

Entrepreneurship as a way to unlock hierarchical organizing?
- On the construction of power in collective entrepreneurial processes

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Abstract

In this paper it is argued that the concept of power has much to contribute to the field of entrepreneurship. The un-critical stance taken by most entrepreneurship scholars towards how entrepreneurs use people and how entrepreneurial discourses seem to pervade society, and it calls for critical inquiry based on power in terms of patterns of domination/suppression (i.e. a hierarchic notion of power). At the same time, there are increasing claims that entrepreneurial processes is a way for people to take control over a situation and create something new (i.e. a non-hierarchical notion of power). Our aim with the paper is to discuss how the concept of power can be applied to entrepreneurship and how it can be seen as both a way of unlocking hierarchical thinking and power relations and at the same time producing new power in relations. This is done through a case study of the Hultsfred rock festival and its base organization RockCity, in which the collective process of entrepreneurial action is put in focus, instead of individualistic entrepreneurship. Out from this, we discuss the different notions of power in relation to entrepreneurship theory.

1. Entrepreneurial processes and power

At a meta-level, entrepreneurship can be described as a function in society (Schumpeter, 1947) that provides adaptive reality-testing; i.e. that existing patterns are tested against reality and changed if found to be obsolete (Etzioni, 1987). It means testing new products and services against current market demand, but it also means continuous testing of existing practices of organizing against that same market demand. When market demand cannot any longer keep an organization alive, the organization will be closed down. Hence, the entrepreneurial function involves closing old and weak organizations down and bringing up new and fresh ventures. What characterises old and weak organizations is an inability to adapt to changes in their environment; due to bureaucratic structures, conservative cultures and nostalgic leadership, they are locked into ineffective and failing practices. In that sense, the entrepreneurial function means unlocking old organizations in order to use their resources in new and better ways.

At the micro-level, entrepreneurs have thus become associated with an ability to challenge old, established companies through organising new ones. Many of the publicly known entrepreneurs of our time share a reputation of not only inventing new products and services, but also organizing business operations in new ways. What is common in this respect for people like Richard Branson, Rupert Murdoch, Bill Gates, Ingvar Kamprad, Donald Trump and others is an un-bureaucratic and creative perspective on organizations combined with a dominant personality and an obsession of making their own visions and decisions come true. Our hero entrepreneurs thus unlock old patterns of organizing by competing successfully on the market, at the same time as they remain in total control of their own ventures through locking their associates in new patterns.

Much of the strong legitimacy of entrepreneurship in modern society rest upon the general notion of entrepreneurs as “good guys” that put all their energies into innovative actions that in the end will mean prosperity and development for all of us. Just like corporate managers, entrepreneurs thus exercise power, and they are usually not afraid of doing so. They are even expected to do so, if they want to be taken seriously. In that sense, entrepreneurship means stepping out of established power structures and constructing new patterns of power where no such relations existed beforehand. In the literature on entrepreneurship, the concept of power is not to be found anywhere, though. The almost total absence of any form of critical analysis

of how entrepreneurs construct, organize and exercise power (as compared to the abundance of such analyses of corporate managers and politicians) signifies to us that lack of interest in power analyses of entrepreneurship is widely shared also in the scientific community.

To us, the concept of power has much to contribute to the field of entrepreneurship, regardless of what conception of power that is used. The un-critical stance taken by most entrepreneurship scholars towards how entrepreneurs use people and how entrepreneurial discourses seem to pervade society calls for critical inquiry of power in terms of patterns of domination/suppression (i.e. a hierarchic notion of power). From such a perspective, entrepreneurs dominate and suppress other people in their pursuit of their own goals, thereby contributing to the construction of entrepreneurship ideals and identities that segregates and create new hierarchical structures in society. At the same time, there is a growing stream of research claiming that entrepreneurship could and should be seen as a way for everyone in society to take control over a situation and create something new (i.e. a non-hierarchical notion of power). Such an emancipatory view of entrepreneurship can be found in the sub-field of social entrepreneurship/community entrepreneurship but rarely elsewhere (Steyaert & Hjorth, 2006).

In a sense, entrepreneurship theory and current practices thus need to be criticised for what they actually do to people and societies, but we also need new perspectives on entrepreneurship in order to make entrepreneurial action possible for more people. Entrepreneurship has the potential to become a movement, an important bottom-up force in societal development. But in order to become a movement, entrepreneurship should be constructed as something that implies innovation in all sectors of society, involves all kinds of actors and results in new conditions and patterns in the lives of individuals (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2003).

In this paper, we view entrepreneurship as a socially constructed phenomenon, both as concept and practice - as something that emerges dynamically in social interaction between people. Entrepreneurship is constructed as a concept in an interactive process by media, researchers, practitioners etc., and in practice, entrepreneurship is also a collective phenomenon (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2003). Therefore we will not talk about single entrepreneurs – one could rather view it as several co-entrepreneurs creating an entrepreneurial process together, from formulating ideas to taking major decisions etc

(Lounsbury, 1998; Birley and Stockley, 2001; Clarysse and Moray, 2004). Entrepreneurship is an inter-subjective construction produced and re-produced in everyday social interaction, and that entrepreneurial action should thus be seen as collective temporary experiences (Lindgren and Packendorff, 2003). The entrepreneurial process can therefore be seen as a complex web of reciprocal interaction between culturally embedded actors closely connected to each other (cf Jack and Anderson, 2002; Lindgren and Packendorff, 2003). Without such a perspective, it would be less rewarding to use the power concept in analyses of entrepreneurial action since power emerges in relations (Foucault, 19xx) – between people and between people and situations. From such a perspective, an entrepreneurial process can be seen as an opportunity to unlock hierarchical organizing and to engage in network-like, collective, democratic work forms. But, power can also be interpreted as constructions of new hierarchical relations at the same time. Added to this, relations do not necessary have the same pattern over time, power relations are not stable – they are ongoing constructions within the cultural/society context. Given this constructionist perspective, our aim with the paper is to discuss how the concept of power can be applied to entrepreneurship and how it can be used both in terms of unlocking hierarchical thinking and at the same time in terms of constructing new power in relations. This will be done through a case study in which a collective process of entrepreneurial action is put in focus, instead of individualistic entrepreneurship. By this, we intend to discuss the different notions of power in relation to entrepreneurship theory.

