

A Study of Socioeconomic Interventions of Transorganizational Storytelling Among New Mexico Arts Organizations

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This study brings together Socio-Economic Approach to Management (SEAM) with narrative and story theory in a transorganizational context of artists and arts organizations seeking identity. Previously narrative and story are viewed as duplicate constructs. Our theory suggests that narrative emphasizes stabilized retrospective sensemaking, while stories accentuate prospective sensemaking. By looking at their interplay, there is a contribution to be made to understanding self-organization as the interlacement of retrospection and propection. More stabilized narratives about 'lack of arts scene' and more nascent stories ascribe possibilities that together construct the identity of a city's 'arts scene.' Our study analyzes interventions to speed along self-organizing process of that scene.

Keywords: *SEAM, Transorganizational Development, Art, Story, Narrative*

RESUMES

Introduction

What do tattooists, painters, sculptors, gallery owners, museums, and performing artists all have in common? They are stakeholders in the *arts scene* of most cities. Can such arts scenes be developed? How does one study that development from nascent scene to vitalized arts scene?

Despite the quantity of artists and arts organizations, in many cities, there are several voids. The arts scene needs to communicate what's happening in its scene, and for that its dependent upon its storytelling competencies. The arts scene is made up of non-profit organizations and small businesses who cut costs by not investing in telling their story to newspapers, internet, or orally by attending cooperative meetings among their peers. But, the less they invest in getting their story told, the less customers know about the arts scene, until they assume there is none. Noticing the void, artists, and arts organizations begin to self-organize to get their story told, but when the energy and the money runs out, the arts scene back slides. A nascent arts scene aspires to develop, to emerge as a viable source of revenue for artists, as tourist dollars for the city, as a better place for people to enjoy an aesthetic life. However, for many cities, the arts scene is unable to sufficiently self-organize in a highly active state to command the necessary social and economic resources to sustain artist's incomes, or add to cities' treasury.

Our study addresses these concerns. We selected a nascent arts scene for intervention and study, one with over 200 artists and scores of galleries, museums, live performance theatres, and organizations attempting to serve the arts scene, but with a reputation for lacking energy, excitement, or passion for the arts. We initiated nine student team consulting projects, went into the field to collect narratives and stories, and did several interventions to aid artists and arts organizations in developing a transorganization identity.

The article's structure begins with a brief review of narrative and story theory, Socioeconomic Approach to Management (SEAM), and transorganization networking. Additionally, we summarize the

methods adopted to analyze narratives and stories, SEAM, and specific transorganizational interventions. This is followed by a presentation of narratives pre-existing to our story interventions into the arts scene. Finally, we present implications of our study for narrative and story, SEAM, and transorganization theory and practice. We begin with our approach to the differences and interplay of narrative and story.

Narrative, story, and antenarrative

Narrative and story are force and counterforce in a self-organizing relationship of sensemaking. Narratives, since Aristotle (350 BCE), are primarily treated as wholes, with coherence of beginning, middle, and end (BME). Aristotle (350 BCE) says the most important element of narrative-tragedy is the “story or Plot”, “We have laid it down that a tragedy is an imitation of an action that is complete in itself, as a whole of some magnitude... Now a whole is that which has beginning, middle, and end” (1450b: 25-30: p. 233). By limiting story to be the Plot, one of the narrative elements, in an arrangement of an order of importance of those parts of narrative, story is quite well constrained and controlled. Narrative personages (or characters) then “act the story” (1448a: 30, p. 236) in “realistic representations” (1448b: 10: p. 237), that “frame stories” (1449b: 5: p. 229). Narrative then is the imitation of action of story (plot), into scenes, “incidents arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions” (1449b: 35-30: p. 230), where the characters act or *re-present* the stories. Aristotle is careful to point out it is not the entire plurality of stories that a narrative is dramatizing: “One should also remember what has been said more than once, and not write tragedy of an epic body of incident (i.e. one with a plurality of stories in it), by attempting to dramatize, for instance, the entire story of the *Iliad*” (1456b: 10: p. 247, parentheses and italics, in original).

American Structuralists have followed the path set by French Structuralists (Barthes, Todorov, Bremond, Grimas, Pavel & Prince). For example, in structuralist narrative, differences of narrative and story get collapsed. Donald Polkinghorne (1988: 13) says, “As I use it, the term ‘story’ is equivalent to ‘narrative.’ Polkinghorne (1988: 15) follows the structural functionalist approach of treating “narrative as a cognitive scheme.” Narrative becomes a sensemaking scheme, or structural grammar.

