MUSIC ENTREPRENEURS IN A LINGUISTIC MINORITY CONTEXT: EFFECTUATION AS ADAPTATION TO THE PARADOXES OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES
Joëlle Bissonnette and Sébastien Arcand
HEC Montréal

Abstract

Digital technologies offer new possibilities to entrepreneurs in cultural industries in linguistic minority societies. Paradoxically, they also pose a threat by exacerbating the precariousness and uncertainty experienced by them. However, there is a lack of literature on the ways in which these entrepreneurs adapt to the paradoxes brought about by digital technologies. This study aims to address this gap in the literature through an analysis of 50 semi-structured interviews carried out in the music recording industry in Canadian francophone societies and in Catalonia (Spain). Using an abductive approach, we suggest that the attitudes and practices implemented by music entrepreneurs in these societies can be interpreted according to the four principles of the effectuation theory (Sarasvathy, 2001): 1) by predetermining affordable losses; 2) by harnessing contingencies rather than avoiding them; 3) by relying on strategic alliances rather than competition; and 4) by drawing on the means rather than the ends, these entrepreneurs are able to take advantage of the possibilities offered by digital technologies while mitigating the threats. Thus, our research contributes to the literature on cultural entrepreneurship by highlighting these practices and attitudes using the effectuation theory.

Keywords: cultural management; cultural entrepreneurship; music industry; recording industry; linguistic minorities; cultural policy

In the early 2000s it was believed that digital technologies would promote cultural and linguistic diversity by offering new possibilities for disseminating the cultural goods of smaller players on a global scale (see Anderson, 2006; Beaudoin, 2014). However, empirical research carried out since then has revealed that digital technologies can also pose some threats, particularly for cultural entrepreneurs in linguistic minority societies. Some scholars have shown the risk of loss of cultural and linguistic specificity in these societies within the globalized environment created by digital technologies (Baillargeon, 2002; Boucher and Thériault, 2005). Considering the ethical imperative that the international community has put into place to protect and promote cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2005), it is important to focus on the creation and production of culture in the linguistic minority context and on how to ensure their sustainability in a digital era. However, there is a lack of research on these activities in this context. Some practices implemented to deal with the challenges and possibilities of digital technologies have been studied in different cultural industries (Janowska, 2011; Wade Morris, 2014; Benner and Waldfogel, 2016), but they have not considered the specificities of the social and linguistic environment, especially in a minority context. The article addresses the issue by highlighting specific practices in order to gain a deeper understanding of what it is that cultural entrepreneurs do to survive in a digital era in minority contexts. Another objective is to contribute to policy-making that aims to support cultural entrepreneurs in linguistic minority societies. Given that digital technologies present both a number of threats and new possibilities, this raises several paradoxes for our entrepreneurs, who must adapt by overcoming the threats posed while taking advantage of the possibilities offered.
All this leads to the following question: how do cultural entrepreneurs in a linguistic minority context adapt to the paradoxes raised by digital technologies?

Our analysis is based on a qualitative study of 50 semi-structured interviews carried out in the music recording industry in Catalonia, Spain, as well as in francophone societies of Canada located outside Québec (Ontario, Atlantic or Acadia, and Western provinces). These societies represent various degrees of linguistic minority status that raise specific challenges for cultural entrepreneurs, especially in a digital era. We are particularly interested in the elements of this context that these entrepreneurs interpret to influence their practices.

This paper begins with a definition of music entrepreneurship in the chosen societies. The next section presents the theoretical underpinnings of our research, mainly in terms of cultural entrepreneurship. We then suggest that effectuation theory (Sarasvathy, 2001) provides the means to understand the practices implemented by music entrepreneurs in specific contexts to adapt to the paradoxes brought about by digital technologies. This theoretical section is followed by a description of the methodological approach we used and the results of our interview-based data collection. We conclude by highlighting the potential of our results to contribute to the literature on cultural entrepreneurship in a linguistic minority context by applying an entrepreneurship theory, specifically effectuation theory, to the practices implemented by cultural entrepreneurs.

Definitions

Music entrepreneurs in linguistic minority societies face many levels of precariousness and uncertainty, which amplify the issues related to digital technologies. The professional literature in this field highlights the difficulties in ensuring the viability of musical creation and production in French in Canada and in Catalan in Spain, as well as the vulnerability experienced by the companies in charge of these activities (Nordicity, 2015; Departament de Cultura, 2016). Commercial successes are exceptional because of the small population size and the geographic dispersion of audiences, albeit to different degrees depending on the society, as well as the limited potential for the exportation of local musical creations. Subsequently, very little independent revenue can be generated by music recordings in French in Canada and in Catalan in the case of Spain. Institutional support, such as policies to protect and promote language and culture, as well as public funding at the national and regional levels are indispensable to ensuring the viability of these activities, but they cannot guarantee their sustainability. Further, some of these policies do not apply to the deterritorialized environment created by digital technologies, making the viability of music creation and production even more difficult to attain (Morén Alegret, 2016; Fortier, 2016). As a result, digital technologies add another layer of precariousness and uncertainty to the creation and production of music in linguistic minority societies.