2. Perspectives on power relations: Managerialist, hierarchic and non-hierarchic

In their overview of the different notions and usages of the power concept in organization studies, Hardy and Clegg (1999) maintain that there are two main perspectives in the literature; the managerialist perspective and the critical one. According to the managerialist perspective, power is a hierarchical relation that can and should be used by managers in an instrumental fashion in order to attain organizational goals (Lindhult, 2005). This view can be found in most modern popular management literature in the form of lengthy descriptions of all the available forms of getting people to do what you want. In the guise of “situational leadership”, it is stressed that different combinations of domination is needed in different situations, and it is also claimed that people might even need to be ‘empowered’ from time to time in order to perform effectively. In a way, this is a modernist tradition that goes back to

Max Weber and his rejection of pre-modern notions of power as based in traditions and charismatic persons.

From a critical perspective, the managerialist view is highly questionable since it lacks any reflection whatsoever on the implications and the consequences of power. It has e.g. been claimed that behind superficial rhetoric on democracy and empowerment there are actually subtle patterns of domination and oppression. Hence, the task of critical management studies of power has been to deconstruct reality in order to make these subtle patterns visible to people – thus enabling them to make an active choice if to accept or to resist the power structures of which they are part. This stream of research has in many cases been based in the writings of Michel Foucault, according to which power exist in relations in society as patterns of domination.

According to Hardy and Clegg, there is an ongoing debate within critical studies of power concerning the possibilities of individual agency, resistance and emancipation. From the Foucauldian perspective, power is something that emerges in relations and inevitably make people part of societal patterns of domination and oppression. Following this, the possibilities to escape or change these power patterns should be almost non-existent – at the same time as subtle power relations are exposed, it is also said that they are here to stay. While resistance is a natural part of a hierarchical power relation, it is much more likely to confirm the relation than changing it.

Against this purist post-modernist stance, some argue that power relations do exist, but that they are also possible to escape and change once they have been exposed. These authors are of the view that Foucauldian notions of power and Derridean notions of deconstruction are useful in order to reveal subtle patterns, but that the modernist project of enlightenment and emancipation is still a possible and necessary consequence of such revelations. People are subject to hierarchical power relations, yes, but they are also able to escape them through constructing new patterns of power together. Expressing this as a managerial ideal, Lindhult (2005) develops a Rousseauian notion of power where freedom and democracy is the source of development and innovation.

This latter notion of power implies a research focus on power as something that people can construct together anew, i.e. that active resistance against power structures is in itself an instance of constructing new power structures. Such construction of new power structures is directed towards a dominating part of a hierarchical relation, but could be organized by its participants as a non-hierarchical process. Referring to the writings of Mary Parker Follett (Follett in Metcalf and Urwick, 1940), Dareblom (2005: 79ff) discuss such non-hierarchical power as a possibility to integrate and unite people and to achieve common goals. Even though power emerges in relations and not in individuals as such, individuals may be the carriers of power as a constructive opportunity in a relation. Power *with* others is preferred over the traditional power *over* others, which requires co-actors to make active choices, and to adjust and adapt to each other in functional, mature and considerate ways. From our point of view, we can agree that emancipatory processes can be seen as construction of non-hierarchic power relations, even though many such processes in practice are organized both with an external hierarchical relation and an internal hierarchic power structure in mind - power relations are always connected to cultural context and traditions. People are not totally free, our way of dealing with relations are connected to cultural traditions in different degrees. We can also agree that people in power relations does not have to be seen as dominators and oppressed, even though a perspective where all forms of hierarchic power is denied seem to us somewhat problematic. Entering a relation is an active choice of all parties, and so is emancipatory action in order to escape power structures inherent in the relation – but to claim that all parties always have the same possibilities to do so is to take Follett’s argumentation several steps too far. Emancipatory processes organized by conscientious, considerate, rational equals can of course be found – but as long as the ideal of emancipation is there, so is what is emancipated from; a relation characterised by some sort of domination.

What do this mean, then, for the studies of entrepreneurial action and power? First, it can be said that traditional entrepreneurship research usually and implicitly embraces the managerialist notion of power – i.e. that the entrepreneur can and should use any measure needed in order to develop his/her venture into a successful firm. Entrepreneurship literature is full of such positive advice to both entrepreneurs and politicians on the implications and necessary conditions of entrepreneurial action. Entrepreneurs are told to control the situation by hard work, carefully crafted business plans and coalition building, while politicians are told to unleash entrepreneurial action in society through more advantageous tax schemes,

laissez-faire regulations and encouraging official rhetoric. Second, there is also an implicit notion of entrepreneurs as emancipated people – they have understood how existing companies exercise power successfully, and they have taken prompt action to do that by themselves. Through their entrepreneurial actions, they have become free men in control of their own destiny. The price they pay is of course the risks, the precariousness and the lack of influence that follows with being outsiders.

To use the language of organizational power theories, entrepreneurship can be equated with breaking current patterns of domination through resistance, change and the construction of new such patterns. As an empirical phenomenon, entrepreneurship can thus be used both to advance theorising on how new hierarchical power relations are constructed in society, and on how existing hierarchical power relations are unlocked by means of emancipated, enlightened collective action. In this paper, our intention is to advance both these themes in order to develop a more nuanced notion of entrepreneurship and power. This is done by means of deconstruction.

3. Deconstruction as a way of analysing power in entrepreneurship

Derrida's works has been a main source of inspiration for many researchers within the field of organisation theory during the last decades (cf Calás & Smircich 1991, Knights, 1997, Martin, 1990, Mumby & Putnam, 1992, Cooper, 1989). Derrida claim that there is nothing outside the text (Derrida, 1976) and the text implicates hierarchical structures expressed in terms of binary dichotomies (for example male and female). He uses the concept of *differance* instead of 'difference' and emphasise that concepts are processual and non-static constructs, situated in time and space. He also describes the concept differance as the combination of differing and deferring. Cooper (1989) discusses dichotomies as consisting of binary opposites that in themselves imply that one concept is privileged over the other. He also point out that in early historical eras, opposites such as strong-weak and large-small were expressed through the same concept. Cooper thus suggests dichotomous concepts as being complementary to each other rather than being opposites. This reasoning also means that our focus can be lifted from the concepts as such, and that interaction processes should instead become central, that is,

connections and co-construction are stressed. The same reasoning can therefore be applied within the field of power as expressions of hierarchies and non-hierarchies at the same time.

