Art, Cities and Social Enterprise

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Abstract

This paper explores the potential role of art-based social enterprises in contributing to sustainable urban development. It considers the examples of two social enterprises on opposite sides of the globe, and with contrasting relations to the "urban"; the Pacific Women's Weaving Circle in the heart of inner-city Melbourne, Australia and Dzidefo Women's Cooperative which traverses the rural context of Kpando, Ghana, with urban markets in Africa and the USA. Both enterprises use the vehicle of art to create opportunities for communities facing economic and social hardship. This paper approaches the field of social enterprise with a cross-disciplinary perspective that combines empirical, art historical and cultural studies methodologies to provide a deeper and more nuanced understanding of how communities manage the complexities of simultaneously pursuing economic, artistic and social development goals. At the point of rapid growth in this field, it considers the conditions for success, and potential risks, of art-based social enterprises in different geographic and urban contexts internationally.

Keywords: art, cities, development, social enterprise

Introduction

The Pacific Women's Weaving Circle in Melbourne, Australia and Dzidefo Women's Cooperative in Kpando, Ghana are social enterprises that use the vehicle of art to create opportunities for communities facing economic and social hardship. The following discussion of these projects explores the complex task of simultaneously pursuing artistic, economic and social goals in art-based social enterprises. The aim of the paper is to ground conceptual approaches to the field of social enterprise in an analysis of specific case studies that take into account both the lived experiences of practitioners, and also the added complexity of pursuing artistic and cultural goals. This involves a two-part methodology. The first part of the paper includes a review of literature in the field of art and its relationship to social enterprise, including perspectives from art history and theory, cultural studies, sociology and business management theory. The second part of the methodology includes in-depth case studies of two enterprises in different geographic contexts with a particular focus on how practitioners in the field navigate the tensions between artistic, social and economic goals. The case studies draw upon field research that includes; interviews with managers, employees and artists of each organisation; an industry round-table discussion held at the University of Melbourne in 2012 which explored the relationship between art, economic systems and social benefit in contemporary art practices; site visits, and analysis of selected artworks and exhibitions from each organisation. The case studies combine scholarly perspectives with more journalistic forms of writing and criticism that reflect the emergent and precarious nature of the organisations and their contexts.

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Social enterprise literature has emerged predominantly from the field of business management (Dart, 2004; Kerlin, 2010; Defourney, 2008; Zahra, 2010). As a result, there is a strong body of work that examines the structures and processes of managing social enterprises, along with factors that contribute to effective leadership and organisational development. These are all important aspects of understanding how social enterprises operate and generate returns – both social and economic - for the communities in which they work. Despite this body of literature, a significant gap has been identified in addressing the cultural, social, and non-economic dimensions of social enterprise, resulting in an over-representation of perspectives that privilege the economic, and technocratic, aspects of social entrepreneurship (Dacin, Dacin and Tracey, 2011; Valente, 2010). This is of particular importance in the context of art, which often challenges, transforms and exceeds conventional understandings of social value (Luhmann, 2002; Tanner, 2003). The analysis of cases in this paper therefore provides insight into practical issues faced by artists and art organisations in simultaneously pursuing artistic, social and economic goals, with a view to providing greater emphasis on, and attributing value toward, the artistic and cultural dimensions of these ventures.

In the arts, social enterprises have tended to emerge in cities, with a particular focus on textile art, craft, fashion and design as opposed to the areas of exhibitions, dealership and gallery sales (Barraket, 2010; Eastley, 2012).This is partly linked to accessibility, in terms of artists being able to source materials and produce items with minimal infrastructure and cost, while readily accessing markets independently of curators and dealers. It also relates to an emergence of such enterprises in developing rather than developed economies, linked with a broader global development agenda, and in a context where there is a greater reliance on self-generated income due to lack of government and philanthropic support (Terjesen, 2012; Yudice, 2003). With a continuing decline of public funding for the arts internationally, this consideration of new models of practice that enable greater degrees of financial self-sufficiency is of increasing interest to artists in a range of cities around the globe (ENCATC, 2013; Throsby, 2010; O'Connor, 2011).