Small local and independent companies in these societies mostly handle musical creation and production. In many cases, creators start their own company and, given the lack of professional resources available in the music industry, they carry out all functions from the creation to the marketing of their works (Nordicity, 2015; Morén Alegret, 2016). They are, for us, musical entrepreneurs. Enhuber (2014) shows that cultural entrepreneurs, who start from an idea or inner vision that invites the consumer to individually experience it, do not correspond to the definition of the economic entrepreneur, which refers to the creation of a new organization to take advantage of new business opportunities. Patten (2016) also highlights that cultural entrepreneurs do not align themselves with traditional entrepreneurship discourses, rejecting orthodox labels of
entrepreneurship and identifying primarily with their occupation. A recent review of the literature on cultural entrepreneurship (Hausmann and Heinze, 2016) reveals a broad definition of the entrepreneur in cultural industries. Using these definitions, cultural entrepreneurs may be self-employed creators who act as entrepreneurs as a result of the working conditions in their industry rather than being motivated by the existence of an opportunity to exploit (Hausmann and Heinze, 2016). Swedberg (2006) even considers that every artist can be defined as an entrepreneur given the creative nature of his/her activities. The definition of a cultural entrepreneur adopted in this article follows this broad definition: it represents an individual who has established a company to organize activities of musical creation and production, a company consisting solely of its founder and taking care of only his/her activities, or a company hiring workers and offering a broad range of services to the music industry. While defining the cultural entrepreneur, the literature on cultural entrepreneurship overlooks the practices implemented by the entrepreneur him/herself, especially those implemented to adapt to the paradoxes raised by digital technologies. It is these practices that will be highlighted in this study through effectuation theory. The following section presents a brief review of the literature on cultural entrepreneurship, which can help us to understand these practices.

Theoretical Context

Cultural Entrepreneurship

In the literature, cultural industries are described as highly uncertain environments for their entrepreneurs because of the nature of the goods produced and the characteristics of their market (Caves, 2000; Flew, 2012). The technological changes during the past two decades have brought about new levels of uncertainty in these industries, particularly in the music recording industry. Due to the intangible nature of music recordings, they are readily digitalized, reproduced and circulated on the Internet. This has led to the development of new production spaces and new business models, some of which are free of charge, which define new territories, new approaches, and new modes of consumption that are increasingly fragmented (Greffe, 2010). Music entrepreneurs in a linguistic minority context face an even greater degree of uncertainty regarding their capacity to ensure the viability of their productions in the new spaces created by digital cultural broadcasting platforms.

Yet the literature reveals that entrepreneurs in cultural industries have the inherent ability not only to adapt to unforeseen events, but to take advantage of them in the development of the entrepreneurial process. Empirical research on entrepreneurs in cultural industries highlights this capacity to adapt to unexpected events, such as a shock, crisis or simply the unpredictable course of things, rather than attempting to avoid them. Andres and Round (2015) have studied the mechanisms of micro-resilience implemented by small-scale cultural entrepreneurs to deal with risk and uncertainty (project-oriented organization, cooperative networks, etc.), which influence their business models and support their capacity to adapt.

In the literature on music entrepreneurship, several authors point to the fact that smaller companies are more creative and poised to reap the benefits offered by digital technologies. The decrease in revenues in the recording industry has been accompanied by a reduction of some costs related to the production and marketing of music (Janowska, 2011). Therefore, while the decrease in revenue has had an impact on small independent companies, the fact that they are already accustomed to accomplishing their work with few resources means that they have developed the
ability to adapt to this situation while at the same time using it to their advantage (Jones, 2011; Benner and Waldfogel, 2016). In comparison to their revenue, the reductions in costs appear to be greater for the small players than for larger companies. Further, with their mechanisms of micro-resilience, these entrepreneurs, as opposed to more established ones, have the potential to be more creative and take more risks in searching for new business models based on cost reductions while remedying the decrease in revenues (Wade Morris, 2014: 285). On the other hand, the larger companies seek to protect their assets by opting for safer choices.

Thus, this literature review gives the impression that the new levels of uncertainty brought about by digital technologies are perceived as a vector of solutions to take advantage of the new possibilities, despite the threats for small music companies in linguistic minority societies. However, to this day, the research on cultural entrepreneurship remains silent on the links between this capacity to adapt and the social context in which such entrepreneurs operate. Indeed, none of the authors have looked at the practices of music entrepreneurs in linguistic minority societies to deal with the increased precariousness and uncertainty brought about by digital technologies. Further, there is no theoretical model that can assist in understanding these practices. Yet, given the specific characteristics of this type of entrepreneurship, we found effectuation theory to be particularly useful for understanding these practices.

**Effectuation theory**

As with the literature on cultural entrepreneurship, effectuation theory challenges many of the ideas behind the main entrepreneurial theories that focus on the existence of business opportunities and the efficient use of resources; and that rely on the possibility to predict the market. Sarasvathy (2001) refers to these theories as causal logic. Inversely, effectual logic is based on the idea that reality is unknown and uncertain and that it cannot be predicted. In line with the literature on cultural entrepreneurship, effectuation theory holds that entrepreneurs mostly act without being certain about the existence of a demand, market or potential revenues for what is offered. Sarasvathy (2001) describes the creation of a business as a process that does not generally begin with the conscious intent of the entrepreneur, but rather as the result of a variety of fortuitous events. According to this logic, the entrepreneur starts with a set of means and focuses on the choices of effects that can be created with these means. The first means are an entrepreneur’s personal characteristics: who he/she is (character traits, tastes, abilities, and attributes), what he/she knows (the knowledge corridors he/she is in, education, experience, and expertise), and the people he/she knows (his/her social network). Through interactions with members of their social network, entrepreneurs gain new resources and establish new goals that lead to a reassessment of the means and possibilities for action that these interactions offer throughout a continuous process. Thus, an entrepreneur’s vision does not remain frozen by a plan, but rather is constantly evolving.

These possibilities of action are based on four principles. The first is affordable loss rather than expected returns. Rather than starting out with any profit expectations, as is generally the case with the causal logic, entrepreneurs using effectual logic predetermine an idea of losses that would be affordable for them. Therefore, entrepreneurs can experiment with as many strategies as their limited means will enable them to implement and decide what to leave behind. In addition, since they cannot guarantee profits, entrepreneurs decide what means to invest and what outcomes to emphasize based on their likeliness to yield promising results for the future instead of the present (Sarasvathy, 2001; Wiltbank, Dew, Read, &Sarasvathy, 2006).
The second principle refers to strategic alliances rather than competitive analyses. To mitigate their uncertain working environment, entrepreneurs following the effectual logic focus on building strategic alliances with other individuals and organizations instead of treating them as competitors (Fisher, 2012).