Deconstructions of different sorts of texts from are viable given certain purposes, such as to open our eyes to patterns taken-for-granted. This is important when it comes to thoughts or theories that are seen widely accepted – such as management models like organization theory (Calàs and Smirchich, 1991; Kilduff, 1993), where a deconstruction may open our eyes to managerialist patterns of domination and gender discrimination. Stephen Linstead (1992) argue that research of organizational culture should be done from a deconstruction perspective that views culture as a paradox, as otherness, as seduction and as discourses, in opposition to the predominating harmony-based and unitary notions of corporate symbolism. The deconstruction method in this article is a way of seeking for absence and contradictions in the text as well as discourses. In concrete practice this means that we will reinterpret an empirical narrative about Hultsfred as “two (as hierarchical and non-hierarchical) stories” with different implications for power relations. These interpretative stories are not two different stories existing side by side – they are interwoven and simultaneously constructed in the power relations.

4. The empirical study

The study presented in here is part of a bigger research program called entrepreneurship as interactive processes based in social constructionist perspective within cultural sector in Sweden (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2002, 2006). Several cultural events and projects can be characterised as entrepreneurial both in terms of organizing and of contents. Movie production teams may create just as innovative images of life and society as do traditional entrepreneurs, and there are theatre forms where the play emerges during performance through improvisation. Aside from these examples there are also other examples of entrepreneurial processes that do not imply the creation of formal organizations. Some of these happens outside existing organizations (e.g. voluntary work and spontaneous political action), but also within existing organizations (e.g. product development projects, radical reforms etc) (Stevenson & Jarillo, 1990, Kanter, 1992) or in geographical regions (Saxenian, 2000). And by widening the empirical basis of entrepreneurship research, more people and phenomena in society are included in the concept of entrepreneurship.

4.1 Case study methodology

In this article, we present an in-depth study of the Hultsfred rock festival in Sweden and how the actors within the festival have initiated a number of entrepreneurial processes over the years. We have used narratives in order to get an understanding of individual participant's interpretation of the process. With story-telling and narratives we have possibilities to understand how/why problems arise, how/why people can perceive obstacles, how/why new ideas emerge (Lindgren and Wåhlin, 2001; O'Connor, 2002), etc. Since we view entrepreneurial acts as collective experiences, the empirical information concerning entrepreneurial acts is described with help from several persons. In the study we have reflect upon questions such as how language is used, different discourses, and the importance of reflexivity throughout the research process (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2000; Lindgren and Wåhlin, 2001; Fletcher, 2003).

The study is based on recurrent interviews (story-telling), participant observation and documentation (cf Boje, 2001). The interviewees were asked to speak openly about the development of their operations, how they had worked together, what problems they had experienced. In total, ten of the central actors in Hultsfred have been interviewed in-depth at least one occasion, in several cases two or three times. They have also read and commented upon the material, which is ethically important in this kind of approach.

4.2 Case introduction

Hultsfred is a small industrial town in the Småland region of Southeast Sweden, characterised by forests, lakes, farms and picturesque villages. The municipality counts about 15.000 inhabitants, half of them living outside the town. In the city centre there is a travel centre, a park, a hotel, an outdoor shopping mall and several blocks of flats, but the rest of the town consist of wood houses in well-kept gardens. The social life of the town being concentrated around the factories and sports clubs, it had not much to offer the young men growing up as punk rebels during the 1970's. In 1981, some of them formed their own music club, RockParty, in order to arrange concerts and other happenings. Rock music, a reliance on voluntary work, and a determination that nothing was impossible were – and still is – the foundation of RockParty.

Today, RockParty is the arranger of the Hultsfred Festival that has been held annually since 1986. The festival has steadily developed into one of the major summer rock festivals in Europe, and Hultsfred houses the headquarters of the European festival association Yourope. RockParty also arranges several other recurring festivals with separate themes. The club has its own concert hall, which they had to build when they were thrown out of the sports hall in 1990. It is situated at the edge of the town, in a small industrial block between the deep forest and the regional highway.

In the middle of the 1990's, the group realised that the success of the festival could be used for the good of the whole town. At the same time, the club was constantly close to bankruptcy due to constant expenses (maintenance of the concert hall and salaries to the full-time employees of the festival organisation) and irregular revenues (mainly the entrance fees from the festivals). Some of the employees had to form companies out of their specialities in the festival organisation (catering, advertising, booking, call centre etc) in order to sell their services to external customers. This worked out fairly well, and it spurred them to invest some small amounts in other business ideas related to the music industry, and they managed to attract public funding to establish an industrial development centre for the music industry. Today, the concert hall has been expanded with a large office building called RockCity, housing a number of small entrepreneurial companies, a national music industry centre, a business incubator, and a unique university education in music management. RockCity has also become the common name for the whole group that is owned by RockParty. As of 2004, the group had 44 employees and total revenues of 72 million SEK¹. Their next vision is to build an amusement park based on rock music next to the RockCity building. In 2003, RockCity CEO Putte Svensson was elected Creative Entrepreneur of the Year in Sweden, but he immediately claimed that he was just the front member of a group of people that had worked together for decades.

In the case of Hultsfred, the individuals in the actor network has organised several entrepreneurial processes that have varied in terms of involved persons and their roles. RockParty was started by Håkan Waxegård and Per Alexandersson, the former being the 'front face' and the latter the organizer. As the festivals grew in scope, more people joined the

¹ About 8.000.000 EUR.

inner circle. Gunnar Lagerman became responsible for signing up artists, Putte Svensson organized the voluntary work needed to build the festival area, and Per Alexandersson specialised in marketing. When they later decided to build the concert hall, the same group were active (except for Gunnar Lagerman, who thought the project to be too expensive, went on to create Yourope, but stayed in the building to arrange concerts).

Per Alexandersson then left Hultsfred for a career in Malmö, and Håkan Waxegård were ousted from the board and replaced by Patrik Axelsson. This was not an easy decision but they thought that Waxegård was too keen of doing things by his own head and also wanted to personify Hultsfred by himself. It was then decided that Putte Svensson was to become the 'front face', and Patrik Axelsson the thoughtful administrator. Patrik gradually grew into the role of preserving the original RockParty spirit, but he also started a company that developed and exported mobile security fences for outdoor concerts. RockParty still owns the festival and all the companies of the group, and Putte, Patrik and the others are regular employees with ordinary salaries. Since the club was created out of voluntary work, no one will ever be allowed to use RockParty to amass personal wealth.