The impact and social benefits of creative activity, in and of itself, has been recognized internationally and now forms part of a global development agenda. This is evident, for example, in a submission for the Economic Cooperation and Development Review in 2013 made by Irena Bokova, the Director-General of the UNESCO. The submission made a number of key recommendations focused on the importance of culture in promoting sustainable development:

> As a source of identity and strength, culture is a vital resource for empowering communities to participate fully in social and cultural life *…+ Culture is a force for inclusion that is important for communities and individuals aspiring for more effective governance and increased cultural choices *…+ The impact is especially important at the community level, where it can help empower individuals, improve living conditions and foster community-based economic growth.

> Bokova, 2013

This interest in cultural practice as a form of economic and social development was echoed in a prior report for the UNESCO Institute of Statistics by Hendrik van der Pol, who argued for the social benefits of embracing economic activity 'at the crossroads of the arts, business and technology' (Pol, 2007). Practices such as art, craft and design, have a unique ability to combine market participation with social inclusion, bringing together individuals in a way that was engaged with cultural context while also provides links to economic participation. While money-making may seem anathema to cultural activities, van der Pol argues, 'Culture should not only be considered as a means (or a barrier) to achieve economic growth but also as a factor of social

cohesion and human development'. This is not to say that art and culture should be monetized or commoditized (Throsby, 2010). Rather it recognizes that art and culture are already intertwined within broader economic and social systems, and indeed culture has become an important factor in worldwide economic growth (Yudice, 2003).

The emergence of social enterprise as a force links to a history of cooperatives and microfinance, while also responding to widespread cutbacks in government funding across Europe, the USA and Asia in the 1980s and 1990s (Borzaga and Galera, 2012; Kerlin, 2010). Social enterprise developed from an interest in how the market might be used to address gaps in funding for social welfare and community services. With its strong basis in the non-profit sector, it tends to prioritize social and community goals over profit-motives and in this way is connected to, but different from the microfinance industries. Indeed many social enterprises are not profit-making at all, combining multiple revenue streams to pursue their social objectives which include grants and donations. In a field review by New York's Seedco Policy Review, it was reported that of a random study of social enterprises conducted in 2001, the vast majority had lost money rather than making a profit (Seedco, 2007). The report notes, '71% lost money, 5 percent broke even, and 24 percent turned a profit'. While such information might sound alarming, this is not necessarily a sign of flaws in the model. Instead, it demonstrates that most social enterprises focus on their social goals over financial returns, just as more conventional non-profits regularly post losses in their balance sheets. By bringing together income from many and various sources including trading activities, they have the potential to extend the potential survival of the traditional non-profit in a climate of low philanthropic and state giving (Weisbrod, 1997; Sabeti, 2009).

The advantage of art, craft and design based social enterprises is that they are often based on the existing skills, creativity and resources of artists and therefore don't require significant start-up capital. This provides an important advantage in a developing-world context, where recycled materials can be sourced for production of goods and works can be created from almost anything and everything at hand. In terms of social enterprise, this also means that running costs and overheads can be adjusted according to the local context. Perhaps more important than cost efficiency is the fact that these types of enterprises provide other, non-monetary benefits for the artists involved, including space and resources to make art, the opportunity to explore and address issues of cultural identity in a changing global context, as well as skills development and participation in civic life (Farr-Wharton, 2013; Bokova, 2013).

Social enterprise therefore has the potential to re-orient the focus of urban development away from overtly commercial motives, by privileging artistic and social goals alongside the quest for economic independence (McRobbie, 2011; Social Enterprise UK, 2013). It is nevertheless important to be aware that in many examples of social enterprise, those intended to benefit may not be active agents in managing and setting the direction of the organization. As Marie Lisa Decaney observes in her study of social enterprises that work in communities experiencing poverty, 'Social enterprises that engage the poor as passive beneficiaries have a tendency to foster subservience and dependency that may lead to a hardening of social exclusion' (Decaney, 2012). This is also evident for example in social enterprises that manufacture in developing economies but where the artistic and business direction, retail and management of the business occurs in a way that is disconnected from the context of production, or NGOs focused on gap funding for their social welfare activities rather than income generation for the artists involved. Questions around the exploitation of labor, copyright of artist's work, and a condescending attitude to addressing poverty and disadvantage abound in this field, and are worthy of critical reflection (Menkes, 2012; Kolk, 2013, Davis, 2012).