When a distinction is made between narrative and story, it is oftentimes in the form of a duality. Jonathan Culler (1981: 169) suggests Russian Formalists (Propp & Shklovsky) dualize narrative

over story, theorizing narrative as *sjuzhet* (the representation and reshaping of underlying events through narration into plot) and *fabula* (as story stuff getting emplotted). There is implied systems logic at work in structuralist approaches to narrative. Indeed, in a variety of narratology traditions, there is a double move, first a duality (a hierarchical opposition) theorized between narrative and story, and second narrative doubles back to efface the order of event presupposed in story-chronology (Culler, 1981: 171-172).

Jerome Bruner, for example, (1986: 21) says, “each level has its form of order, but that order is controlled and modified by the level above it,” in short, a linearization of hierarchic levels. Victor Turner’s narrative rationality formula is described by Bruner (1986: 21) as “steady state, reach, crisis, redress” is a sort of narrative expectancy. Bruner (1986: 15) asserts “good stories” are well-formed particular realizations of narrative-deep structures (Bruner, 1986: 15).

In organization studies, narrative and story are treated as synonyms, or narrative is the dominant term in their duality. For Yiannis Gabriel (2000) a ‘proper’ story must have Aristotelian narrative coherence: beginning, middle, and end. Plot is grasped in retrospective sensemaking. Gabriel (2000: 19-21) says (Boje, 1991: 106-108) tersely told “you know the story” is a “narrative deskilling,” not a “proper” story, with plot. As well for Barbara Czarniawska’s early work (1997, 1998), narratives must have a casual sequence, a plot: “A story consists of a plot comprising causally related episodes that culminate in a solution to a problem” (Czarniawska, 1997: 78). Elsewhere, “For them to become a narrative, they require a plot, that is, some way to bring them into a meaningful whole” (1998: 2). Applying Barthes petrification of narrative thesis, Czarniawska’s (2004 38) developed the idea of “petrified story.” She put it this way “... every narrative becomes new with each retelling, and the ‘petrification’ of stories is not the result of the myopia of the researcher but of intense stabilizing work by the narrators” in organizations.” Czarniawska (2004) petrification approach, argues that in strong culture organizations, founding BME narratives are immutable, with later tellings just adding concentric rings to the narrative, like a tree trunk, year-by-year.

We would like to propose that narrative is oftentimes-retrospective sensemaking, while story can express prospective sensemaking. Karl Weick (1995: 129) uses the words story and narrative interchangeably, but his way of talking about story is through its imprisonment in narratives of control: retrospective “stories transmit and reinforce third-order controls by conveying shared values and meaning” of sense experience. The section of Weick’s (1995: 127-129) short

discussion of retrospective narrative-sensemaking stresses “people think narratively rather than argumentatively or paradigmatically”; “organizational realities are based on narration”; the “propensity for inductive generalization [of] noteworthy experiences” becomes an “empirical basis” where “people try to make the unexpected, hence manageable”; “impose a formal coherence on what is otherwise a flowing soup” i.e. “the experience is filtered” by “hindsight”; “typically searching for a causal chain” and as with other Aristotelian formulations of narrative coherence “the plot follows – either the sequence beginning-middle-end or the sequence situation-transformation-situation. But sequence is the source of sense”; in short, narrative retrospection “sequencing is a powerful heuristic for sensemaking” knowledge via third-order managerial control. “An orderly story depicting linear causality and bounded temporality allows us to account for an event and provides us with the perception of “a more ordered social reality by reducing equivocality” (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005: 417). There are approaches to sensemaking which follow a different line. Gioia, Clark, and Chittipeddi (1994: 378) define prospective sensemaking (see also Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Gioia & Mehra, 1996; Gioia & Thomas, 1996; Gioia, Corley, & Fabbri, 2001). They build on Weick’s (1979) idea, that making sense of a future that has yet to occur, is accomplished when people project events into the future as if they were already over and done (future perfect). We would like to suggest an additional approach to prospective sensemaking, one where *nascent sensemaking* is emerging, being born, or just starting to develop in highly interactive story medium.