After Putte becoming the driving force in the creation of new firms related to the festival – a strategic direction that is still a major source of discussion within RockParty - he gathered a new network around him to pursue the ideas on business development, educations and music industry research. The effort were called Project Puzzle. In this network, Erkki Lahti was the opportunity searcher and idea generator, Putte the charismatic motivator, and Lasse Rönnlund the action-oriented 'doer'. They also placed their old friend Per Kågefors as business developer in the regional authorities, which meant access to all sorts of financing and funding. Gunnar Lagerman and Patrik Axelsson were part-owners in two of the firms, but focused most of their work on the festival. In order to maintain the dynamics in the RockCity building, they often question their roles and what they do, and they actively seek to involve new persons both as employees and as network contacts. Being a group consisting of men only, they made efforts to recruit women (Putte was replaced by Frederika Svensson as CEO of the largest company, Metropol), which has also implied projects aimed at improving the possibilities for young female rock musicians, led by Hanna Rotelius.

Since the members of the original team has now become family fathers, they have had to redefine their way of working. They are not available around the clock anymore, and they need to plan for their interaction. Still, a lot of ideas and decisions happen informally around coffee tables, but they have also begun to see the drawbacks of too much informal networking in an organization with 44 employees. Hence, they are planning to form a professional board for the whole group and to establish a development company to handle all new ideas. Many employees outside the inner circle finds RockCity to be the most creative and inspiring place they have ever been at, but they also say that traditions and history are important – you need access to certain key actors if you really want your ideas to come true.

4.3 The stories

The leading actors behind the club RockParty are all born in the end of the 1950’s or in the first half of the 1960’s. Those who grew up in Hultsfred tell the story about a quite traditional and stagnating industrial town, where almost every family were dependent upon the wood house manufacturer Hultsfredshus. When not working, the Hultsfred people got together in sports clubs and numerous other associations. Even though the establishment of a local high school and the subsequent influx of academics meant changes, those teenagers not interested in sports had not much to do. During the punk wave in the end of the 70’s, Putte and others arranged concerts in their school and noticed that the interest for music was growing:

<p><i>”Most of us played in bands and we also brought together the bands to concert evenings where I acted as presentator. We were not allowed to continue within the school’s premises for very long, though, it became a bit rough sometimes. Especially those evenings when we didn’t have any bands, it was really heavy drinking. It’s funny; today everybody complains about the drinking, but it was worse then. We had people smashing the windows to the bank and slept over there, and nobody raised their eyebrows over that... The dean had a big meeting with us on how to stop violence and drinking among the pupils, and we started to arrange a new form of parties where the music was in focus. And then we graduated, and had no reason to continue to arrange school concerts. We then formed the club RockParty. December 16th, 1981.” (Putte S)</i></p>	<p>Collective action to create concerts, constructing non-hierarchical power together.</p> <p>Resistance/Emancipation from hierarchical relation to school, fun and rebellious underdogs.</p> <p>Masculine image of themselves, heavy drinking, smashing the windows to the bank. Resistance /emancipation from a powerful actor in society, the bank.</p> <p>Constructive interactive cooperation, constructing new power through old power structure. Uniting instructions from authority with own ambitions.</p> <p>Independent, decisive action. Entrepreneurial action used in power relation.</p>
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Already from the beginning they were seen as outsiders, but they also think that this has helped them in their ambitions:

<p><i>Sometimes I think that it was good for us that everybody worked against us; crazy young rebels were not really popular in the beginning of the 80's. Well, perhaps they didn't work against us, but nobody ever listened to us. Hultsfred was a town concentrated on manufacturing industry, and there were no education possibilities beyond high school. The local politicians lived in the old days; they were not bad people, but they did not understand that the local youth wanted concerts and festivals. Today, the official policy is that the festival is good for Hultsfred, but we have never seen any decisions to support the festival. I have been to some awkward meetings with the municipality board... It has become our strength that we have had to fix everything by ourselves. (Patrik A)</i></p>	<p>Conflict and power struggle in relation to context good for entrepreneurship. Constructing myth through talk about entrepreneurship which in the longer run creates barrier for other individuals. Then smooths former statement, giving more nuanced image of context as different.</p> <p>“Poor”, small Hultsfred against other more “rich” cities Regional aspects of power.</p> <p>Things have improved, we are somewhat accepted now.</p> <p>Re-emphasizing independence and internal strengths as sources of the power they have.</p>
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The RockParty board was a group of friends, which has meant a strong sense of collectivity but also difficulties in handling conflicts and ideas:

<p><i>We are a bunch of old friends, we were always together in the beginning. If there was a party, we were there together, and other friends came along. But I think it was an initial strength that we were a quite small gang that were behind a lot of things. Today it is not really the same thing, people have families and want to get away from work sometimes. This has meant difficulties in handling budget overruns or layoffs; we have not been professional in such occasions since we are all old friends. This is a sensitive thing, we must be professional but it shall also be fun to work here. (Patrik A)</i></p>	<p>Friendship and close network contacts as basis of collective power. Close team that were always together.</p> <p>Friendship and professionalism as two different things, one of them non-hierarchical, the other hierarchical.</p>
<p><i>”What is so fascinating is that we really need each other. We learn from each other a lot. Different people, but we think the same way about entrepreneurship. Often we meet in different constellations at breakfast, and then we start to juggle with ideas. It is not necessary to have Putte at the table, there are many persons that can take the ideas and develop them further. Of course there are informal ways, if you want things to go fast you must sell the idea to Putte and the others. Earlier that happened all the time, we were not that many employees then.” (Frederika S)</i></p>	<p>Groupthink as a strength with socialised way of viewing themselves in relation to others.</p> <p>Informal idea generation and decision making, shared values as basis of collective power. It helps to have Putte around (hierarchical power notion).</p> <p>Fast action and decision within an informal way, strength, but also different power bases linked to different persons</p>

Thanks to the ability of the board members to attract hundreds of voluntary workers for their events, the club and the festival grew fast. Since nobody had any knowledge of accounting or business matters, they used a very simple business model:

<p><i>I had to do everything since I was the only employee and RockParty started to grow. We had indoor concerts every week around the year and outdoor concerts every second week during summer season. The tactic was to make a profit out of the outdoor</i></p>	<p>Powerful position go get control over bookings with bands. Anarcho-capitalism as a pseudo-commercial strategy.</p>
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<i>concerts and to spend the money on our favourite bands at the club. Some sort of anarcho-capitalism, as I use to say. (Gunnar L)</i>	
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Rock music and rock culture is not that deviant anymore, and the actors seem to think more carefully when and in terms of what they want to challenge their context:

<i>Our fascination for music has always been there, and we early decided to make Hultsfred a concept within rock music. We are not that rebellious anymore, we are more of an institution now. We are forty instead of twenty years old, and we have assumed a more politically correct view on things like teenagers getting drunk during the festival. We often did not listen to criticism before, and today we do understand it in another way. (Nisse J)</i>	<p>Creating Hultsfred as a power base out of nothing.</p> <p>Connecting themselves and their organization to societal values in order to gain legitimacy.</p> <p>Listening to criticism (defining themselves into a power system) as a matter of virtue and maturity.</p>
<i>The festival is still an independent thing, so in that sense we are still rebels. A feminist rock association is now being started up, and they have had a rookie-camp with Marit Bergman². We will work more with things like that. (Putte S)</i>	Need to uphold image about themselves and their entrepreneurship as deviant. Emancipatory action as a way to construct power together.

Even after more than a decade of festival organising, they saw themselves as just a bunch of rockers unable to do real business. The festival did not grow so much anymore, and they had constant problems in matching revenues and costs – which is still a problem from year to year. The festival was also met by scepticism by banks and other institutions. When they built their first concert hall, they were forced by the bank to own the building personally, since the bank did not trust the RockParty club to be a responsible debtor. They were forced to make personal investments and to straighten up their administrative routines:

<i>We were 30 shareholders when we formed the first company, Metropol, but we have all sold our shares back to RockParty. We earn decent salaries – I get 27.000 SEK³ per month – but nobody has become rich. We run big business and have vast responsibilities, but I usually do not think about it, I might have a hard time sleeping in the night. Some people in Hultsfred has earned a lot of money, like those owning the festival grounds, coffee shops, restaurants and so forth, but we are not among them. It is a good thing that we haven't owned this ourselves, even though that could have made some difficult decisions easier to implement. On the other hand, the spirit in this building might not have been the same. In the end, it is about daring to test ideas. (Patrik A)</i>	<p>Collective economic power cannot rest upon individual ownership.</p> <p>Ignorant relationship to own power position.</p> <p>Others have become rich and influential.</p> <p>Individual ownership implies better possibilities to make rational decisions => hierarchical power. Collective ownership implies better conditions for experimentation and learning.</p>
<i>"I worked at the local newspaper Vimmerbytidningen after high school, got a temporary job there and on it</i>	

² Emergent Swedish rock star that has collaborated with RockParty to find ways to help young women to enter the rock music industry.

³ About 3.000 EUR.

<p><i>went. One day Kågefors called me and asked if I wanted to work with them – it was 1999 and they needed someone to keep track of things, create educational programmes and research. I became an administrator, I created a network database, I kept the boys in order, tried to organize things. It was four of them; Putte, Kåge, Erkki, Rönnlund. I created order out of chaos, a lot of things were moving then. I'm glad I was allowed into that group, I have learn a lot from them.” (Frederika S)</i></p>	<p>The single female executive as administrator of the powerful boys.</p>
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The music industry represented another economic logic than traditional industrial manufacturing, a logic that did not suit established models for credit evaluations:

<p><i>We have had festivals where we lost big money, and we have tried to solve it by selling inventory and taking personal loans. We have really been on the edge of bankruptcy sometimes. The festival business is risky, you know. And the bank has not been keen to help, not even with temporary credit for costs that will be repaid when the festival entrance fees flows in. Not even the municipality has been there for us. The characteristics of traditional manufacturing are built into the bank world, it has shaped their view on judging business risks. We are different, which means that they must have trust in us instead. Which they don't. (Patrik A)</i></p>	<p>Money is an eternal problem, but in the end a less important problem. Part of their identity as emancipated rebels that music is more important than money.</p> <p>RockCity as more or less powerless debtor in relation to bank and municipality.</p> <p>Being trusted as part of improving a hierarchical power relation.</p>
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At some instances, there were also serious mistakes made, often due to over-optimistic assumptions on future revenues:

<p><i>I was among those who were sceptical about this building, I thought it to be too large for Hultsfred. I was a part of the project, but I always tried to argue for more careful estimations. You don't really want to come down on the enthusiasts, but it appeared that our indoor concerts resulted in a loss of about one million⁴ the first year. The indoor concerts we have today is not at all of the same scope as intended from the beginning. It just had to be downsized. We had a loss of about 40 or 50 thousand⁵ every weekend. (Gunnar L)</i></p>	<p>Headless enthusiasm as backside of entrepreneurship. Reluctance of senior employee to exercise power despite being convinced that it should be needed.</p> <p>Economic rationality as characteristic of maturity.</p>
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Music industry is still not fully understood, the actors claim. The only support and competence available is to be found in Stockholm, which is where the major companies in the industry are located. When they started IUC (the national music industry centre), the money came directly from the government, not from venture capitalists and banks, and the RockCity spin-off's also deviate in the sense that they aim for survival rather than fast growth:

⁴ About 110.000 EUR.

⁵ About 5.000 EUR.

<p><i>Let's say that we have 60% of our venture capital left in three or four years, then we will be really satisfied. Then we will have accomplished a major change in this sleepy hollow. Today, we have had one company going bankrupt, one that we closed down, and the rest is still up and running. But everybody around saw us as idiots; banks, venture capitalists, authorities. We had to break all these prejudice saying that you cannot do anything with music outside Stockholm. Our companies are not that profitable, they live on a level suited for self-employment which means careful spending habits and survival despite recession. These people are here because they want to be here. The business development manager at the municipality is not really happy about this, he now has dozens of small companies to take care of instead of a single big one as it was before. (Lasse R)</i></p>	<p>Total achievement and societal change the major goal.</p> <p>Entrepreneurship based in different values imply lack of power in traditional counterparts, power must instead be created outside structures.</p> <p>Cost-efficiency as way to have power over ones own situation.</p> <p>Few big organizations the usual power structure in local economy.</p>
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The decision in the middle of the 1990's to create spin-off operations from the festival awakened an old ideological dilemma in the actor network. RockParty had always been different both in terms of life style and music and as a form for economic value creation, and the general opinion was that they were a cultural association where money was a secondary thing. When it was suggested that some of the existing operations within the festival (such as catering) were to be transformed into companies aiming for profit, many feared that traditional economic thinking would become the norm for the whole festival.