This paper therefore focuses on two examples of relatively small-scale, locally-focused ventures where artists and communities experiencing disadvantage have a driving role in the enterprise, considering the degree to which they have agency and freedom in what they make, their conditions of work, how and where they generate income, how profits are distributed and how their activities support artistic goals. It compares the experience of practitioners in the urban context of Melbourne in the case of the Pacific Women's Weaving Circle, with an enterprise that combines production in a rural context of Ghana with sales in urban markets internationally in the case of Dzidefo Women's Cooperative, pointing to the difficulties of sustaining such ventures outside of an urban context. If we are currently on the brink of rapid growth in this field, what are the conditions for success, and failure, in these types of enterprises?

Case Study 1: Pacific Women's Weaving Circle

The Pacific Women's Weaving Circle is is an initiative of artists living in Melbourne who originally hail from Pacific Island nations, with the aim of generating artistic and economic opportunities for the artists involved, along with a space for social connection in what is at times an alienating urban environment for new migrant communities. The non-economic values of the group included artistic collaboration and skill sharing, the creation of a space in which to address experiences of social exclusion, and the opportunity for artists to reconnect with traditional arts and crafts. They describe:

> We realize more and more, that by being part of something like this, we ensure that these exquisite skills of craft and design unique to our beloved Pacific Islands are maintained and cherished. By investing in local knowledge, we are able to connect with Islander life and culture in our urban realities.
>
> PWWC, 2011

Their economic focus included the generation of income for artists through the making and selling of works, while at the same time encouraging a spirit of reciprocity. Maryann Talia Pau, one of the founders of the group, describes 'Our vision for the circle has always been to grow it and support women to create their own social enterprises based on crafts they love and that have meaning for them' (Pau, 2011) The group therefore embraced elements of commercial enterprise as a way of generating income for artists and to support their activities. At the same time they retained an element of resistance to the purely economic, linking to a history of artistic practice that has challenged the capitalist market by promoting alternative forms of trade (Purves, 2005). An interest in gifting and sharing, for example, is expressed in many of the group's communications. In a description for one of their exhibitions, for example, the artists explain, 'Hand-made, hand-woven and hand-gifted treasures will be exchanged during the installation, foregrounding community, tradition, and history' (Mis-design, 2011).

The term social enterprise is useful here, as it speaks to the possibility of generating income while also privileging non-economic goals. The Pacific Women's Weaving Circle describe process as taking priority over outcomes in their activities: 'Through The Pacific Women's Weaving Circle, we remind each other that the 'making' process is just as valuable as a finished basket or necklace' (PWWC, 2011).Making, trading, facilitating workshops and exhibiting their work are means for the artists to engage with a variety of audiences, including the contemporary art world. This reflects the interests and practices of the group's founders, artists Lisa Hilli and Maryann Talia Pau.

Lisa Hilli's practice engages a range of contemporary media including video, sculpture and installation, while maintaining a dialogue with traditional art forms relating to her Papua New Guinean cultural background. In her video and performance work Just Like Home (2008-2010), she documented the ways in which her mother had adapted traditional Papua New Guinean cooking techniques in Australia. She filmed her mother preparing a meal of Ai gir, a vegetable and chicken dish traditionally cooked in banana leaves. In Australia, her mother prepares the dish using tin foil, creating a disjuncture between indigenous life and industrial modernity. For the exhibition of the video work, Hilli constructed large banana trees from tin foil, under which the video was screened. Alongside the exhibition, Hilli and her mother prepared and shared the traditional meal of Ai gir with audience members. The exhibition travelled to a variety of galleries in urban and regional venues across Australia. In projects such as Just like Home, HIlli explores the ways in which social and geographic conditions influence identity, while also conscientiously traversing the boundaries of what is seen to be contemporary and traditional cultural practice. Hilli's work explicitly foregrounds the loss of cultural identity in Western cities, and the conflict between modern industrial processes and indigenous culture.