Applied work in story consulting has not picked up on either the future perfect or nascent approach to prospective sensemaking. Take, for example, John Kotter’s (1996) bestselling book *Leading Change*. It’s a retrospective narrative prison for story, an 8-step linear model of how to change an organization, with beginning steps, middle steps, to bring about end steps. The lock-step approach treats change as if some combination of frozen molecules can be unfrozen, moved, and refrozen. Kotter’s second bestselling book (with Cohen), *The Heart of Change* (2002) uses the same 8-steps, augmented with 34 so-called ‘story’ examples of the steps. Their method is summarized by the motto, “see-feel-change” as a way to move away from traditional change approaches which are “analysis-think-change.”

Other bestselling organization change books which rely upon storytelling included those co-authored by David Cooperrider, founder of Appreciative Inquiry. For example, Cooperrider and Whitney (2005) promote the ‘appreciative story’ (more accurately, narrative),

attained by elicitation in an ‘appreciative interview,’ so it can be retold to build a ‘positive core’ for the ‘Positive Revolution.’ There approach is (forward-looking) and prospective, but in a future-perfect sensemaking, not in anyway about nascent emergence: One of the principles for a positive revolution, “what we discover (the data) becomes the linguistic material, the stories, out of which the future is conceived...” (Cooperrider & Whitney, p. 51). Organization change is accomplished by keeping the ratio of positive to negative stories quite high. For example “a goal of creating a narrative-rich culture with a ration of five stories of positive performance and success to every negative one...” (p. 4), and to ask open-ended questions in company salary surveys that have the ration of positive to negative comments tracked (p. 5), and “people constructively appropriate the power of the positive core and simply let go of negative accounts” (p. 35). In terms of story, the future is said to “emerge out of grounded examples from an organization’s positive past” as “good news stories are used to craft possibility propositions” (p. 29). The appreciative storytelling however, seems to be a bit naïve. The organization does not have to “deal with the negative anymore” since AI has a “positive foundation of strength to build on in addressing those problems” (p. 41). When critical consciousness is suspended, it becomes a closed universe of systems thinking, and its “petrified structure” is realized (Marcuse, 1969: 100 cites narrative French Structuralist, Barthes. Appreciative Inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) invokes the same petrified structure of hypnotic nouns “affirmative topics,” “appreciative organizations,” “appreciative inquiry,” “cooperation circles,” “positive revolution,” “positive core” and so forth. In sum, Appreciative Inquiry is an authoritarian attack on dialectic as a productive apparatus of change. Appreciative Inquiry reduces freedom of speech and thought in the administered world (Marcuse, 1969: 253).

Steve Denning's (2000, 2005, 2007) books on story change consulting have yet to be as popular as those of Kotter (& Cohen) or Cooperrider (& Whitney). Denning's books do not appear in the top 100 top-selling Organization Change books. The coaching advice is to have CEOs (actually their staff members), construct “springboard” stories, “a story that enables a leap in understanding by the audience so as to grasp how an organization or community or complex system may change” (2000: xviii). The characteristics: (1) story from perspective of single protagonist in prototypical business predicament; (2) explicit story familiar to the audience; (3) stimulates their imagination; (4) must have a positive or happy ending (xix, 124, 126, &198). In Denning (2005), as in Cooperrider, positive stories are cultivated to counteract more negative stories that circulate “like

viruses within an organization and threatened to infect the entire body” (p. 11). Denning (2007) uses the springboard story’ as the vehicle for change: “If the company is facing a major change, springboard stories will be need to spark the change” (p. 111). But a closer read reveals, that these springboard stories are linear (2 minute) BME narratives that in Czarniawska’s (2004) term petrify. Cultivating narrative intelligence includes ‘brand narrative’ linked to wit and characters of founders.

In sum the best selling Organization Change books turn Living Story into a Dead Narrative tool, a reified object that replicates managerialist and systems thinking, while promising to be complexity thinking.

Our critique of narrative sensemaking theory and practice suggests it is time to develop insights into the differences between narrative and story in ways that can show how they interact. For Mikhail Bakhtin (1973: 12) “narrative genres are always enclosed in a solid and unshakable monological framework.” Bakhtin’s “Dialogic manner of the story” (1981: 60) stands in contrast to monological narrative framework. The implication is that our personalities live and work, in a “plurality of consciousnesses” that is multi-dialogic (Bakhtin, 1973: 65). Narrative coherence frameworks posit mono-systems-wholeness, mergedness, and finalizedness. The single observer posits unitary mono event horizon wholeness with one complexity property.

Derrida also treats story and narrative as quite different.