<p><i>Putte had decided to do what Roskilde⁶ had not been able to do, to create spin-off's from the festival. The person that decides to do such a thing must be able to handle the reactions from the rest of the organisation. When he declared that we were going to do other things using the festival brand, a gigantic conflict broke out. If it had not been Putte, he had been thrown out at once. They wrote angry letters to each other and called me to meetings where they told me that I destroyed the festival brand and so on. My first year here mostly meant working internally to get permission to do new things, and I use to remind people about that now. It was just to take it cool, explain and deliver. (Lasse R)</i></p>	<p>Hierarchic, charismatic notion of power as a means to convince the rest of the organization. Anticipation of resistance and planned approach to handle resistance.</p> <p>Putte has a certain power position, can protect those who work with his controversial projects.</p> <p>Non-hierarchic notion of working with others in the organization when the project is up and running. Patiently awaiting positive results and changed state of mind.</p>
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Even though the festival has remained a non-profit activity, economic thinking has indeed influenced and changes their way of doing things:

<p><i>Before, when you wanted a certain band, you just went for it. If someone younger wants to bring in an unknown band to the festival today, it might not be that easy. Today, everybody have a more developed sense for economic responsibility. Before, we brought in two famous artists and used the profits to pay for a bunch</i></p>	<p>Young people lacking internal power as a consequence of founder maturity.</p> <p>Economic responsibility as a source of power.</p>
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⁶ Danish university town housing one of the other major rock festivals in Europe.

<i>of unknown bands. We don't do that to the same extent anymore. (Nisse J)</i>	
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Patrik Axelsson, long-time chairman of RockParty, has a dual role in both preserving the One of the major internal conflicts over the years emerged when there were ideas on creating commercial spin-off's from the festival. The conflict was exacerbated when Putte brought in Lasse Rönnlund to support a number of small independent ventures in the house. No one at RockCity does, however, claim that they are mainly interested in money and business. Putte's view of this seem to be quite common among most of the actors:

<i>Like everybody, I have had to work elsewhere and I've also been registered as unemployed. I worked at the paper mill, for example. Throughout the 80's, everyone worked on a voluntary basis, and around 1990 we were able to employ people. I don't own anything of this, and that is a good thing. I was part-owner for a time, and that was not good; people started to think that we were earning money for ourselves. The entrepreneurs we try to support here think the same way; they want their main interest as their work, they want to have control over their life. The envy that we have seen is rather a part of the mentality of an old industrial town, where no one was allowed to raise above others. I like doing a nice deal, but a nice deal is primarily an acknowledgement that I have done a good job that someone appreciates and put a high value on. Money is not interesting unless they can be used for something funny. (Putte S)</i>	<p>Image of themselves as powerless outsiders in society.</p> <p>Entrepreneurship as a way of creating and maintaining control over one's life, not necessarily to amass independent means.</p> <p>Economic negotiations and transactions as instances of appreciation between equal friends.</p> <p>Money as a source of self-control and fun projects rather than as an end in itself.</p>
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Still, Putte is most aware of the tensions, and knows that there will be future conflicts on the subject:

<i>What happens if the commercial parts of RockCity becomes bigger than the festival? A lot of people work with the festival and are proud of that, and what happens if something else appears that is bigger and consumes more resources? If it is put that way, there will definitely be a hot debate. (Putte S)</i>	<p>Internal reasoning connecting relative size of different business areas with hierarchical power relations.</p> <p>Internal hierarchisation can be avoided but not necessarily.</p>
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The relations to the local context has been problematic since the beginning. Rock music and rock culture was strange in itself, and the municipality was reluctant to support what was happening. The lack of understanding has – among other things – implied a situation where the festival is accepted, but never embraced:

<i>The relations with the town are really bad, the expression that you never become a prophet in your hometown is an accurate image of what we have experienced. Look here, here's a new brochure from the municipality intended to promote Hultsfred. Look at the pictures. Forests, forests, an airplane, a lake. And on the back side, a small picture from the festival.</i>	Lack of power in relation to local authorities, nobody cares or listens.
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<p><i>We are now making contacts with the teenagers in the town, and that have also made the parents more positive. But the Jante law still applies, and some people don't like that we have received public funding. Even though all the money has been well invested. (Hanna R)</i></p>	<p>Connecting to alternative power base.</p> <p>Perceived local dislike of received regional funding.</p>
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Most of the blame for RockCity not having become an established part of the local business life is put on the local politicians, who does not see what the rest of Sweden see in Hultsfred; the festival:

<p><i>In five years, there will be twice as many students, I think. And the festival, of course. 95 % of the Swedish population think of the festival when they hear 'Hultsfred', they don't think of any manufacturing industry. We have had a better relation with the inhabitants of the town than with the politicians, the politicians have not been seen as representative in this matter. They are very positive when media direct their attention to the festival, but when you scratch the surface you see otherwise. (Gunnar L)</i></p>	<p>Anticipation of changes power relations in the future. Influx of students and national perceptions of Hultsfred will supercede local identity. Hierarchic image of relation with local society.</p> <p>Separating inhabitants (equals) and politicians (superiors), thereby voicing both hierarchical and non-hierarchical power relations. Politicians only appears as equals when the TV cameras are on.</p>
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The leading actors have also realised that their ambitions have taken them to another level, where the natural collaborators are to be found elsewhere. Two members of the actor network, Erkki Lahti and Per Kågefors, work with projects that include RockCity in developing the entire region, and through the music industry centre they seek to play a central role on the national arena:

<p><i>The bigger we get, the more distance we get to the start of all this. It is not the same local connection as it used to be, and we are looking elsewhere for contacts and ideas. We don't pile up money on bank accounts, they are re-invested in new projects. There are other values to care for here. (Frederika S)</i></p>	<p>Strengthening their entrepreneurial process by connecting to other arenas. Partners for non-hierarchical power construction to be found elsewhere.</p>
<p><i>We have discussed a pure development company in which to gather all new projects, and we have also discussed to form our own venture capital firm here in Hultsfred for music industry ventures. Today, when you have an idea you must run around to all sorts of actors, and that is not easy to do when you are in Hultsfred. There are no venture capital here, it is in Stockholm. But in Stockholm they know too little about the music industry and too little about working outside Stockholm, so that makes it even harder. (Putte S)</i></p>	<p>The music industry entrepreneur as powerless.</p> <p>Economic power structure centered to Stockholm despite lack of knowledge.</p>

They also try to use different 'front persons' depending on what context they operate in. Some people are the local faces of RockCity locally, Gunnar Lagerman symbolises the festival internationally, and Putte operates on the national level:

<p><i>My strategy is not to be seen locally. I might be on the cover page of <i>Entreprenör</i>⁷ and looked upon as the great businessman and all that, but at home I'm not seen at all. Instead, it is always the one that has been responsible or actually did the job that is to be seen. It's important that you always try to put the others in the light, and I've tried to do that for five or six years now. (Putte S)</i></p>	<p>Realising the importance of personal, charismatic power. Delivering the single entrepreneur wanted by media.</p> <p>Putting others forward as a part of the non-hierarchical power process.</p>
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Even though they are critical to the local connections, they are convinced that RockCity will nevertheless have a major impact on the town. In a way, this is already happening through the subsidiary RockCity AB, which is a joint venture between RockParty and the municipality. The long-term vision is far beyond Hultsfred, at the same time as it means expansion in Hultsfred. If Hultsfred does not go to Europe, Europe will have to come to Hultsfred:

<p><i>The national music industry centre here has formulated a development programme for the Swedish music industry that we are now presenting to the government. It is a plan on how to develop the whole Swedish music industry, and in due time we will establish a European music development centre here in Hultsfred. That is the long-term target. (Putte S)</i></p>	<p>Big visions, alignment to national power bases.</p>
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To use RockCity as a tool for local development was not a natural thing, but it came to be through both emotional and business-related arguments:

<p><i>It was not a natural thing to expand during the 90's, but we saw that we have had many people working for us during the festival that then ended up in Stockholm. We wanted to give them possibilities to live and work here in Hultsfred. It was both about keeping competence and friends here, it is not so fun to see the removal vans driving away. We do have a responsibility to society, it is about keeping up shops, schools, childcare and so on. (Patrik A)</i></p>	<p>Traditional ideal of mobilizing local patriotism for the sake of preserving society and prevent negative development.</p>
<p><i>This house and this organisation is important for the future development of the town. Hultsfred has been an industrial town, and this is knowledge-intensive. A lot of people move to Stockholm, but not all of us wanted to do so. (Nisse J)</i></p>	<p>Aligning RockCity with the modern, trendy developments in society, hierarchically better than the old industrial structures.</p>

5. Discussion: Hierarchic and non-hierarchic discourses on power

Analysed from a power perspective, our interviewees in Hultsfred maintain both hierarchic and non-hierarchic notions of power. The immediate impression is the non-hierarchic perspective, which appears in several forms. The strong internal culture of equality, voluntary work and non-commercialism implies a view where power is something that is created and exercised in a collective manner, and by that they want to show the rest of the world that they

⁷ A leading Swedish business magazine on entrepreneurship and business creation.

are different. Not least in their conception of entrepreneurship, i.e. as a process where the important thing is to create something new that they can all benefit from, this non-hierarchical ideal is evident. Money is unimportant, they say, and the public display of single individuals like Putte is only a consequence of external demand for a visible single entrepreneur. They also share a concern for Hultsfred as a local community, and they want to secure the future of the town by moving ahead at the same time as they maintain close relationships with the inhabitants.

At the same time, there are also several accounts where a hierarchical perspective on power can be interpreted. Their self-image of being rebels is one such account, where they create a dichotomy between themselves and the inhabitants of the town – implying relations where they must deviate in order to be listened to. This image later appears in a more nuanced version, where they see themselves as boundary-workers appreciating the relations with the people in the town while still feeling powerless in relation to the local politicians (Lindgren & Packendorff, 2006). They also acknowledge instances of informal internal hierarchies in the organization that affects the practical possibilities of making decisions and get things done – often relating back to Putte as in possession of extraordinary personal qualities that is used to convince others to support new projects. The hierarchical perspective is also notable in the view of Hultsfred in relation to Stockholm and in the constant comparisons made between different practical levels of analysis (local – regional – national – international). To summarise, we find the following examples of hierarchical and on-hierarchical thinking in their stories about RockCity and Hultsfred.

Hierarchical discourses on entrepreneurship and power in the Hultsfred case	Non-hierarchical discourses on entrepreneurship and power in the Hultsfred case
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rebellious entrepreneurship: Against school, against politicians, disrespect for adults and banks. • External resistance good for entrepreneurship. Need something to fight against, need to do things ourselves. • Non-rebels less interesting people. • Identification both as powerless underdogs and as wise forerunners into the knowledge society. • Women as deviants that keep things in order for the “real entrepreneurs”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping together internally, using old friends and families as network. Always together from the start. • Creating Hultsfred as a power base out of nothing. • Identification as deviants in society – in terms of clothes, music taste, business ideology.. • Power is something that is created outside traditional structures. • The culture-commerce conflict a matter of time – results and activities will solve it by time.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture vs business- internally. If commerce gets to big, it is interpreted as a shift in direction. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putte as charismatic and in possession of extraordinary individual power. • Conforming to the wanted medial image of the single omnipotent entrepreneur (i.e. Putte). • Perhaps we have power, but we don't think about it. • Not all people have the same internal influence. • Those who don't like our way of doing things should not be here. • We are part of hierarchic power relations, and we need legitimacy and trust to level them. • Young members of organization get to lack power when founders mature, they are not allowed to do what the founders did at the same age. • Too much headless entrepreneurship. Too much reluctance to exercise authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not want a single leader. The one who did the job is to be seen, putting the collective forward rather than individuals. Different persons at different arenas. • We learn from each other and others. If you share your ideas, you will get ideas back. Informal idea generation, anyone can come up with ideas. • The important thing is that you are committed and want to do fun and interesting things. You are never told what to do, you must figure that out yourself. • The collective is the most important thing, not the individual. This organization is bigger than ourselves. • Emancipation means constructing power together.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were forced into individual ownership for a while. • Individual ownership is better suited for decisions requiring economic rationality. • Some power systems cannot be rejected if we want to be a player in society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective ownership better than individual, means better experimentation and learning. • Money is not important. • Others have become rich, not us. • Economic responsibility • Money as a source of situational control. Cost efficiency as a way to get power over the situation. • Doing business is negotiating compromises between equals who value each other.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional industrial culture based in a few big powerful industrial firms. • Music industry lacks local legitimacy in relation to other industries. Power in music industry is in Stockholm. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music industry as based in many small independent companies and ventures. Politicians don't like that. • Music industry means working low-cost, low-level.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hultsfred as a poor and less fortunate community • Relation to local politicians is hierarchic by nature. • RockCity is the future city centre. • Local- regional- national – different arenas used against each other both by internals and externals. The local perspective will have to be changed in the future. • Rock music industry much trendier and embraced at the national level as compared to traditional manufacturing industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legitimacy through connecting to societal values at the local level. • Relations to local people, good. RockCity people are also local people. • Need to mobilize local society for survival.

