with Ohio Employee Ownership Center eventually brought about the idea of cooperatives. An influencing factor was the declared goal to employ people that live in the surrounding neighborhoods to University Circle and to create wealth rather than merely jobs;

Stage 6 - Introducing the concept of cooperatives and designing a new organization: an essential part of learning how a cooperative can operate were three study trips to Mondragon Cooperative in Spain. Over 30 local leaders from Cleveland joined the trip. This is just one example of a transformative approach of bringing in elements from outside to blend with and be reconfigured to the resources readily available in Cleveland.

Stage 7 - putting together funding: in March 2008 a strategic plan was approved by the Cleveland Foundation to put together a grant to fund the Evergreen efforts and to launch the laundry business.

Stage 8 - Starting the first three cooperatives and learning by doing: the idea to start a laundry cooperative was somewhat born by chance. VA hospitals was building a new facility in Brecksville that was not going to include a laundry facility. As it was the first business to be started the set-up of the cooperative happened very informally without any signed contracts or letters of intent by potential clients (the anchor institutions). As it turned out, most potential customers were bound in contracts with other laundry service providers that couldn't be easily broken. Once this first experience was made, the process of setting up the Solar Cooperative as well as the Greenhouse became much more formalized and experts in the field were hired as managers and to design the facilities.

Stage 9 - Forming a holding organization: …

Stage 10 - cultural reset: most recently, Evergreen has been going through a cultural reset. Some of the issues that evolved over the first 5 years were the expectations towards employee ownership. "Who makes which decisions and how do the three cooperatives work together with the holding organization and the board of directors are major questions currently being addressed by a team of consultants." Decision-making and worker participation, reporting and financing are issues being revisited.
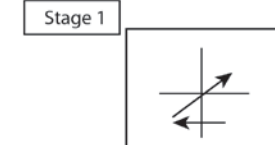
The following graphic assigns the stages within the theoretical framework:

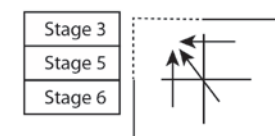Where do new ideas come in? What are we tinkering about? (Shaped by society conditions)
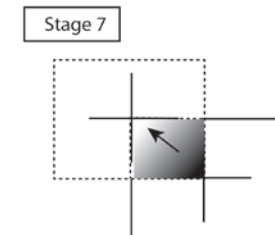**Stages: Emerging of the Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland**
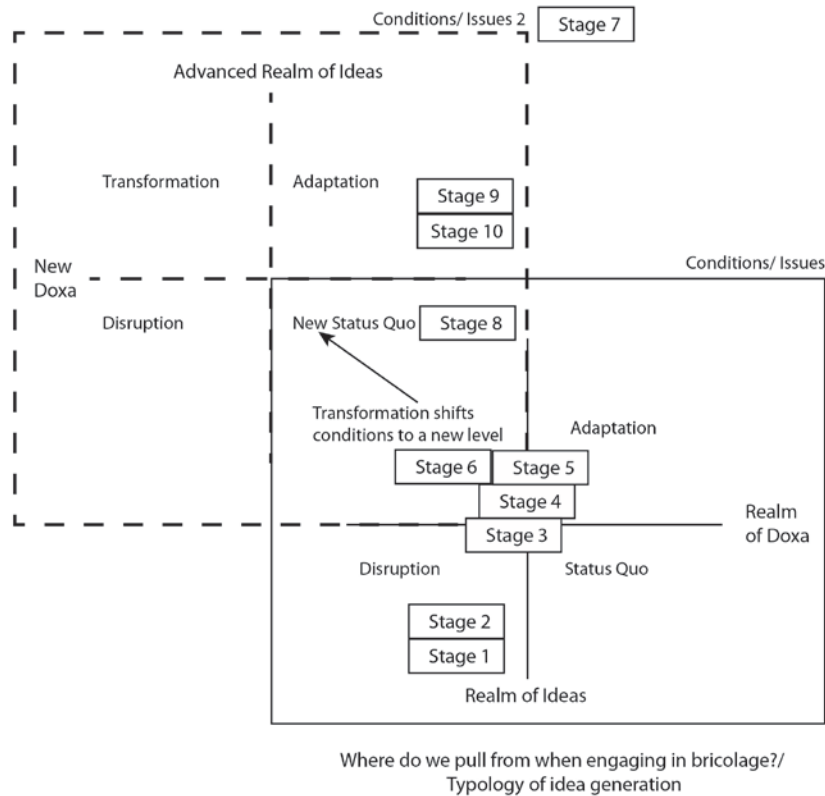
Loose Governance:

- The institutions went from isolation from the neighborhood and self-interest towards working and collaborating with the neighborhoods through loosely connected networks where they maintained autonomy because the governance model involved multiple ports of action and dispersed power structures.