Each “story” (and each occurrence of the word “story,” (of itself), each story in the story) is part of the other, makes the other part (of itself), is at once larger and smaller than itself, includes itself without including (or comprehending) itself, identifies itself with itself even as it remains utterly different from its homonym. (Derrida, 1979: 99-100).

Derrida is more radical than Bakhtin, viewing narrative as an instrument of torture:

... The question-of-narrative covers with a certain modesty a demand for narrative, a violent putting-to-the-question an instrument of torture working to wring the narrative out of one as if it were a terrible secret in ways that can go from the most archaic police methods to refinements for making (and even letting) one talk that are unsurpassed in neutrality

and politeness, that are most respectfully medical, psychiatric, and even psychoanalytic. (Derrida, 1979: 94).

Finally, Italo Calvino (1979: 109) imagines stories in relation to a space full of stories:

I'm producing too many stories at once because what I want is for you to feel, around the story, a saturation of other stories that I could tell... A space full of stories that perhaps is simply my lifetime where you can move in all directions, as in space, always finding stories that cannot be told until other stories are told first.

For Calvino, story necessarily opposes itself in a web of stories.

In sum, we take the view that narrative and story are force and counterforce in self-organizing relationship of retrospective and prospective sensemaking. It is in the interplay of stabilized narrative petrifications and prospective nascent stories that self-organization is constituted. There may be grand narratives and localized narratives that have stabilized into stereotypic patterns that are interweaving. Further, if we follow Derrida's (1979) poststructuralist approach, then we can also trace when story becomes narrative. For example, antenarratives may arise as pre-narrative candidates. Or narrative fragments may recombine, in the moment of being into antenarrative candidates for wider adoption. An antenarrative as developed by Boje (2001) is a bet that a loosely constructed story or a pre-story can become a more entrenched and stable narrative. In short, following Ricoeur (1983/1984, 1993), there is a hermeneutic spiral in which antenarratives emerge as pre-stories that can, on occasion, become full blown narrative emplotments, that socially disseminate in wider fields of communicative action, interlacing with fragments of narratives to begin the spiral anew.

Our thesis is that this hermeneutic spiral can rebalance the relation of narrative, story, and antenarrative forces to change the level of self-organization. Unlike the n-step, or the appreciative approaches to change, we suggest that it is necessary to analyze the dominant narratives, rather than to pretend they do not exist. After deconstruction it is possible to build more positive collaborative exchanges among stakeholders. Finally, we seek to carry this proposition out in the transorganizational arena. However, the process we describe is accomplished at the individual, organizational, as well

as the interorganizational context. We will therefore briefly overlook at transorganizational development theory in the following section.

Transorganizational Development

Transorganizational Development (TD) is a consulting intervention that has as aim to create, develop and change a network between organizations to pursue a common agenda (Boje & Rosile, 2003). From its inception, TD has focused on the implications of storytelling on networking behaviors and organizational transformation. Culbert et al. (1972) have defined TD networking as a visualized change in the collective relations of a variety of stakeholders to achieve something beyond the capability of any individual or single organization. Certainly, by allowing people to interact, share narratives and stories and create common experiences a network that leads to action and change can be created (Boje, 1982).

Boje & Rosile (2003) suggest that in the TD networking process three subsystems are formed: Subsystem one - Facilitates the creation of a second subsystem. Subsystem two – The internal network, so people can identify leaders and form a temporary organization that will change the status quo. Subsystem three - The Extended Network Involvement Cycle.

This consulting intervention allows spaces where the organizations involved can share their narrative and stories and as a result find shares experiences that enact changes in the networks, create new alliances and a new vision for the future. In our proposition we use the Socioeconomical approach to management (SEAM) as a TD networking consulting approach. In the following section we discuss and present SEAM's fundamentals and its difference with other TD approaches.

Socio Economical Approach to Management (SEAM)

Henri Savall created SEAM (1974/1975), a basic intervention model that links economics, accounting and a special socio technical systems approach to large system change. As Henry Savall (2000) suggests, organizations generate profits and constantly develop but also have disruptions that entail financial and performance implications (hidden costs) that are not identified in traditional information systems. SEAM tries to identify such dysfunctions and reduce them through structured interventions. When a firm succeeds in reducing its dysfunctions, performance and therefore financial

benefits are obtained (hidden performance) that again, are not specifically identified in accounting books and information systems.