As its third principle, effectuation theory asserts that in an uncertain working environment, one of the strengths of entrepreneurs using effectual logic is the exploitation of contingencies rather than pre-existing knowledge. In the absence of any pre-existing knowledge about an environment, the entrepreneur must be prepared to take advantage of unforeseen circumstances that may emerge over time (Wiltbank et al, 2006: 993). Under this logic, contingencies can be a source of unexpected profit opportunities, but they can also present unanticipated problems (Steyaert, 2007).

The fourth principle is controlling an unpredictable future rather than predicting an uncertain one. While causation aims to predict the aspects of an uncertain future in order to control it, effectuation focuses on controlling some elements of the future so it becomes unnecessary to attempt to predict it (Sarasvathy, 2001). Hence, entrepreneurs appear as non-rational actors who use their imagination to constantly and incrementally create new conditions in which they want to act, as opposed to rationally evaluating or calculating the possibilities of current conditions (Steyaert, 2007: 466).

With its roots in the process paradigm (Moroz and Hindle, 2012; Hjorth et al., 2015), effectuation theory constitutes a way of seeing the world, an ontological category, rather than a method to interpret objects such as entrepreneurship. However, Sarasvathy (2001) suggests that effectuation theory is suitable for understanding entrepreneurship in uncertain conditions and that effectual logic can be more useful in certain entrepreneurial environments, mainly those that are dynamic and non-linear where it is impossible to know and measure the future. According to the literature on cultural entrepreneurship, cultural industries are sectors with a high degree of uncertainty, particularly in a linguistic minority context. These conditions are exacerbated today by digital technologies. However, a review of the literature that applies effectuation theory reveals that it has not, to our knowledge, been used integrally to interpret entrepreneurship in cultural industries. One mention of it has been made by Patten (2016), who focuses on the fact that cultural entrepreneurs start from their existing means, in the form of their own creativity, to determine their ends, thus ending up creating their own opportunities, which refers to the fourth principle mentioned above. Given the specific characteristics of music entrepreneurship in linguistic minority societies, we suggest that effectuation theory as a whole can be used to shed light on the practices and attitudes of entrepreneurs in these societies that contribute to their ability to adapt to the paradoxes brought about by digital technology.

**Methodology**

**Research Design and Methodological Approach**

The majority of entrepreneurs we interviewed (27 of 35) are individual music creators who became entrepreneurs out of the necessity to have a framework for developing their career. Some of these individuals also came to manage the career of other creators. The remaining entrepreneurs who participated in our research (8 of 35) are producers who have never been music creators, but decided to start their own business to manage one or several creators.
We adopt an interpretive epistemological approach to understand the practices and attitudes of these entrepreneurs, as well as the way in which these practices and attitudes enable the entrepreneurs to adapt to the paradoxes of digital technologies. Therefore, we build our understanding through interaction with individuals who can convey their interpretation to us (Guba and Lincoln, 1994: 110). In accordance with this posture, our understanding of these practices and attitudes emerges from how they are interpreted by the entrepreneurs who put them into place daily, as well as by the experts who accompany or closely observe these entrepreneurs.

To gain insight into this interpretation, we conducted qualitative research in the form of 50 in-depth semi-structured interviews with experts (15) and entrepreneurs (35 creators and producers) distributed proportionally among the music recording industry in the aforementioned Canadian francophone areas and in Catalonia. For the purposes of this paper, we focused on the commonalities shared by all the entrepreneurs who participated in our research given the similarities of their respective social context.

In each society we began by meeting with experts who were selected using the intensity sampling method (Patton, 2002). We targeted two types of experts. The first type were academic researchers leading research projects on the French music recording industry in Canada or on the Catalan industry in Spain. The second type is a key informant of an organization representing creators or producers in this industry such as the manager of a creators or producers' association, of a copyright management association, or of a music industry workers’ union. Using the snowball sampling technique (Patton, 2002), experts led us to the entrepreneurs who are part of our larger sample. The selection criteria for the entrepreneurs was as follows: their primary professional activity constitutes the creation or production of vocal music in French in Canada or in Catalan in Spain; their activities are primarily carried out in the territory and using the resources of their community; they use at least one digital method of creation, production, or marketing of their music.

Following an iterative process of data collection and analysis, the first interviews were transcribed and briefly analysed and then subsequent participants were contacted based on the additional information they could provide regarding the role they occupied. This resembles what Corley and Gioia (2004) refer to as “an evolving sample of informants” (p. 180). Towards the end of the data collection process, we asked the experts we interviewed in each society to review and validate our sample to make sure that it was representative of the industry. The participants were contacted by email and most of the interviews took place in person, in their office or public places. Some of the interviews in remote francophone areas in Canada were carried out using videoconferencing. The interviews with participants in Canadian francophone societies were carried out in French, which is the mother tongue of the researcher and the participants. The interviews in Catalonia were carried out in Castilian Spanish, which was the participants’ second language and the researcher’s third language. When the researcher and the respondent do not have the same mother tongue, as was the case in Catalonia, Marschan-Piekkari and Reis (2004) suggest using another language in common to create a situation of mutual linguistic challenge.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out in an exploratory perspective, generally in the form of an informal conversation. Questions aimed to capture the personal perspectives and experiences of the participants regarding influences on their ability to create and produce music in their first language, given their specific social context and the impact of digital technologies. The interviews lasted an average of 75 minutes. The interviews were recorded and most were
transcribed shortly after the interview was completed in order to identify themes that could be discussed in subsequent interviews.

Our approach, which is consistent with an interpretive posture, reveals what music entrepreneurs in Canadian francophone societies and in Catalonia say about the practices and attitudes they adopt daily. This echoes Orlikowski (2002) who, following Giddens (1984), argues that participants are “knowledgeable and reflexive, and that they tend to know more about (and can give a reasonable account of) what they do than researchers give them credit for” (p. 255).

