

ON THE IDEA OF EFFECTUAL AND EMANCIPATORY MANAGEMENT: SARASVATHY, BRAZILIAN AUTHORS, AND A LOOK AT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS FROM THE OUTSKIRTS OF RIO DE JANEIRO[1]

SOBRE A IDEIA DE UMA ADMINISTRAÇÃO EFEITUAL E EMANCIPATÓRIA: SARASVATHY, AUTORES BRASILEIROS E UM OLHAR SOBRE EMPREENDEDORAS DE PERIFERIA DO RIO DE JANEIRO

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One of the hallmarks of the contemporary management debate has been the efforts to overcome the causal and predictive rationality that has historically guided management literature (Rosa; Tessarini Junior; Carrieri, 2025; Afonso; Silva, 2024; Carrieri; Perdigão; Aguiar, 2014).

In this context, the effectual logic proposed by Saras Sarasvathy (2001; 2008) represents a shift in the way entrepreneurship is understood: the entrepreneur starts with what they have and controls what they can, assuming uncertainty as an inherent condition of action rather than an obstacle. It becomes an alternative interpretation of how decisions are made in the entrepreneurial field.

Alves, Afonso, and Silva (2024) demonstrated the power of the effectual lens when analyzing the trajectories of women entrepreneurs located in peripheral territories in Rio de Janeiro. The empirical results showed that these women build their businesses with the resources they have, operate within losses they can afford, activate local networks, and transform structural adversities – unemployment, work overload, and economic instability – into possibilities for

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action, confirming the analytical relevance of effectual logic outside the context in which it was originally formulated.

However, the rationality identified in that study is not restricted to the theoretical framework of effectuation. Brazilian authors who investigate small-scale organizational practices and/or those in peripheral territories – such as the *virador*, ordinary management, and the crossroads social innovator – based on distinct empirical objects, problematize the universalization of management and construct equally emancipatory and situated interpretations of entrepreneurial practice (Souza Neto, 2003; 2008; 2013; Carrieri; Perdigão; Aguiar, 2014; Afonso; Silva, 2024; Rosa; Tessarini Junior; Carrieri, 2025; Afonso; Brufato; Orsi-Tinoco, 2025). Although they have not focused on large businesses or business contexts in developed countries, these authors identify analytical categories that recognize improvisation, scarcity, territoriality, and everyday life as legitimate dimensions of organizational rationality. What these perspectives have in common is that they question the canon of American management and reject the idea that hegemonic models are universally applicable (Rosa; Tessarini Junior; Carrieri, 2025).

The interviews conducted by Alves (2023) in the study “Imprevisibilidade e incerteza como essência da experiência de mulheres empreendedoras de periferia sob a lógica efeitual da teórica Saras Sarasvathy” are opened here to another interpretation. What was previously viewed through the effectual lens takes on new contours when read through Brazilian authors. Therefore, this editorial revisits a previous study on women entrepreneurs from the periphery to place effectual logic in dialogue with Brazilian authors who share similar concerns – although they follow different paths.



THE EFFECTUAL LOGIC

The effectual logic, proposed by Saras Sarasvathy (2001; 2008), begins with the question: how do entrepreneurs actually decide when there is no certainty about the future? Unlike causal logic, based on prediction, planning, and the prior definition of objectives, effectual logic starts from action, contingency, and available resources, proposing an alternative rationality for the entrepreneurial process.

Instead of executing a plan, the author proposes that the entrepreneur constructs objectives while acting, and their destination emerges along the way. This makes the theory particularly suited to contexts marked by unpredictability and resource scarcity, since much of the information relevant to a venture does not exist beforehand and emerges during the process.

Based on five fundamental principles, the author indicates what guides entrepreneurial action in effectual logic, a rationality oriented toward action, adaptation, and the progressive construction of paths. The principles, analyzed later, are as follows: Bird in Hand; Affordable Loss; Crazy Quilt; Lemonade; and Pilot in the Plane.

What is most provocative about the theory is the inversion it proposes: causal logic starts from previously defined objectives and seeks the most efficient means to achieve them; effectual logic, in turn, reverses this relationship by starting from the available means to construct possible ends (Sarasvathy, 2001; 2008). This movement dialogues with broader critiques of the universality of traditional models (Rosa; Tessarini Junior; Carrieri, 2025), repositioning entrepreneurship as a situated practice, not as the execution of a prescription.