Maryann Talia Pau similarly confounds the distinction between contemporary and traditional in her practice, where the artist hand-crafts elaborate body adornments using traditional techniques from Samoa and across the Pacific. In her installation work Find your memories, Find your stars, Pau engaged with both pop culture and cultural tradition. The work was exhibited as part of the exhibition Meleponi Pasifika at the Footscray Community Arts Centre, part of the Contemporary Pacific Arts Festival, Melbourne in 2013. The focal point of the installation was a simple white dress-form mannequin sitting on the floor of a small gallery, near the wall. Pinned to the mannequin was an elaborate chain of crisp white ribbon, tightly woven into geometric shapes. Strung across the mannequin like an elaborate couture dress in the making, the chain then spread out across the floor and crept up along the wall to create a an intricate web of white shapes against the white walls, barely discernible yet striking in its subtle texture. Catching the light, the network of shapes, with their interplay of frame and space, star and shadow, alluded to the natural formations of wildlife and stars, while also connecting to the seemingly random nature of the creative process. In such works Pau draws upon traditional form, with its links to ceremony, place and identity, and brings this into dialogue with the aesthetics of contemporary fashion, drawing attention to the process of making rather than the end product.

The Pacific Women's Weaving Circle was less about the individual artistic goals of Hilli and Pau, however, than about forming a space for emerging artists and makers, with a goal to increase opportunities for income generation for women in their communities. The origins of the group were somewhat organic, beginning with the foundation of fortnightly and monthly gatherings which included anywhere between a handful and a dozen women. As people became aware of the group, the numbers increased and additional weaving circles were formed in different geographic regions (PWWC, 2011). The group also shifted to a more enterprising model as their work attained interest and attention from the general public and art world. They began selling items and running public workshops to fund the growth and development of the group. From here, they rented a studio and started employing project and administration staff to support the development of mainstream exhibitions and public projects. A key project that accelerated this growth was the exhibition Pacific Trade: Occupation & Exchange, which involved collaboration with independent fashion label Alpha 60 as part of Melbourne Spring Fashion Week in 2011 (Mis-design, 2011).

In Pacific Trade: Occupation & Exchange, the artists inhabited one of Alpha 60's high-end fashion retail stores, repurposing it for public weaving workshops, activities that promoted an economy of gifting and an art installation featuring a range of hand-woven objects displayed throughout

the store (Figure 1). The artists made stars from woven ribbon, for example, which were gifted to customers who entered the store, transforming the usual economic exchanges of a commercial shop. They also gifted knowledge and skills by providing free workshops for members of the public to learn how to weave the stars, which also provided an opportunity to experience the social and relational qualities of the weaving circle. Their installation in the store referred to Pacific Trade routes and migration. This included traditionally woven mats, a hand-made woven canoe, and an array of baskets, interior furnishings and adornments. Woven stars were suspended from the ceiling to hang over the canoe, referring to navigation by night. The front window of the store was transformed with a hand-woven dress made of brightly wrapped sweets, a play on the ideas of consumption, consumer desire, value and the superficial aspects of fashion. It was also referring to a traditional Samoan gift of sweets woven together.

Fig.1: Pacific Women's Weaving Circle, Pacific Trade: Occupation & Exchange, 2011
Photo Credit: Lisa Hilli, 2011

The Alpha60 retail store is known for a minimalist, slightly gothic, black and white aesthetic. The Pacific Women's Weaving Circle installations and activities were a strange juxtaposition in this context. Their living presence and vibrant objects, along with their focus on processes that subvert the usual economic exchanges of clothing retail, drew attention to the lifelessness of retail stores, spaces in which the end product is elevated and production is usually disguised. The incongruity highlighted the ways in which the contemporary urban landscape alienates human interaction. The artists physically occupied this de-humanized and transactional space, carving out a territory from which to raise questions of cultural exclusion and class divisions in fashion. The use of the term "occupation" pointed to histories of colonization in the Asia-Pacific region that continue to be played out in both political and cultural terms (Mignolo, 2010). Here the power-dynamic was reversed, with Pacific artists becoming the occupiers, teachers and traders, while privileging alternative forms of commerce such as gifting and exchange. They did not simply create an image of social harmony, however, instead providing a space in which to attend to political and social differences. Tensions arose for example in the process of imparting traditional knowledge to members of the public, where the artists had to negotiate the boundaries between what they considered to be sacred knowledge and the information that they wanted to openly share, addressing issues of cultural appropriation and emphasizing cultural difference rather than homogeneity (Pau, 2012).