Data analysis
The transcripts of interviews with the experts were analyzed in the same way as those with the entrepreneurs since they offer complementary perspectives to the studied phenomena, thereby constituting a form of triangulation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Taken together, these 50 interviews also enabled us to reach a level of saturation because each interview strengthened emerging themes from the other interviews amongst the different societies. Following an inductive and exploratory approach, the first phase of coding was carried out manually using a grounded theory strategy (Langley, 1999: 699). This analysis revealed the practices and attitudes put into place by the music entrepreneurs to adapt to the paradoxes of digital technologies and which correspond to the principles of effectuation theory. The data collection process that followed this initial phase of inductive data analysis was also exploratory, but it included questions aimed at probing more deeply into these principles. Many of the elements that emerged from the interviews confirmed the relevance of using this theoretical approach. Subsequently, the data was coded systematically using the qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti in a more deductive way, according to the theory’s principles. Overall, this theoretical choice resulted from an abductive process (Locke, Golden-Biddle, & Feldman, 2008).

We used a narrative strategy to account for responses. It consists of associating transcript excerpts and detailed narrative descriptions with the principles and dimensions that emerged from the coding in order to contextualize them when discussing results (Langley, 1999). This strategy has the potential to account for the shifting and undetermined nature of boundaries between the principles and dimensions, which were rendered distinct for the presentation of the results.

Results

The Paradox of Digital Technologies
The results of our study tend to confirm that digital technologies present both a source of threats and possibilities for our participants. The interviews reveal that the paradox, as a rhetorical tool, enables these entrepreneurs to create meaning from the multiple, complex, ambiguous and moving realities presented by digital technologies. They refer to digital technologies as a “dilemma,” a “double-edged sword,” as “give and take,” as something that “is good and bad at the same time,” and that presents “problems and opportunities.” It is also in this technological context that many of the creators refer to themselves as entrepreneurs, posing the artist-entrepreneur identity as another paradox that they have to manage:

It has become more than simply writing music, being an artist. You have to be a master of digital social media, you have to be aware of what people like and perceive from your music, if you want to have a certain image associated with your product,
which is your music. It’s like managing a company, you know. It’s being an entrepreneur.

Thus, the context of digital technology expands the definition of an entrepreneur for our participants and, as such, identification with this figure. The participants emphasize the paradoxes that digital technology represents for them in relation to their identity as entrepreneurs.

The threats of increased precariousness

All participants discussed the impacts of the steady decline in record sales over the past fifteen years. For these entrepreneurs, it means less revenue; revenue that is not replaced by any new source. Indeed, the participants stated that even though the sales and broadcasting of their music on digital platforms have been increasing, these generate low revenues, which cannot compensate for the decline in record sales. In this context, an expert in French Canada explains: “At this time, for producers, for creators […] you can earn revenue, but it is more difficult for it to be sufficient to make a living, to be able to do only that in life.” All the participants speak of “trivial revenues” from the broadcasting of their music on these platforms, of “scraps for the artists” and many consider that this decline in revenue jeopardizes the survival of the creation and production of music in French in Canada and in Catalan in Spain.

Indeed, as explained by an expert in Catalonia, although the downward trend in returns has occurred at a global scale, it can pose a greater threat for the smaller players who already have very little independent revenue: “It is more difficult for the smaller societies, because the smaller you are, the smaller your audience is and when you sing in a language that is different from that of your State, which is Spanish, the industry has fewer resources, everything is reduced.” An entrepreneur in Ontario echoes this statement:

The issue is bigger for us. For me, if I don’t have any more revenue, I will lose my company and my job. It’s not like Sony that can lay off 10,000 employees on the planet and it will be fine, it can survive. It’s another issue, it’s not just to make more money, it’s about being able to support ourselves and continue to increase the Francophonie in a minority context.

The low returns can be partly explained by the lack of effective showcasing of their music on digital platforms such as iTunes, Spotify, and Google Play. Since these platforms belong to foreign multinational companies, they often do not have local employees able to offer content selection aimed at a local clientele. As a result, the entrepreneurs have difficulty showcasing their music on these platforms, to “stand out from the crowd” and to generate listening and sales figures that would provide them with a source of independent revenue. Since they must learn how to use the tools available on the Internet to showcase their music on these platforms, they need to train themselves and their employees to acquire this new knowledge. Along with the decline in revenue, there has been an increase in the marketing costs. Indeed, it is necessary for entrepreneurs to acquire these new skills while taking care of the promotion and marketing of their music in traditional media sources (radio, television, print media) which target other audience segments. As an expert in French Canada outlined: “Digital technology has added many layers of responsibility to an industry that was already fragile. It is necessary to have new employees, to establish new work protocols, to consider new distribution channels.”
In addition, these entrepreneurs need to learn how to deal with the foreign companies behind these platforms, such as Apple and Google, which have a significant influence on their future in terms of the visibility they give to their music and the remuneration they offer. The entrepreneurs mentioned that they have little bargaining power with these new players to demand better payment or promotion of their music. Further, they have little choice but to make their music available on these platforms, as expressed by an entrepreneur in Atlantic Canada: “We don’t have much choice. Because everybody is on it. We have to follow, you know. It’s not us, in Atlantic Canada, who are going to change things. We don’t have much power, no.” Thus, music entrepreneurs in Canadian francophone societies and in Catalonia evolve in a context of increased precariousness and uncertainty since the advent of digital technologies.

Emancipatory possibilities

By contrast, digital technologies also offer our participants possibilities in relation to their specific social and industrial context, which compensate for some of the challenges inherent in their societies. First, some digital techniques make music production more accessible to creators who would not normally have access to them due to the lack of resources in their industry. The participants discussed the democratization of the production means: “Now, with the lower costs of sound recordings, it gives access to anybody to try it out.” They nuanced this idea by highlighting the importance of knowing how to use these techniques, and several creators admitted preferring to have their music recordings handled by professionals. But some of the steps can be done in their home with basic means, such as the pre-production of an album, which reduces the time spent in a professional studio. These rudimentary means can also be used for creative experimentations without having to “enlist the machinery of studio production.” Since returns from music in French in Canada and in Catalan in Spain are low, it goes without saying that the decline in costs involved in experimentation and music production is beneficial for the entrepreneurs.