SEAM methodology defines any organization as a “network of conflicting actors” (Bonnet and Crisalini, 2003). Here, each actor of an organization has its own views and objectives, which conflict with the views and goals of others. This conflicts and difference between actors create dysfunctions. The socioeconomical intervention aims to improve the performance of the network. Through qualitative research (interviews and field observations), consultants identify dysfunctions in organizations that fall into six themes: Working condition, work organization, cooperation-coordination-collaboration, time, training, and strategy. The dysfunctions found result in the creation of a narrative with the statements made by the actors of the organizations. These findings are then presented to the organization in the “*mirror effect*”. The Mirror effect exercise consists on presenting the diagnosis resulting from the interviews and field observations. The dysfunctions found, their hidden costs and the reasons that account for them are presented to management and employees (Savall et, al., 1999) and finally an intervention is created to solve the dysfunctions found.

SEAM methodology has been applied in a transorganizational environment. Marc Bonnet and Vincent Crisalini (2003) worked with government organizations in a city of 250,000 to apply SEAM in a transorganizational context. They involved organizations from the public, private, education and labor section. Indeed, SEAM methodology has been widely applied to different contexts, organization sizes and types, in a wide variety of cultural settings, proving to be a consultation methodology that provides a way for organization or transorganizational networks to improve performance.

Several TD and story consulting models exist in the literature of the subject such as action research/science inquiry, appreciative inquiry, and sociotechnical system models, among others (see Boje, 2003 for and more detailed analysis of TD approaches). However, as Boje & Rosile (2003) suggest, compared with other TD consulting methodologies, SEAM uses qualitative data along with quantitative financial analysis and considers a complete and detailed dysfunction analysis. Mainly, it includes extensive financial and accounting research of hidden costs and performance revenues that are not picked up through traditional accounting systems.

SEAM is also relevant as a story consulting methodology. We believe that the identification of social dysfunctions through SEAM is also the identification of the organization's official narrative and fragments of more tacit stories uncovered in the SEAM process. SEAM consultants use verbatim note-taking (& observations) that we

believe identify official retrospective-narratives of the organization in relation to an unnoticed fabric of tacitly-acknowledged problems and unrealized potentials (i.e. social dysfunction phase). In addition to retrospective narratives, SEAM is also identifying emerging vibrant, prospective sensemaking stories. There is therefore in SEAM a previously unexplored relation of narrative and story. In the months of field work, there is a tracing of the interlacement of retrospective and prospective sensemaking. Official narratives are being contrasted with emergent stories that interlace problem domains. In SEAM's '*Mirror Effect*' process is an opportunity for organizations to identify the dynamic relationship between official retrospective narratives and new prospective antenarratives of organization transformation (bets that dysfunctions can be resolved). In the '*Mirror Effect*' is where transcripts of official narratives are analyzed for their complicity. Stories of social dysfunctions are sorted out that have been previously only tacitly known. In this process, and in the design of interventions, antenarratives of transformation to social action move from pre-story to the possibility of becoming now-based story enactment. Overtime, the new stories can become routine, share narrative retrospective sensemaking. And these can become out-of-phase with patterns of interaction and potential, requiring new rounds of restorying entrenched narratives. In short, SEAM is in our view, an under-explored intervention into the interlacement of stabilized retrospective narratives, emerging antenarratives, and the wider fields of story action. The narratives, antenarratives, and stories interlace to begin the spiral of transformation anew. What SEAM does is intervene in this process, accelerating the time to achieve realignments.

Methodology

The Small Business Consulting Seminar at New Mexico State University (NMSU), got involved with artists and art organization from Las Cruces (LC), New Mexico (NM). The project had two main purposes: To provide consultation services to art organizations that lead them to improve performance and increases profitability and to support artist, and related organizations to create a city art scene that could place Las Cruces as one of the top 25 small cities recognized and art leading cities un the United States. We therefore had two levels of analysis: Organizational and transorganizational.

The project was carried out form August to December 2007 by the Small Business Consulting seminar at NMSU. The group was formed by 22 undergraduate and 5 graduate students. Student consultants

worked with 9 clients. Clients were either artists, art galleries or art organizations in LC. We define art organizations as non-profit organizations that have as purpose to promote and support art and artists in a community through the organization of events, fundraising, promotion, and networking, among other activities. Our clients were composed by 3 artist, 2 art organizations, 2 art galleries, and one community theatre.