After a period of rapid growth in 2011-12, the collective scaled back their operations to reconsider their original purposes, pointing to the difficulty of negotiating the competing goals of social enterprise. Pau describes this questioning process, stating 'As a collective, it is good; it is the whole dealing with complexity and acknowledging it. What is this space for, who is it for?' (Pau, 2012).In 2012 they returned to the simple original premise of meeting on a monthly or

fortnightly basis in an informal way, without the pressure to exhibit and pay rent and overheads that had emerged through their expansion. This was a purposeful decision to prioritize artistic and social goals. The group describes, 'some things though are absolute and consistent each time we meet: we share a great feed, we enjoy hearty laughter and we grow a deeper appreciation for the skill and ingenuity of our ancestors and peoples around us' (PWWC, 2013). Somewhat unexpectedly, this shift away from mainstream art world exhibition and profiling enabled the artists to have more time to make artwork. They were able to return to a process of making what they liked, as they liked, and according to each artist's individual interests, as opposed to collective exhibition making. Similarly, a reduced focus on economic goals also unexpectedly enhanced the economic potential and benefits to the artists, by reducing overheads and expenses. Artists were able to sell their wares independently and as a group at markets and through their own networks, while the costs of regular workshops were funded by the artists themselves contributing materials (Pau, 2012).

The Pacific Women's Weaving Circle is an example of the possibility for art and social enterprise to come together without compromising the qualities of artistic independence and critical engagement with social context. However this has relied upon an ability to navigate complex terrain, including adapting and scaling back the model over time when economic and artistic motivations started to compete. Staying small and focusing on opportunities for artists to earn income without huge financial risk has led to a more sustainable model; the group is financially sustainable without the need for, or dependence upon, external funding. However a tense relationship with commercial economic value remains. Pau describes the ways in which artistic, social and economic values coincide in her individual artistic practice:

> Getting my work acquired by NGV really set the bar for me. That got me thinking, 'Wow, if I can make a breastplate and sell it for this much, then maybe that is how I could make some money for me and my family'. But it is deeper than that; it is more complex than that. It is so much about the process and about community and culture and identity and my worth as a woman, my work and how I use these hands.
>
> Pau, 2012

Pau's description of the cultural and social facets of her artistic practice, along with the economic benefits that are simultaneously intertwined within this practice, point to the role that art is playing in international community development, as evident in the direction of UNESCO policy. However the push for cultural entrepreneurship in developing economies raises a separate set of issues, particularly in relation to the ease of access to markets in rural versus urban settings. These issues are central for Dzidefo Women's Cooperative, the second case study to be discussed in this paper.

Case Study 2: Dzidefo

Geographic context plays a significant role in determining both the sustainability and impact of art-based social enterprises. In the case of Dzidefo Women's Sewing Collective, a rural location resulted in dependence on partner organizations in urban centers for survival. Dzidefois an example of a small scale, local, art based social enterprise with a hybrid model. Dzidefo operates from an orphanage in the Volta region of Ghana, Africa. Along with producing textiles and garments for the local markets, they also manufacture for a number of international designers who sell to urban consumers. Due to the small scale and remote location of Dzidefo, they tend to produce quantities of items for customers on an ad hoc basis, rather than larger manufacturing orders which are sent to bigger factories or larger scale workshops in more

accessible regions of the country. While production is located in a rural context, the enterprise is dependent on retail trade in urban markets for survival. This makes for a precarious and hybrid model and impacts on their goals of economic sustainability.