Second, in terms of marketing, digital technologies enable entrepreneurs to eliminate the necessity for some of the intermediaries between themselves and consumers. In Canadian francophone societies where there is a shortage of musical production and marketing professionals, digital platforms that allow this disintermediation such as Facebook, YouTube or Bandcamp have become particularly important. These platforms provide creators with the possibility to be heard without having to rely on marketing professionals:

The positive side of Facebook is that an artist in regional communities perhaps does not need a manager or a big machine, […] For me, technology allows me to go along at my own rhythm. I’m still present, people can contact me whenever they want, because I’m always there, on the net, and I don’t need a big machine.

Third, in certain remote regions where the population size is small and geographically dispersed, the disintermediation also offers the possibility for deterritorialization that is indispensable for the survival of an entrepreneur’s career or business. This is particularly the case in Western Canada: “Well without that it would be impossible to make French music in the West and to make a living doing that. But with Facebook it’s doable because you can communicate with many promoters at the same time, organize events and tours, keep the people interested in your music informed.” Indeed, thanks to digital technologies, entrepreneurs are no longer limited to an audience residing in their region. It becomes easier to reach other audiences and to present daring
musical works or more marginal musical genres since it may be more likely to garner some interest from a broader public than if they remained confined to their region, which was expressed by one participant:

> It would have been more difficult for a more alternative, marginal artist who appeals to a specialized audience, to release something interesting during the 1970s in Acadia. I don’t even know if it would have been possible. But digital technology has ensured that now you can reach a wider public and it becomes possible.

This is the case in Catalonia as well where, until recently, the only music written in Catalan was by singer-songwriters (“Cançó catalana”). However, today a new generation of creators has emerged that takes risks with musical genres such as rock, punk, or reggae in Catalan to make it a language that can be used with all types of music. These creators mention that digital technologies support their attempts by allowing them to create and to connect with music broadcasting networks, national and international, that correspond to their own more marginal styles. Thus, digital technologies are involved in the cultural emancipation of these societies.

Regarding organizational aspects, digital technologies create new possibilities, which, in turn, foster the functioning of the music industry in these societies. For some participants, this is what enabled them to become music entrepreneurs: “I have always said that if it weren’t for the Internet, I would have never started my company. That’s what allowed me to do the work that I do, for sure.” The practices and attitudes put into place by the music entrepreneurs and which correspond to the principles of effectuation theory facilitate their ability to adapt to the paradoxes presented to them by digital technologies. They allow the entrepreneurs to increase the possibilities while mitigating the threats discussed above.

**The principle of affordable loss: The attitude of entrepreneurs**

As with the entrepreneur described in effectuation theory, those who participated in our research do not begin creating and producing music in French or in Catalan with any revenue expectations, which would be the case according to causal logic. Rather, they start by predetermining what their affordable losses are. These entrepreneurs are aware that the choice to create and produce music in their language represents a greater challenge in their social context. The market for this music is smaller and there is less money to be made compared to creating and producing music in English in Canada or in Spanish in Spain. Several of the participants who are perfectly bilingual mentioned that they could have chosen this path and some of them had done so in the past. However, creating and producing music in their own language was more important, as expressed by an entrepreneur in Atlantic Canada: “I want to prioritize the Francophonie in my songs. In a way, I’m not making my life easy. Already having a strange accent and all that, I’m not putting myself in the best position for my career, but for me it was important to do this in French.” All participants indicated a strong sense of belonging to their society and a will to participate in making its minority language and culture stronger. As descendants of generations who fought for keeping their language and culture alive, in Canadian Francophonie as well as in Catalonia, our respondents share a responsibility for pursuing this work. They expressed the feeling that the becoming of their society, of its language and of its culture is more important than their own individual destiny and they all want to do their part in enlivening it through their music.
Regarding the economic and social benefits, they know that in making this choice the returns on their activities will be limited, and that before achieving a certain level of success, they will receive very little social recognition for their work. Many of them could take up a higher paying and better recognized job, but they are proud of the choice they have made for a cause: their minority language and culture, which is bigger than themselves. Some speak of their work as “missionary,” such as an entrepreneur from Atlantic Canada: “[…] it’s really the best definition. I’m not complaining, it’s a life choice, I could do something else if I wanted, that’s for sure.”

This choice has major repercussions for both their professional and personal life. In some cases, this attitude towards the affordable losses implies that, even if they do everything possible to earn a living from creating and producing music, they are ready to face the risk that they might not attain this goal. In other words, and although many of them achieve this, making a living exclusively from their activities in the music industry is the loss that they can afford. For the participants, this is not considered to be a disappointment or failure, but rather as simply a state of affairs they deal with in good faith. For an entrepreneur in the Canadian Francophonie: “Regardless of whether I earn a living or not, I make music and I am happier than if I were a bank manager.” An expert in Catalonia refers to these music entrepreneurs who cannot make a living exclusively from their music activities as “resistant fighters” who find complementary work when their primary musical activity is not sufficient to earn a living, who cannot always dedicate themselves completely to music, but still are able to produce good creations.

These entrepreneurs are passionate about their work. They focus on experimenting with strategies they can implement from their limited means and rely on those that are more promising in the long-term for the development of their industry, perhaps even for their entire society, as stated by an entrepreneur in Atlantic Canada: “Me, I’m here because I love developing artists from the beginning. That’s my passion. I work at the stage where there is no money to be made with the artist. But it’s what I love doing, the development at the beginning of their career and bringing them to do crazy and extraordinary things.” Another adds: “There are many sacrifices on my side, but I think that I also give back to my community, and that’s my motivating force.” The participants even feel grateful for being able to dedicate their time to music. They consider themselves to be “lucky”, “passionate”, and they “love” their work, simply happy to do something they enjoy. Although they would prefer less precarious conditions, this does not stop them from continuing their work, which is motivated by a passion for preserving and promoting their minority language and culture.