Consultants used SEAM methodology as consultation tool with their clients. Each team of consultants carried qualitative research (semi structured interviews and field observations) to identify social dysfunctions of their clients. Themes found from research were submitted to SEAM categories. Consultants presented a metanarrative of the findings quoting the clients and carrying out a “*mirror effect*” exercise. A proposal of intervention was developed for each client that addressed solutions to the dysfunctions found. Altogether, consultants carried out 16 weeks of field observations and a total of 270 interviews.

Additionally, two workshops were carried out during the semester called Talking Stick. The methodology used at the workshops is called Talking Stick Story Circles; these story circles are conversational encounters with a back-and-forth of storytelling and storylistening, noticing fragments of retrospective narrative and fashioning as well prospective antenarratives. These workshops used the TD networking and story consulting approach to allow artists and art organizations representatives to interact, share their stories and identify common experiences (Boje, 1982). Table 1 chronologically presents the consultation and intervention process carried out during this project:

Table 1 – Chronological description of project activities.

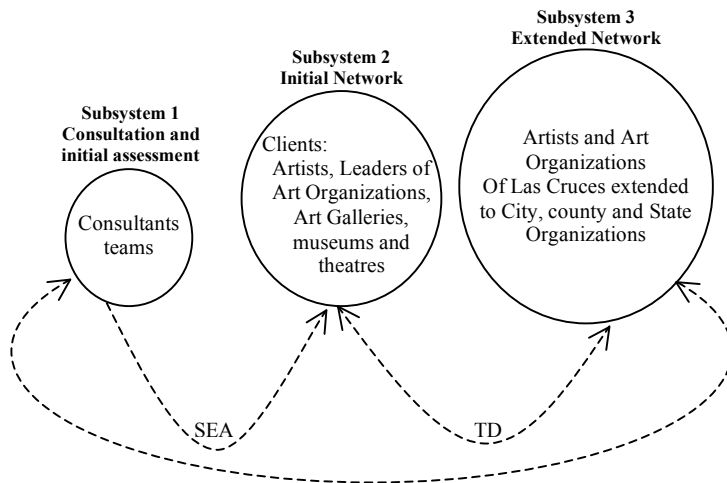
Date (2007)	Activities
Aug. 22	Small Business consulting Seminar initiates.
Sep. 3	9 clients are selected.
Sep. 3 to Oct. 15	consultants gather evidence through interviews and field observations and analyze data to identify dysfunctions.
Oct. 1	First Talking Stick Workshop.
Oct.15	Consultants present their findings from seminar and prepare their mirror effect event.
Oct. 15 to Dec. 2	Consultants give feedback to their clients using the Mirror Effect and prepare intervention proposal.
Nov. 12	Second Talking Stick Workshop..
Dec. 2 to Dec. 9	Consultants present proposal of intervention.
Dec. 9 to Dec. 14	Consultants present report containing a proposal for the City officials.

To address the social dysfunctions of their clients, and to understand the narrative and stories of the LCAS, a thorough analysis of the LCAS was developed. This analysis and the description of the intervention process of the project are presented in the following section.

Las Cruces Arts Scene (LCAS)

According to TD Networking consulting theory (Boje & Rosile, 2003), three subsystems were created. Subsystem one was formed by consultants who carried out an initial assessment of the LCAS. They acted as the outside process consultants that facilitated the formation of the second subsystem. The second subsystem was formed by artists and leaders of existing art organizations that created temporary organization with potential of changing the status quo of the Las Cruces Art Scene (LCAS). This second subsystem in turn facilitated the creation of a third subsystem, which is the creation of a cycle that permanently extends the existing network (See Figure 1). Each subsystem intervention is developed below.

Figure 1 – Subsystems created in the TD Network approach used in the LCAS consulting project (Adapted from Boje & Hillon, 2008)



Subsystem 1: Consultation and Initial Assessment

LC is a city in New Mexico, United States. According to the US Census Bureau² the estimated population of LC for 2006 was 86,268 making it the second largest city in the state. LCAS has 40 galleries,³ a dozen museums, 22 arts organizations,^{4,5} and is home to 200 artists. LC has a number of major art events every year, such as the Annual Renaissance Fair, the Boarder Book Festival and La Vina Blues and Jazz Thing. Nevertheless, it lacks an art identity and it is rater known for its climate, golf, and retirement communities.