  "Well, it was informal, and it's remained that way for eight years. There were no Memorandum of Understanding agreements, there was agreement that we're not trying

to change anything anybody is trying to do, this is not the work or responsibility of any single institution."
"That in it self was a huge and I think "momentous"- occasion- that you could get all these entities to share their master plans." (Board Member, Evergreen Cooperatives)

- The role of a loose network of institutions including external elements involving consultants and trips to Spain along with an abundance of finances connected to the initiative guaranteed a flow of ideas that would otherwise probably not have occurred.

  Three study visits to the Basque region of Spain where the Mondragon Corporation is based. This "opened our eyes to new possibilities." The role of the consultants and the trip to Spain and the abundance of finances was that it guaranteed a flow of ideas that would otherwise probably not have occurred (Director, Democracy Collaborative)

Loose Space:

- Property and buildings were available. The Greenhouse was built on 4 acres of a severely abandoned housing development. In addition the residents of the area were unemployed and poor.
- Outside of the very wealthy areas in the city, communities were struggling and housing programs weren't working. This disturbance prompted the interest of the anchor institutions from being primarily concerned with their own interests as the areas around them were falling into decay.

Change unconstrained by rules and doxa:

- The framing idea as "Wealth building" for the surrounding communities was transformative as it played around with the rules of work and compensation.

- As the idea was framed as "wealth building" (in opposition to old economic development paradigms), first an adaptation approach was pursued (transform existing CDC's). Since that didn't gain traction, a transformative approach of creating a completely new approach to the area and type of business.

- With the formation of the GUCI the doxa and constraints were already changing which allowed for a more radical pursuit of new ideas.

- Despite the change in mindsets of CEO's there are significant institutional structural doxa in place that are currently prohibiting the intended scale of transformation.

  - changes in the laundry contract (practical barriers) impacting wealth creation
  - worker mindsets away from employees to that of owners (cultural shift)
  - dwindling external financing requiring business units to operate more profitably

Discussion

Legacy is a word that invokes thoughts of both extraordinary inheritances and obsolete relics and is a suitable description for the city of Cleveland, which along with a similar group of American cities have rich histories and assets, and yet have struggled to stay relevant in the broader socio-political and economic context (The American Assembly, 2011). Cleveland has in the past, experienced a continuous decline in industry and loss of population, from a peak population of 914,000 in 1950; Cleveland's population in 2010 had dropped to 396,000. It has one of the poorest inner cities in the U.S. with a high unemployment rate (Meyer-Emerick, 2012). Cleveland entered the twenty-first century facing many major problems, including huge poverty, troubled public schools, aging infrastructure, and despite a decline in the rate of population loss,

all of the symptoms were associated with the loss of much of its middle class and corporate headquarters base (Chakalis, Keating, Krumholz, and Wieland, 2002). Cleveland, much like other legacy or shrinking cities in the American Northeast and Midwest, is a vital place with living histories; and enormous value of the physical infrastructure, civic institutions, and human capital embedded midst of seemingly uncontrollable social change brought on by economic and population decline (The American Assembly, 2011).

Given this background of legacy cities, the concept of bricolage can be revisited to describe the process of recombining existing elements, opening entirely new sets of adaptive paths; creating something novel as a response to disruption, stress, or change. The assemblage of elements through bricolage in the case of the Evergreen Cooperative, therefore is not to form a new, immutable structure, but something that is loose and adaptive. This is the process of tinkering around with ideas to find the proper societal fit (Holling, Gunderson, & Peterson, 2002).

This project applied a complicated theoretical framework to case study in order to explore how a relatively unique business initiative in the form of a worker cooperative was started in an urban legacy city. The conclusion rests on the following underlying concepts of loose change:

Loose has been applied structurally to describe legacy cities as places where the spatial fabric of society has been relaxed thereby creating gaps within the community – think loose space. Loose has also been applied functionally to describe how the governance systems within legacy cities have evolved from tightly bounded direct

governmental approaches to informal processes involving networks and social entrepreneurship – think loose governance.

Change is also discussed structurally and functionally. The first version of change suggests that the degree of change is structured by the realm of rules and the realm of ideas. The argument applied here is that structurally looser conditions within legacy cities and functionally looser governance approaches are less constrained and therefore more inclined to produce ideas which can lead to adaptive and transformative outcomes – think change as unconstrained by rules.

The second version of change is contextually different and refers to something being readily available – think of change in your pocket left over after purchasing something. Change is this setting is associated with the role of social entrepreneurship when engaging in bricolage to play around with the things that are already there to create new ideas. The argument applied here is that the opportunity for bricolage is optimized when unconstrained by pre-ordained doxa- think change unconstrained by doxa.

What can be offered is rather simple and perhaps utterly intuitive. Loose space - indicative to legacy cities and loose forms of governance - indicative of new governance form a context in which bricolage is most likely to take place to create fundamental transformation in legacy cities towards resilience. It does this through the by creating the conditions for a high resource initiative to occur within a low resource context.

Our findings also raise very real issues of concern for policy. Particularly, in the absence of policy are loose change approaches capable of taking on and solving vexing issues of society such as climate change and sustainability? Our project doesn't offer an

answer to this other than to say that global problems can be worked on locally and perhaps loose change is one way in many for that to occur.

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