In Catalonia, an expert qualified this attitude as irrational and stated that it slows down the economic development of the industry because only small businesses with four employees or less can survive. As she explained: “Very often, their objective is a personal achievement. Very few do this with the ambition of doing business. Because if they did it with this ambition, they would be selling shoes and not music.” Many speak about “craziness”, while others refer to working with “heart.” As an entrepreneur in Ontario mentioned: “Very few people would work in the conditions we have in the music industry. This is a labour of love. You really have to support the cause.”

As a result of this attitude, the entrepreneurs who participated in this research are not as shaken by the threats posed by digital technologies as are entrepreneurs who follow a causal logic. They recognize and regret the increased uncertainty and precariousness due to the decline in revenue and the poor visibility of their music on digital platforms, but this does not halt their development. They are already accustomed to earning little return and accomplishing a great deal.
with few resources. In addition, they work with small structures and do not hesitate to redesign them in order to adapt to digital technologies. Therefore, they are not as affected by the threats posed by digital technologies as are larger and more established music businesses, as explained by an entrepreneur in Catalonia:

We began producing albums at the end of the 1990s. Immediately after, the industry started changing and albums were not selling, so we had to do management and booking. It was a way to survive with the declining sales. With a small structure, like ours, it was much easier to adapt and to make rapid changes compared to a larger structure.

This attitude puts them in a better position to bear the increased conditions of uncertainty and precariousness brought about by digital technologies, as well as to take advantage of the possibilities offered.

**The principle of exploiting contingencies: reaping the benefits of digital technology**

Effectuation theory tells us that in the absence of pre-existing knowledge of an environment, one of the strengths of the entrepreneur who uses effectual logic is the propensity to exploit rather than avoid contingencies. In the context of digital technologies, the practices implemented by our participants reflect this principle because they focus on the new possibilities offered instead of the threats posed by digital technologies. Participants both young and old actively use social media and digital music broadcasting platforms, implement crowdfunding campaigns using these networks, and find innovative solutions for obtaining greater visibility and for generating revenue in order to create works of high quality. They consider these technologies to be an incentive to developing their unique style and to making their place in the globalized context of cultural broadcasting. In terms of creation, given that music recordings from around the world can be found on digital platforms without any specific valorization for local products, some entrepreneurs view this reality as an incentive to stand out more. One expert said: “It’s really important that they learn how to think outside the box to be able to offer something original. You know, the objective is to be original enough for a video to become viral, so that thousands and thousands of people see it. So it is hip.”

Regarding production and marketing, numerous initiatives reflect this incentive to be more creative. For example, during the early 2000s when music piracy was prevalent, an entrepreneur in Atlantic Canada was one of the first to make his music accessible online following the “Pay What You Want” model. Online users could download the album free of charge or give the amount they wanted. The logic behind the idea to market the album this way was as follows: “I don’t have a team around me, there is some illegal downloading and rather than investing tons of money to make myself known, I could just do that. It’s a way to reach people. And you know, it worked out well.” Indeed, while we do not yet fully understand these initiatives, they produce results. Some even believe that the emerging music is of a higher quality and interest compared to what was being created before the advent of digital technologies because “in the end, I think all that is left is what is done with passion. If you look at the state of Catalan music, the relationship between what it costs and its value, I think that the music produced in Catalonia today has more value.”
This propensity to exploit contingencies rather than avoid them, which enables entrepreneurs to reap the benefits of digital technologies, is based on practices of collaboration and assistance that structure and reinforce the music industry in these societies.

The principle of strategic alliances: practices of collaboration and assistance

To reduce the uncertainty that characterizes their environment, the entrepreneurs in our study who use effectual logic focus on building strategic alliances with other individuals and organizations rather than considering them as competitors. Moreover, these collaborative practices play a significant role in the context of digital technologies because entrepreneurs feel they are crucial to reducing the increased precariousness and uncertainty that they experience. Paradoxically, digital technologies support these alliances, particularly through the possibilities of deterritorialization they offer. This is especially the case in societies that are isolated geographically.

It is important to note that these alliances naturally play a more pronounced role in smaller societies in Canada, such as Western Canada and the Atlantic provinces, since precariousness and uncertainty are fundamental issues. Indeed, entrepreneurs in the recording industry in these societies often lack resources, so they regularly call upon their peers to overcome these shortcomings. The values of collaboration and assistance are at the heart of the entrepreneurs’ discourses in these societies, as was expressed by one in Atlantic Canada: “I regularly call upon people who are supposed to be competitors, but I don’t get involved in that. It’s assistance; we need to help one another. We are too small to be in competition.” Another entrepreneur added: “It’s what I expect. Me, I give to young artists, information. I want to help them out, you know, just like everyone in the music industry in Acadia did for me. I feel like I owe that to the newcomers.”

Thus, the entrepreneurs are united by the generally accepted necessity to pool knowledge and resources to foster the development of the industry as a whole. The common interest takes precedence over the advancement of a business or an individual career. It gives rise to collective initiatives that are structural elements for the industry, including resource centres, contests and festivals, as well as numerous information services available to everyone. As outlined by an entrepreneur in Atlantic Canada: “Yes, I work with artists in particular, but I try to create projects that help all Acadian artists. It’s really my work philosophy.” Many participants in Western Canada, Ontario, and Acadia speak about “solidarity” and an “industry that sticks together” which they describe as a “big family where everybody knows each other” and as a “community that is very tight-knit,” where competition is not welcome.