Unlike approaches that treat uncertainty as a problem to be reduced or eliminated, effectual logic assumes it as an inherent condition of the entrepreneurial process. Uncertainty ceases to be a problem to be solved and becomes the starting point of the theory (Sarasvathy, 2008).



Empirical studies show that entrepreneurs frequently start their businesses without formal planning, mobilize available resources, and adjust their strategies over time (Alves; Afonso; Silva, 2024; Souza Neto; Diniz; Silva, 2020). This dynamic demonstrates that entrepreneurship can emerge even in the absence of structured technical knowledge or traditional management methodologies. In peripheral contexts, and here we do not refer exclusively to geographical peripheries, entrepreneurial action is associated with the need to generate income and survive. Thus, the urgency of material conditions imposes a logic of immediate action, in which doing precedes planning.

In this study, we seek relationships between this author and other Brazilian authors, taking as the object of analysis women entrepreneurs from the periphery of the State of Rio de Janeiro in the study “Imprevisibilidade e incerteza como essência da experiência de mulheres empreendedoras de periferia sob a lógica efeitual da teórica Saras Sarasvathy” (Alves, 2023). The trajectories of these women entrepreneurs reveal diverse practices of organization, decision-making, and business management, constituting the analytical corpus of the following section.

APPROXIMATION WITH BRAZILIAN AUTHORS

Brazilian authors have constructed interpretations that begin with the concrete conditions of life, work, and organization in popular territories. In doing so, they make it possible to understand entrepreneurial practices beyond formal, planned, and growth-oriented models, composing an interpretive framework that gives visibility to forms of economic action marked by scarcity, informality, social relations, and the centrality of everyday life (Souza Neto, 2003; 2005; 2008; 2009; 2013; Carrieri; Perdigão; Aguiar, 2014; Afonso; Silva, 2024; Rosa; Tessarini Junior; Carrieri, 2025).



The virador: solutions drawn from everyday life

The figure of the *virador*, proposed by Souza Neto (2003), is the entrepreneur who emerges in contexts of precariousness and instability, mobilizing practical strategies to ensure survival. The *virador* is characterized as someone who “finds a way,” that is, who creates solutions from the available conditions, without resorting to formal planning or organizational structures. The *virador* operates through a practical rationality constructed in everyday life, where action is marked by improvisation, constant adaptation, and the mobilization of social and affective networks, which function as support for maintaining activities. This practice is guided by a logic that transforms scarcity into a possibility for action.

The *virador* breaks with the idea of the entrepreneur as an exclusively rational and planning agent. Their actions are also linked to the ability to interpret the context and operate through immediate solutions adjusted to the concrete conditions of the territory in which they are situated. The *virador* contributes to understanding Brazilian entrepreneurship as a practice rooted in everyday creativity, challenging normative and idealized views of what it means to undertake entrepreneurial activity (Souza Neto; Diniz; Silva, 2020; Souza Neto, 2009; Souza Neto; Bartholo; Delamaro, 2005).

Thinking about the *virador* and their *viraçõ*es has to do with valuing Brazilianness and understanding that wisdom is something distinct from logic, as João Guimarães Rosa taught us so well. For:

> The failure to recognize positive values in our Iberian heritage undermines a lucid examination of the limits and possibilities of Brazilian development, with all its inequalities, contradictions, and ambiguities. Therefore, instead of attempting hasty solutions and syntheses, we need to qualify our backwardness. Make it relative, determined, referred to the possibility of understanding what constitutes the modernity against which our backwardness is contrasted. Choices imply losses and gains. Mapping the possible losses and gains of our choices is a priority task for affirming what is our own and rejecting what is inappropriate, since, as a wise popular proverb tells us, a frogdoes not jump for beauty, but rather out of necessity (SOUZA NETO, 2009).



Ordinary management: everyday life as a space for creation

The notion of ordinary management, developed by Carrieri, Perdigão, and Aguiar (2014), proposes an inflection in organizational studies by shifting the focus from large corporations to the everyday practices of ordinary individuals who manage their own businesses. In this approach, management takes place in everyday life, constituted by simple practices that are often made invisible but are fundamental to the organization of economic life. It is a form of management marked by improvisation, social relations, practical knowledge, and constant adaptations, which is not guided by institutionalized managerial standards.