Initial investigation indicates that the lack of development of a Local Identity as an artistic community is the result of two main factors. The primary reason is that the vision of what constitutes a unique local culture has never been adequately defined and may not even exist. The second problem is a lack of communication, cooperation and conciliation among local artists and existing organizations. The lack of a unique vision stems from the fact that geographically and culturally the LC area has strong similarities with communities throughout the Southwestern United States and Northern Mexico.

The problems of communication begins with the lack of vision but are solidified by a resistance to find common ground among the numerous subcultures existing in the artistic community. Without

conciliation, cooperation will be suppressed by individual preferences for their own goals and ideas.

A clear example of these problem can be seen when one is navigating the LC Visitors Bureau web site. A link titled “Arts Calendar” is located on the *Arts and Galleries* page. This link will bring a person to the City of Artists Promotional Association (CAPA) calendar. It is important to note that CAPA is one of at least 23 art associations in LC, and if an artist does not belong to CAPA their event will not be listed in the “Arts Calendar”.

It can be concluded then that in the initial assessment consultants found that a communication, cooperation and conciliation dysfunction existed among artists and art organizations in LC. We therefore used the Talking Stick workshops as tool to generate subsystem two. We present and discuss the formation of this subsystem in the following section.

Subsystem 2: Initial Network Intervention

In the first Talking Stick workshop, clients discussed what we called the Flat Grand Narrative of the LCAS. This flat grand narrative is the actual LCAS situation and the reasons for the existence of this flat grand narrative. In a sense, this exercise consisted on identifying socioeconomic dysfunctions that do not allow a vibrant and strong LCAS that will place LC as one of the top 25 small cities in the United States recognized for its arts.

The first detail noticed when Ruth Daryer, Karla Perry and Sherryl Carter (artists and members of art organizations) spoke at our first meeting was an overall lack of unity, communication, and integration of those involved and participating with the arts in LC. It became apparent that LC houses many arts organizations, like the City of Artist’s promotional association (CAPA), the Dona Ana Arts Council (DAAC), and ArtFroms (Artists association of New Mexico). However, there is not a single organization that works to put everyone under a single umbrella and work to promote the LCAS identity.

It also became apparent that artists rely heavily on art organizations and networking to promote their art. Susan Frary, metal sculptor and marketing committee chairperson for CAPA commented: “artists don’t know how to promote themselves or their work...They want it done it for them”.

The initiation of the subsystem two (initial network) was achieved by allowing artists and art organizations’ representatives to share their stories and recognize the flat grand narrative of the LCAS, which is the lack of unity among the LCAS actors. By sharing their stories, participants created a new prospective story, one in which they

identified a common goal, a new prospective story: Creating a LCAS identity. As painter and numerologist Ruth Dryer commented “I feel like we have made tremendous progress here tonight”. As the initial network was being created, artists and art organizations recognized the need to extend the network to other important actors: city and state institutions. We present an analysis of the initiation of subsystem 3, the extended network.

Subsystem 3: Extended Network Intervention

In the second Talking Stick workshop consultant presented to participants the economic impact that the arts can have in a community. They also compared LC to other cities with a strong art scene. This intervention was done to allow participants to recognize prospective stories and identify actions that could lead to an extension the network and therefore the creation of the LCAS identity.

Kloostera (2007), in the June The June 2007 issue of American Styles Magazine did a study of 75 top Arts Scenes in the U.S. In the small cities and towns’ category (under 100,000 in population), three of New Mexico’s small towns ranked among the top 5. However, LC did not appear on such list. Other cities, comparable in size to LC, that appear in such list such as Loveland, Colorado; Santa Fe, New Mexico and Asheville, North Carolina have vibrant art scenes.

Loveland, Colorado, was the first city in its state to adopt an Art in Public Places ordinance, designating one percent of the city’s capital construction projects of \$50,000 or more for the purchase of art. Currently, the city’s art collection is valued at more than 6 million dollars with approximately 83% of the total value of the collection donated by organizations and individuals.

Asheville, North Carolina on the other hand, plays host to a unique and diverse art scene formed by museums, galleries, a state Liberal Arts University (UNCA), art festivals and a support network of artist, art organizations and councils⁷.

Also, a study that was recently conducted by the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF)⁸ shows that New Mexico’s estimated 200 nonprofit art organizations directly spend more than 63 million, employ 852 full time and 1,484 part time employees, underwrite more than 2,500 part-time contracted positions and attract more than 6 million in contributing goods and services. The organizational Impact is much easier to see compared to an individual level. This has a substantial impact on the economy.

