

CALL FOR PAPERS

Special Issue of *Journal of Business Venturing*

Getting More for Less: The Role of Resourcefulness in Entrepreneurship

Guest Editors

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Resourcefulness is a central concept of entrepreneurship and is frequently invoked to explain how entrepreneurial actors “find a way” to innovate, create, and turn ideas into reality. Indeed, resourcefulness is so central to entrepreneurship that it has in many ways become a ubiquitous concept that is generally assumed. Unfortunately, the perceived ubiquity of resourcefulness in entrepreneurship has stunted scholarly inquiry into the *what* resourcefulness is; *who* resourceful actors are; *why* and *when* actors are resourceful and with what consequence; and *how* actors are resourceful.

Exploring resourcefulness is critical given its potential role in addressing a fundamental question of entrepreneurship. Broadly speaking, entrepreneurship can be understood as “the process by which individuals—either on their own or inside organizations—pursue opportunities”, or “future situations that are both desirable and feasible” (Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990: 23). Importantly, this process involves both the simultaneous pursuit of opportunities and mobilization of resources that may or may not yet be within the entrepreneur’s control (Stevenson and Jarillo, 1990: 23), which stands in contrast to the “non-entrepreneurial resource trustee focused on carefully protecting resources” (Baker and Nelson, 2005: 358). Thus, a central question for entrepreneurship scholars is: What explains the process by which actors simultaneously pursue opportunities and enact resources without regard to currently controlled resources?

Traditionally, scholars have addressed this question by exploring how entrepreneurial actors acquire (Barney, 1991) and/or recombine (Galunic & Rodan, 1998; Shane, 2012) resources that are valuable. The argument goes that entrepreneurs must acquire resources to pursue opportunities given the disadvantages associated with liabilities of newness (Stinchcombe, 1965). Given these assumptions, scholars have drawn heavily on resource-based view theories to examine how new ventures *solicit* and obtain valuable resources through equity financing, venture capital, angel investing, and—more recently—crowdfunding (see Drover et al., 2017 for review). While important, these resource acquisition techniques typically impact a relatively small share of all new ventures (i.e., high-growth, high-impact firms) and do not account for the full array of resourcing techniques employed by entrepreneurs (Clough et al., 2019). Indeed, we know that resources do not have a “fixed use” (Sonenshein, 2014: 816), and that actors employ a “wide scope for judgement” (Penrose, 1959: 42) in how resources are *brought* (Sonenshein, 2014), *assembled* (Reuer & Koza, 2000), *enacted* (Baker and Nelson, 2005) and *deployed* (Penrose, 1959) to a generate various forms of value. Therefore, entrepreneurship research has (to date) failed to fully explain a central question of entrepreneurship—the process by which actors pursue opportunities without regard to resources they currently control.

Therefore, despite frequent references to the concept of resourcefulness in the literature as an explanation of the central question, we lack convergence on how resourcefulness is defined and understood across levels (individual, team, firm, context, and institution); the broader nomological network of resourcefulness including antecedents and outcomes (across levels); and how resourcefulness influences the processes by which actors pursue opportunities.

In this special issue we seek to advance scholarship on resourcefulness and how it relates to important entrepreneurship processes and outcomes. We define resourcefulness as a property that allows actors to get more from less, by identifying novel and clever ways to bring, assemble, and deploy resources. Why resourcefulness and not other, related concepts? First, resourcefulness does not require a condition of low resources as a spark (Sonenshein, 2017). This differentiates it from other constructs such as bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005), which assumes a penurious environment as the context wherein actors convert what is considered useless to something useful. While bricolage certainly is a resourceful behavior, it does not capture the full breadth and depth of resourcefulness and thus its impact on key outcomes (e.g., growth, performance, innovation, and so forth). Indeed, there are other situations where actors are resourceful in resource-rich contexts (Sonenshein, 2014, 2017), which leads one to ask: why would someone choose resourcefulness when they could do something else?. Second, resourcefulness does not require a condition of Knightian uncertainty, which is assumed to be a pre-requisite for employing an effectuation-based logic to problem solving (Sarasvathy, 2001). Therefore, like bricolage, effectuation can certainly be resourceful, but it does not capture the full notion of the construct. Indeed, resourcefulness could occur under a variety of conditions, which leads one to ask: when is resourcefulness helpful, when is it not? Finally, resourcefulness is likely manifest in a variety of ways across levels of analysis. These could include cognitive, practice, and material behaviors. We know little of these diverse forms of resourcefulness and if/how they impact outcomes over time.