The interesting thing with the above summary of how the two power perspectives appear in the empirical case of Hultsfred is that the duality of power – i.e. that power is often expressed as both hierarchical and non-hierarchical – is apparent. Power is both “power over” and “power with”, at the same time. Power over situations also means power over people, since

people are part of situations and situations are part of people. Without being exhaustive, we can find several such discourses in the empirical material where the duality of power can be seen.

One such instance is the stories about the early years of RockParty, when a number of young men created their own version of disrespect for adults and authorities. In relation to their environment they all shared the typical teenage identification as being totally different and doing totally new things. They still take any opportunity to point out that they are deviant rebels and enjoy any time when they are acknowledged to be different. In this maintenance of themselves as different, there is a clear hierarchical notion of the RockCity people as “underdogs”, as non-educated, powerless and naïve youngsters easily manipulated by politicians and bankers. Being subject to such outer domination, they construct an entirely different power structure within the organization, based on equality, collectivity, democracy, loyalty, shared leadership, co-ownership and controlled anarchy. RockCity is what the rest of the world is not, and they are struggling from beneath in a kind of tight-woven male network (cf Jackson, 1990). They even claim that it has been good for them to encounter resistance from politicians and bankers, implying an identity as masculine outlaws who are almost triggered by resistance.

A second instance of the duality of power is their internal constructions of what power is. The official rhetoric still supports the democratic, collectivist tradition from the early years, and they actively try to use this also in their daily operations. Having the common breakfast in the main hall in the RockCity building is one such ritual; anyone can sit down at any table, say what they want and come up with all sorts of ideas. This is also instituted in the office layout, where all the leading actors are spread out among the others in an ever-changing office landscape. They are powerful together, and they come down on anything that may threaten their ideal of equality. Still, an organization with over 40 employees is hard to run without any rule system that gives some people the right to decide things, and there are also formal/legal requirements that they cannot escape. Moreover, they have also made an image of Putte as the visible entrepreneur – allegedly as a response to market demand for such a person – which has had the effect that he is also internally viewed as the idea generator and charismatic leader. Aside from Putte, the others (all men of the same age) in the original RockParty team also have the power to control what ideas and projects that are launched.

They all claim that they are more mature and responsible now, which means that the teenagers of today are not allowed to “go wild” within RockCity to the same extent as they did themselves. A lack of hierarchical power took them where they are now, and hierarchical power is what is needed to secure their operations in the future.

In their relations to the local community of Hultsfred, the duality of power has implied that they see some actors as related to themselves in a hierarchical manner, and others as equals and co-producers of power. The local politicians are still their opponents, while the locals in general are their equals (they are locals themselves nowadays, they say, and they are proud of it). Other authorities, such as the regional authorities and the Kalmar University College, are also seen as equal partners in the societal processes that RockCity wants. Their external relations are in that way constructed in terms of partly hierarchical, partly non-hierarchical power structures.

As the core team in RockCity has gradually grown into the role of saviours of the local community, they have also started to view their hometown as a threatened and somewhat under-developed societal context for their operations. In a sense, they want to “drag” Hultsfred into the future world of entertainment and media expansion, and they do this by relating to actors at other arenas – even up to the Swedish government. They create power alliances with their perceived equals in order to be able to lean “downwards” to Hultsfred and give the town a helping hand.

To us, the Hultsfred example shows the importance of applying power as a concept and as perspective(s) to entrepreneurship. By viewing entrepreneurial processes as instances of construction of power structures, both the innovating and re-producing aspects of entrepreneurship can be analysed in a better way. Entrepreneurship means constructing new power structures where none existed beforehand, but it also means re-producing taken-for-granted images in society of how charismatic leaders and fast-growing firms should behave and what values they should express. In this sense, RockCity deviates by its focus on equality, democracy and collectivity, and the organization is thus in a constant process of negotiating hierarchical relations to actors in its context. Entrepreneurship is also a concept that is institutionalised as a positive societal phenomenon, and by adhering to the expected content

of that phenomenon you will be able to exercise more control over people and situations than otherwise. Here, the RockCity core team is not that deviant; they focus on growth, ideas, creativity and action, and not least the maintenance of a charismatic front person.

Theoretically, the promises of applying theories of power to entrepreneurship can be found in the acknowledgement that resistance and emancipation is possible from a hierarchic power perspective, and that collective democratic action is a non-hierarchical possibility to create new power structures. As we see it, this duality of hierarchical and non-hierarchical perspectives is necessary in the study of entrepreneurship, in order to develop understandings both on the relation between entrepreneurial processes and their context and the relations between actors within the process. Entrepreneurship is indeed a way of unlocking power hierarchies in society through social movements where people come together in emancipation and resistance. But such social movements are always also a part of the surrounding society, and what happens in the entrepreneurial process will reflect what happens in society in general. Just like a hierarchic power perspective will lead us only to expect societal power structures to be brought into any entrepreneurial process, a sole focus on non-hierarchical power perspectives might cause us to over-estimate the emancipatory possibilities in entrepreneurship.

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