However, while digital technologies create more precarious and uncertain conditions in the music industry of all the societies included in our study, they also encourage more collaboration and assistance in other French societies of Canada and in Catalonia too. In Canada, the participants call for greater solidarity between the smaller players in the music industry in the context of digital technology: “To oppose a force necessary to negotiate conditions with the big players, like Google Play or Apple Music, I don’t see how record companies, on an individual basis, can prosper.” An expert echoes this idea: “This necessity, to work together, it already existed in the past, but now I feel it’s more natural, more spontaneous, because we don’t have a choice.” In Catalonia, where traditionally the industry is more fragmented, a network of private and public resource hubs for music creators and entrepreneurs, the “Cases de la música” (“Houses of music”), have been set up.
in several cities during the past few years to pool efforts and equip the industry to face new challenges.

Digital technologies facilitate the establishment of networks and initiatives that support these strategic alliances. The use of existing digital social networks or the creation of new platforms, such as forums or applications adapted to the needs of these music entrepreneurs, foster the dynamics of assistance that previously took place in person, as explained by an entrepreneur in Atlantic Canada: “If I don’t know something I ask. When I don’t know where to go with Facebook, it’s easy to make a call to everyone […] There is always someone who will help us. Whether it’s in Acadia or elsewhere in the world.” Digital technologies also allow for extending the scope of these alliances, which are made more naturally within each society, to collaborations between societies that share similar challenges. An example of this is that francophone creators in different regions of Canada send each other music through digital media and establish artistic collaborations. In Western Canada, an online platform is being created to allow creators dispersed across the region to work together on pieces of music, which had been impossible in the past due to geographic isolation. These alliances also help to professionalize and structure the industry. Therefore, digital technologies encourage more practices of collaboration and assistance among entrepreneurs in the Canadian Francophonie and Catalonia in order to face challenges raised by these very technologies. Further, these practices are made possible by digital tools that enable entrepreneurs to overcome certain characteristics of their societies.

**The principle of controlling means rather than predicting ends**

Overall, the attitude and practices that enable music entrepreneurs to adapt to the paradoxes raised by digital technologies, by minimizing threats and maximizing possibilities, can be attributed to the fact that it is impossible for them to predict the future amid their uncertain circumstances. In this situation, it is more efficient to attempt to control certain aspects of this future. Thus, action precedes strategy, goals, and results in this approach to entrepreneurship. This corresponds to the fourth principle of effectuation theory. Through their daily actions, entrepreneurs can control their future, by adapting their objectives day-to-day using whatever means they can find, rather than predefining their strategy. Their attitude focused on affordable loss and exploitation of contingencies, the small size of their company, and an easily accessible network of assistance and collaboration, supported by digital technologies, are all elements that offer them flexibility to adapt.

In general, even the launch of their businesses was not planned. Many participants refer to themselves as entrepreneurs “by default,” as a result of a need to organize their activities and a lack of resources in their industry for someone else to take care of these activities. As with effectuation theory, these entrepreneurs started from who they are, what they know, and whom they know to determine what they could do. They had a desire to regulate their music creation activities, or they were surrounded with creators whose career they wanted to support, or they wanted to contribute to the culture of their society. They assembled the knowledge necessary to achieve their goals and identified those who would be able to accompany them. Throughout this process, some participants refer to themselves as entrepreneurs “by accident” or “by chance,” since their business did not come from an intention, as expressed by an entrepreneur in Catalonia:

Primarily we are fans, passionate about music. There is a bit of activism as well. And in the end, we find ourselves starting this business here. What do you do? What is
your plan? I don’t know! If someone were to ask me what I studied, I don’t know! There is no formal training. We work on something, we end up with a business, by adapting as best we can.

In the development of their business, even though some entrepreneurs would sometimes prefer to be able to plan their actions beforehand, the participants accepted that the lack of resources makes this impossible. They take on several roles and need to develop different areas of expertise without being able to specialize in any. Therefore, they adapt as they go along. They are constantly searching for spontaneous solutions and temporary arrangements to deal with problems and shortages using “limited means” selected from whatever resources are available. They speak of “learning by doing”, whereby they make mistakes and learn from them to move forward. Due to the shortage of resources, they are forced to be creative and, as mentioned by several participants, this constraint stimulates them. As a result of this method, whereby action precedes strategy, these entrepreneurs are able to accomplish a great deal with very few resources. For example, entrepreneurs have launched initiatives following their instincts, which even they qualify as crazy, but then find the means to continue what they started within their social networks or the possibilities offered by digital technologies. This leads these entrepreneurs to engage in activities that an entrepreneur who plans each move would never consider. An illustration of this situation is an entrepreneur in Atlantic Canada, who launches the career of creators without the necessary resources beforehand because she feels an emotional connection with their music:

Every week, there is an artist who calls me or comes to see me in my office. I can’t take on anymore, I don’t have the resources. But from time to time, there is an artist who comes to see me, I listen to their music and I tell myself that I have no choice. I call it my love-meter. When I get goosebumps and I cry, then I have no choice, I have to help them.

This entrepreneur finds the means to work with this creator in action, one day at a time, rather than relying on a predefined strategy.

Thus, the increased precariousness and uncertainty that music entrepreneurs in the Canadian Francophonie and in Catalonia are facing creates a situation whereby they can move forward and act. All this because they are accustomed to adapting by improvising and putting together arrangements as they go along rather than planning beforehand. Controlling the means rather than predicting the ends sums up the set of practices and attitudes that enable these entrepreneurs to carry out their work and adapt to the paradoxes of digital technology.

Discussion

We have suggested that the four principles outlined in effectuation theory provide us with the tools to understand the practices and attitudes enabling music entrepreneurs in the Canadian Francophonie and in Catalonia to adapt to the paradoxes of digital technology. These practices and attitudes emerge from the entrepreneurs’ quest to manage tensions between the threats and possibilities posed by digital technologies in order to foster the development of their businesses. By predetermining what they can afford to lose, by exploiting contingencies rather than avoiding them, by emphasizing strategic alliances instead of competition, and by starting with means rather than ends, these entrepreneurs mitigate threats and take advantage of the possibilities presented to
them by digital technologies. Thus, by being accustomed to adapting as they go along, improvising, and acquiring new knowledge they are able to continue moving forward in a context of uncertainty.