We invite submissions that draw upon and integrate the variety of theoretical lenses associated with resourcefulness in the literature. This should facilitate the exploration of the context and conditions surrounding resourcefulness. For example, submissions could explore (1) the *theoretical foundations of resourcefulness* (economics, sociology, and psychology literatures); (2) *resourceful assembling of resources such as* bricolage (Baker & Nelson, 2005; Lévi-Strauss, 1966), making the most of current resources (Bhide, 1992; George, 2005; Winborg & Landström, 2001), frugality (Blechman, 1991; Geroski et al., 2010), and re-defining the application of an object or group of resources (Penrose, 1959; Sonenshein, 2014); (3) *creative bringing/identification of resources* (Dharwadkar, George, & Brandes, 2000; Rosenbaum, 1980, 1988) through innovative thinking in problem solving (Sarasvathy, 2001), sensemaking, sensegiving, and meaning making (Gantz, 2000, 2003; Lévi-Strauss, 1966) and storytelling, or other cultural tools to obtain legitimacy (Gehman & Soubliere, 2017; Lounsbury & Glynn, 2001; Zhao et al., 2017; Zhao, Ishihara, & Lounsbury, 2013); (4) *creatively deploying or recombining resources* such as human or social capital (Burt, 2005; Kotha & George, 2012; Williams & Shepherd, 2018) and deploying novel financing tactics such as bootstrapping (Winborg & Landström, 2001) to extend the use and application of existing financial resources.

In drawing on these various theoretical lenses, we encourage submissions that focuses on at least some of the following core concepts:

- *The concept of resourcefulness and its sub-components across levels (individual, team, organizational, institutional, and cultural).*
- *Antecedents and consequences of resourcefulness.*
- *The context and conditions when resourcefulness is manifest, applied, and effective.*

Contributions to this special issue may address (but are not limited to) the following research questions:

The concept of resourcefulness

- What does it mean to be resourceful? What factors contribute to resourcefulness for individuals, teams, organizations, and societies?
- What processes shape different dimensions of resourcefulness—namely, bringing, assembling, or deploying resources? What are the correlates of resourcefulness?

- How do cultural (national, societal and / or organizational) factors shape resourcefulness?
- What is the imprinting effect of resourcefulness that influences decision-making? How does an imprinted culture of resourcefulness lead actors to focus more on resource acquisition in future decisions once they have adequate access to resources?
- How do industries or societies become resourceful and how does this affect “grand challenges” or improved societal outcomes?
- How does materiality shape resourcefulness? What are the cognitive processes such as sensemaking and sensegiving that shape resourcefulness? How do actors communicate and foster shared meanings around novel uses of resources?
- How does resourcefulness (at various levels) grow, decline, persist, or otherwise evolve over time?
- How do teams act resourcefully?
- What is the downside of resourcefulness? When does resourcefulness produce unintended or undesirable outcomes?

Antecedents of resourcefulness

- What (e.g., skills, competencies, cognitive factors, experiences, etc.) makes individuals more prone to and more likely to be effective at resourcefulness? How can organizations, institutions, or cultures cultivate resourcefulness in individuals and teams?
- Why are individuals resourceful? What are the underexplored cognitive processes that could result in seeing objects as resources or identifying multiple uses for single resources?
- When and how are individuals resourceful and with what consequences?
- How do teams of individuals or organizations perform better at converting objects to resources and what factors shape these processes?
- When and why are teams resourceful?
- How do organizations cultivate resourcefulness when they are not experiencing resource constraints?
- Why are some industries or institutions more resourceful than others? What leads organizations or industries to *choose* resourcefulness over other resourcing options?

Consequences of resourcefulness

Performance

- How does resourcefulness influence individual job satisfaction, creativity, innovation, and/or opportunity recognition?
- What types of problems is resourcefulness helpful (unhelpful) in resolving and why?
- Does resourcefulness enable the creation of higher potential entrepreneurial opportunities? Does it enable or limit the scope of opportunities?
- How does resourcefulness shape team creativity, efficiency, and innovativeness? What are the opportunities and limitations of a resourceful team?
- How does resourcefulness influence an organization’s ability to pivot? What are the implications of these pivots, such as changing too soon, adapting to the environment, etc. What are some of the boundary conditions of resourcefulness? When is resourcefulness “too much of a good thing” in terms of financial performance, exploration activities, and so forth?
- Does resourcefulness enable or limit venture growth? When and why does resourcefulness help/hurt growth?
- As new ventures evolve, do they require different types of cognitive resourcefulness in order to achieve revised goals? Could cognitive resourcefulness approaches such as creativity and action-orientation facilitate rapid growth?
- How do organizations sustain resourcefulness and what impact does that have on innovation?

Context and conditions when resourcefulness is manifest, applied, and effective

- How do, and what factors contribute to, teams persisting with their resourcefulness over time?

- How does choice factor into resourcefulness (e.g., choosing to be resourceful despite a munificent environment as opposed to necessity-based resourcefulness)?
- What are the tradeoffs associated with resourcefulness and resource acquisition?
- Do certain resourcefulness abilities deteriorate over time (or engage strategic pivots) and what effect does this have?
- How do resourcefulness manifest differently across heterogeneous cultural and institutional environments? How do cultural and institutional contexts shape the development trajectory and sustainability of certain resourcefulness approaches?

Submission Process and Deadlines

- Papers will be reviewed according to the JBV double-blind review process.
- The deadline for submission is **January 31, 2020**.
- Manuscripts should be submitted through the JBV online submission process:
<https://www.journals.elsevier.com/journal-of-business-venturing>

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