The amounts that are allocated to the states are dependent upon state officials who fight for the funds acquires, as well as, the budget

put aside for the arts. Currently, The United States state appropriations for 2007 were \$287,613,114². Out of these appropriations, New Mexico State legislation appropriated \$1,421,000 for New Mexico Arts⁹. Even though LC has an art scene that is stagnant, the state is doing very well compared with other states. For instance, in the state of Colorado art appropriations are \$1.2 million (0.4%), in Idaho \$1.5 million (0.5%) and New Hampshire \$1.2 million (0.4%).

The following are known sources of funding for supporting community cultural arts programming:

- ⇒ City's General fund
- ⇒ Municipal revenue bonds or certificates of participation
- ⇒ Percentage of development fees
- ⇒ Percentage of capital improvement projects for public art within project area
- ⇒ Waiver of fees
- ⇒ Percentage of parking revenue
- ⇒ Percentage of income from Festival of Arts lease with the city
- ⇒ Voluntary arts subscriptions through water billing.

In Las Cruces specifically there is a fifty-cent ration to every person. That is for every person fifty-cents of arts are allocated to them, in some form.

Faced with this facts, participant of the workshop recognized the need to appeal to city officials and integrate them to the LCAS network. We quote artists:

“We need our city officials ... it is a matter of getting them on board”

“...More access to public places. To just give us an opportunity to put our ideas out there and show them what we can do to beautify the city...”

“We need to show him (Major) what we are doing. What we want to do and what we can do to help them”

“Its all communication and we are not following through with the council, If there was a committee that would go in every month and present our needs”

As a result of this narrative and story noticing and sharing. Participants along with consultants developed several propositions that

may bring forward the LCAS and initiate a networking process that will lead Las Cruces to be recognized as one of the top 25 small cities art scenes. The propositions are presented bellow:

1. Create a commission of arts appointed from the existing arts organizations, with organization representatives to meet monthly to facilitate public arts programs that enhance the quality of life of all citizens, to decide on how to finance the arts scene, what arts to invest in, and how to promote the growing numbers of arts events.
2. Create and develop proposal for the City to Fund Art. Consultants composed a report for the city major reporting on economical impact and benefits to the arts in the city. The new art network must take the initiative to deliver the report.
3. Create and maintain and Arts Directory available imprint and online, that is frequently updated and that include all artists, art galleries, and art organizations in the City, independently of the affiliation to a particular organization they may have.
4. Above all, artists and art organizations, must work together and communicate with each other and the city for any of these efforts to take place and to put LC on the map. They must work together to inform, remind and persuade individuals about the potential of the LCAS.

We hope that this interventions allow the LCAS to grow form blank canvas to a recognized piece of art that leaves an everlasting impression on the people who visit this city and the people that makes city what it is now. We believe this interventions managed to breathe more life into the LCAS than ever before. The reasoning behind this breath of life lies simply in working together, as a group, to accomplish the one thing the LCAS needs: attention and respect.

Conclusions

This project has brought together the SEAM methodology, TD networking and story consulting theory in a transorganizational context.

Previous application of SEAM methodology in a transorganizational context has looked as dysfunctions and proposed and intervention. However, this interventions did not use story consulting and the analysis of narratives and stories to create an

extended network that could build collaborative exchanges among stakeholders.

This project contributes to SEAM methodology by applying it along with story consulting. Dysfunctions can be identified by allowing stakeholders to share narratives and stories. The identification of SEAM's dysfunctions is the recognition of the narrative and antenarrative forces in an organization. Tools like the "mirror effect" can also allow the recognition of an emergent and developing sensemaking of the organization. By allowing stakeholders to share their stories and find common stories in our research project we found that the retrospective narrative identified by the stakeholders themselves and therefore understood and recognized more easily.

In this study we also used TD networking as a consulting tool with SEAM methodology. We attempted to develop an initial network that, through storytelling, would identify their narrative and stories, and common experiences that would lead to action and change. We therefore believe this project contributes to TD and SEAM theory by applying storytelling to this consulting methodologies.

Our initial thesis we suggest it is necessary to analyze the dominant narratives, rather than to pretend they do not exist. After deconstruction it is possible to build more positive collaborative exchanges among stakeholders. SEAM methodology allowed the identification of the dominant narrative in the LCAS and TD networking the construction of a more positive collaboration of the stakeholders on this art scene.

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