The formulation of these practices and attitudes is not prescriptive. Rather, it aims to use an entrepreneurship theory to understand how music entrepreneurs in different linguistic minority societies function in their context of precariousness and uncertainty in this era of digital technologies. We do not claim that this description is exhaustive or exclusive. Conversely, the practices and attitudes that we have identified must be understood as interdependent and intertwined with daily activities throughout the career of the entrepreneurs we interviewed. In addition, this set of practices and attitudes should be considered as being open to other possible answers that our approach did not enable us to identify or that we set aside in order to focus on this comprehension of the situation.

For example, we mentioned the institutional context of linguistic minorities that has an impact on the practices and viability of music entrepreneurs through laws and policies to protect and promote language and culture, as well as public funding. While this institutional context is important, the practices and attitudes implemented by entrepreneurs themselves in their daily activities appear more significant in explaining their capacity to adapt to the paradoxes of digital technologies, which evolve more rapidly than laws and cultural policies. In this regard, we follow Orlikowski (2002) who states that there is much to learn from these capabilities: “…if we also focus on what people do, and how they do it, rather than focusing primarily on infrastructure, objects, skills, or dispositions” (p. 271).

Our approach, which has practical and theoretical implications, has allowed us to describe these practices from the interpretation and meaning given to them by those who implement it in their daily life. On the practical level, Read et al. (2016) highlight that public policies “are only recently beginning to awaken to effectual entrepreneurship.” In this regard, we consider that highlighting the practices of entrepreneurs in a linguistic minority context to better understand them constitutes the first step in developing cultural policies and support measures adapted to what they really do. Such policies and measures would encourage and valorize the practices and attitudes these entrepreneurs call upon spontaneously. Andres and Round (2015: 6) emphasize generally the fragile nature of the behaviors and mechanisms of resilience and adaptability implemented by entrepreneurs in cultural industries. In the long term, could the additional precariousness and uncertainty generated by digital technologies put an end to the resilience and adaptability of music entrepreneurs in a linguistic minority context? By revealing and gaining a better understanding of their practices and attitudes, it will be possible to better support them. It will also be possible to transfer this knowledge to cultural entrepreneurs in other industries challenged by digital technologies as well as in other social contexts where language and culture have a minority status. In doing so, it will help address the ethical imperative of cultural diversity discussed in the introduction to this paper.

On the theoretical level, the set of practices and attitudes noted through effectuation theory has enabled us to contribute to the literature on cultural entrepreneurship. This literature has not focused on the practices of cultural creation and production while accounting for both the challenges related to the linguistic minority context as well as the threats and possibilities raised by digital technology. There has been no new research on practices of cultural creation and production in these societies since 2002 (Baillargeon, 2002), when the threats and possibilities of
digital technologies only began to emerge. Moreover, the literature on cultural entrepreneurship does not have a theoretical approach to understanding the practices and attitudes that enable entrepreneurs to adapt to the uncertainty related to their activities and digital technologies. In this paper, effectuation theory is applied to cultural entrepreneurs and, more specifically, music entrepreneurs in a linguistic minority context, providing us with the tools to achieve this understanding.

**Limits and future research prospects**

For our analysis, we focused on shared elements among all the participants in relation to how they adapt to the paradoxes of digital technology, by emphasizing the common characteristics of their respective social context. By focusing on these common characteristics, we were able to highlight clear and important themes shared by all participants. Effectuation theory has allowed us to organize some of these themes in order to shed light on practices and attitudes that all the entrepreneurs interviewed implement to deal with paradoxes raised by digital technologies. However, we are aware of many more shared elements in our data that could be highlighted by other theoretical lenses, and which could be combined to effectuation theory in future research. For example, in making the choice to work for the cause of preserving and promoting their language and culture while affording the risk to not earn a living from their music activities, and in focusing on building strategic alliances with other individuals and organizations rather than considering them as competitors, the entrepreneurs expressed moral considerations about their work, which could be highlighted by a moral economy perspective (Banks, 2006). This could also be explained by the passionate labour perspective, which has been much explored in literatures on cultural industries (Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011; Hermes, 2014; Hope and Richards, 2014) and on the music industry (Long and Barber, 2014). These literatures try to explain why workers willingly allow themselves to be exploited (in the eyes of some) because they love the work they do. However, very few researches, if any, have explored this question in a minority context, in regard to the passion for preserving and promoting a language and culture. Further, a large part of the strategic alliances implemented in the music industries we studied is based on informal relations rather than formal work relations, which could be highlighted by the relational work perspective (Zelizer, 2012). In future papers, all these approaches could become complementary lenses for deepening our analysis of shared elements among all our participants.

While emphasizing the shared elements highlighted by effectuation theory, we did not shed light upon the contrasts between these societies of interest and the roles occupied by participants. There are several contrasting distinctive factors: sociodemographic factors, such as the degree of minority status of the language and culture in each social context, as well as historical, political, and economic factors, including how the entrepreneurs perceive those factors’ influence on the way they work and adapt in the current technological context. Further, we did not consider the dimensions of culture and identity related to the linguistic minority situation of participants. Since participants did not particularly discuss these dimensions during interviews, we understood them to be an inherent part of the context of the music entrepreneurs’ practices. We considered only the dimensions that entrepreneurs interpreted as having an impact on their practices. Future research and analysis could then focus on these other dimensions.

In spite of these few limits, the general orientation of this article has allowed understanding of how cultural entrepreneurs within linguistic minority societies mitigate threats and maximise
possibilities raised by digital technologies in order to create and produce music, which promotes their minority language and culture. In doing so, effectuation theory has provided tools to shed light on contextualized practices and attitudes that are often, if not always, hidden in the literature, but that are central to preserving and promoting cultural diversity at a global scale.

References