The Dzidefo group was established in January 2008 by a local Ghanaian woman, known as "Mama Esi", who also runs the affiliated Ryvanz-Mia Orphanage. Esi was assisted by Peta Hall, a volunteer who worked with the international aid organization Village Volunteers. This link to Village Volunteers has provided an ongoing source of skilled volunteers for the group, a strategy that has increased international links and opportunities for manufacturing and sales beyond the local market, which is limited. Their studio is located in the regional town Kpando, located about four hours out of the capital city Accra. This means that sale and distribution of work to markets and shops has been difficult, particularly as transportation by road is difficult and the costs of shipping and postage are high in Ghana. Dzidefo began with ten local women designing and printing artwork onto cotton fabrics, employing a range of dying methods that include batik, wax and woodblock printing. African textiles are popular in the local markets, especially in the tourist market, while also supporting a vibrant fashion scene in Ghana. The production and sale of fabrics in the capital city Accra has been a good income source for the cooperative while also enabling a greater degree of artistic freedom for the artists; rather than being commissioned to produce particular work, for example, the artists are able to experiment with materials and ideas. Due to the economic and social conditions of rural Ghana, economic goals are a priority for the group, and as a result their practice has a more obviously utilitarian and economically oriented focus, than might be expected from a similar cooperative of artists in a more developed context.

One of Dzidefo's previous international clients was the US fashion label Osei-Duro, established by US designers Maryanne Mathias and Molly Keogh in 2009. The label sells to the US market in fashion capitals such as New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco, but produce in collaboration with local artisans in remote areas of Ghana. They describe their business in terms of social goals:

> We produce our textiles and garments in Ghana, applying traditional techniques such as hand dyeing and weaving. We aim to support the local apparel industry – on both a large and small scale – in becoming sustainable. We work towards a vibrant fashion industry, one that exceeds international production standards while respecting the rights and aesthetics of local makers.

<div align="right">Osei-Duro, 2010</div>

Despite this social focus, Osei-Durohas a private and for-profit governance structure, and in this sense is positioned more on the business end of the social enterprise spectrum, while nevertheless operating with an environmental and social lens. With a model that combines local artisans with international trade, a for-profit structure with socially engaged motivations, Osei-Duro provides a more problematic example of an art-based social enterprise. The following discussion explores the lack of ownership and participation of collaborating artists in this model, along with the dangers and potential benefits of trying to "do good" through social enterprise. If social enterprise is to be a model that enables independent artistic practice with flow-on economic and social benefits, then the agency and active participation of artists is a key consideration, which is impacted by specific geographic and economic contexts.

Osei-Duro designers collaborate with approximately 20 local makers, from textile design to embroidery and crochet, and at one point this included Dzidefo (Figure 2). The relationship of Osei-Duro to Dzidefo was short-lived, however, pointing to the difficulties of bringing together a

community-driven and grass roots artistic practice, as is the case in Dzidefo, with the commercial demands of a for-profit enterprise in a fast and furious urban marketplace of USA. The cooperative were contracted for manufacturing work. After a few small production runs, the variation in quality and efficiency was too unpredictable for the commercial requirements of Osei-Duro's model, leading to the end of their collaboration. In the realm of art, variation and difference are highly valued qualities. However in the realm of commercial fashion production, sameness and consistency are qualities that trump individuation. This raises the question of whether an art enterprise can translate, and indeed whether it should translate, from a local to an international market. In the example of Dzidefo, the group lost potential revenue by not meeting Osei-Duro's expectations; however this might have been for the benefit of their ongoing artistic and social goals.

Fig. 2: (Left) Exterior view of Dzidefo workshop in Kpando, Ghana, 2012
Photo credit: Grace McQuilten
(Right) Osei-duro and Dzidefo Collaboration, 2010
Photo credit: Molly Keogh, Producer / Leila Hekmat, Photographer, Copyright ©Osei-Duro

The Osei-Duro enterprise continues to work with many other cooperatives and individual artists in Ghana along more conventional and economically rational lines. This benefits their fashion label in a number of ways. They have access to highly skilled and creative textile artists and craftspeople, which brings a strong aesthetic point-of-difference to their finished work. It also means that the business can produce ethically in a lower-cost economy, while creating indirect social benefits to the Ghanaian community. Many advocates working in the space of development in Africa are pushing for exactly these kinds of opportunities to collaborate with international industry. Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon argues, "Africa does not need charity – Africa needs investment and partnership *…+ Joining forces with civil society and private sector, including non-traditional players like the fashion industry, has become indispensable" (Menkes, 2012). One of the complexities of this business model, however, is the integration of traditional Ghanaian aesthetics into a non-Ghanaian product, which draws upon the talents of local artists to create work for a US-owned and managed business. Questions about cultural appropriation abound in the field of fashion, and have come to the fore internationally in recent times with a number of law suits in the US relating to the appropriation of indigenous artwork and cultural references in mainstream fashion (Tillotson, 2011; Karmali, 2013; Wilkinson, 2012). This is an issue of particular relevance for social enterprises in developing economies, where businesses may be started by aid organizations or ambitious social entrepreneurs who come and go without a deep engagement with local context. Jon Hugget, an advisor in the field of social enterprise, warns against the tendency to celebrate the heroic individual in philanthropy and social enterprise, which often inflates the perceived importance of highly educated, articulate, networked individuals. This focus on the "meritorious" individual is often at the expense of valuing the collaborative work and efforts of the communities who are intended to benefit:

> Meritocrats in government and philanthropy give support, contracts and capital to those they trust. Trustees are usually well-spoken and well-heeled. Awards ceremonies can show a hierarchy, with the great and the good at the top, the entrepreneur in the middle, and the 'beneficiaries' at the bottom.

> Hugget, 2012

Instead, Hugget suggests that social enterprises should embrace more of a ground-up approach, providing tools and opportunities to those who seek to benefit, rather than those who seek to help. In his words, 'the best way to solve social problems was to give power to those with the problem, who are rarely meritocrats themselves'. This question of power in social enterprise points to an issue that is relevant for all arts-based social enterprises – the degree to which artists and communities can also respond to problems in the enterprise structure when business starts to impact negatively upon social outcomes.

This was evident in the journey of The Pacific Women's Weaving Circle, which changed and adapted its model, scaling back its engagement with both mainstream exhibiting practices and commercial activity, in order to negotiate tensions between the group's social, artistic and economic goals. This involved striking a balance between their need for money to support the costs of their organization, their aim to generate income for their artists and their social goals in terms of providing a space to address issues of social exclusion and to preserve cultural knowledge, all while enabling a degree of artistic freedom. The degree of independence was much more difficult to secure for Dzidefo, partly due to the geographic isolation and reliance on external partners to grow sales in urban markets.

Conclusion

The findings of this paper suggest that art based social enterprises are more successful when located in cities, where artists have ready access to local markets and greater independence in managing the distribution and sale of their work. It is evident that the process of balancing multiple and conflicting goals in art based social enterprises is ongoing, and requires a clear understanding of intended purposes, continual reflection upon, and acknowledgement of, failure and compromise, and a willingness to change and adapt as circumstances shift. By bringing together empirical research with theoretical perspectives from art history, cultural studies and social enterprise, this paper has revealed that art as a social enterprise treads a fine line between privileging economic development for communities and collapsing back into the logic of commercial business. The ability of such organizations to navigate this territory depends, in great part, on the agency and active participation of those intended to benefit. An understanding of impact in this context therefore requires an understanding of the experiences of practitioners, along with a valuing of the artistic and cultural, as well as economic, goals of each specific enterprise.

The limitations of the paper include the select number of organisations studied. Further research is indicated that provides cross-comparison with a greater number and variety of organisations, including attention to the impact of economic and business models and geographic context, as well as artistic and cultural goals.The findings of this paper point to the need for cross-disciplinary approaches to the field that privilege the perspectives of practitioners alongside critical and theoretical approaches to measuring impact and sustainability. This approach will serve to deepen and enrich our understanding of the complexities involved in the simultaneous pursuit of social, cultural and economic goals in developing communities in an increasingly urbanized world.

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