Ordinary management values lived experience and recognizes that everyday life is a space for creation and reinvention, and its practices are permeated by actions that articulate different dimensions of life – whether economic, social, or family-related. This theory shows that managing a business, in these contexts, also means managing one's own life (Carrieri; Perdigão; Aguiar, 2014; Rosa; Tessarini Junior; Carrieri, 2025).

The crossroads entrepreneur: relational and territorial action

Afonso and Sarayed-Din (2023) identified the crossroads social innovator as one who emerges in contexts of vulnerability and acts based on the need to survive and confront concrete problems of everyday life. These individuals are considered "ordinary" people who, faced with resource scarcity and the absence of institutional guarantees, develop their own solutions, frequently aimed at overcoming the structural limitations of their territories.

Later, Afonso and Silva (2024), as well as Afonso, Brufato, and Orsi-Tinoco (2025), use this same lens to examine entrepreneurs with similar characteristics – residents of peripheral areas who develop businesses in contexts of scarcity –, calling them crossroads entrepreneurs. In these studies, the concept is expanded to encompass practices that, although frequently



initiated as an income-generation strategy, articulate collective, relational, and territorial dimensions, organizing themselves through networks of support, trust, and reciprocity.

The businesses analyzed in these studies emerge from the direct experience of exclusion and are structured around networks of trust, community ties, and collective values. Unlike traditional businesses, they are oriented toward solving p'roblems experienced within the territory itself and thus generate impact (Afonso; Brufato; Orsi-Tinoco, 2025).

METHODOLOGY

This research draws on interviews already conducted – empirical data from a previous study – and proposes a new reading of this material in light of an expanded theoretical framework. The study followed three stages: revisiting data produced in field research conducted for an undergraduate final project (Alves, 2023); surveying theoretical references relevant to the object; and comparative analysis in light of effectual logic and Brazilian authors who discuss entrepreneurial practices in peripheral contexts.

The empirical basis derives from the previous study, which investigated the entrepreneurial practices of women affiliated with the organization Asplande[5] (Alves, 2023; Alves; Afonso; Silva, 2024), in contexts marked by resource constraints, instability, and social vulnerability. The data were produced through eight qualitative interviews, whose narratives provide access to the everyday practices of entrepreneurship in these territories.

The reinterpretation is based on authors who question hegemonic management models: Sarasvathy (2001; 2008), Souza Neto (2003), Carrieri, Perdigão, and Aguiar (2014), and Afonso and collaborators (2023; 2024; 2025) –

[5] https://www.asplande.org.br/



all of whom, in their own way, recognize everyday action and social ties as a legitimate part of any organizational logic.

The comparative analysis examined the same set of data first in light of effectual logic and then in dialogue with the concepts of *virador*, ordinary management, and crossroads entrepreneur, seeking convergences and shifts between the perspectives. To systematize this dialogue, Chart 1 was prepared from a more extensive version produced by the authors, whose synthesis into keywords was supported by the ChatGPT language model. The material was fully reviewed and validated, ensuring theoretical consistency and adherence to the research objectives.

BRAZILIANIZING ANALYSES

Brazilianness in this study is an analytical stance: seeking, in Brazilian authors, categories that make it possible to understand non-traditional business logics in a context marked by inequality, informality, and strong territorial embeddedness. The contribution of Brazilian authors makes it possible to understand that this type of entrepreneurship studied – especially in peripheral areas and/or small businesses – fully aligns with effectual principles and goes beyond them, as can be observed in Chart 1.



Chart 1 – Comparison between Saras Sarasvathy's Principles and Brazilian Authors

Effectual Principle	Virador	Ordinary Management	Crossroads Entrepreneur
Bird in Hand (act with the means available)	Acts with what they have, mobilizing practical knowledge and immediate resources to survive	Management based on everyday life, with inventive use of available resources and local practices	Starts from experiences of exclusion and territorial resources, articulating solutions based on what is at hand
Affordable Loss (limit losses to what one can afford)	Takes minimal risks, prioritizing survival	Decisions oriented toward sustaining life and business continuity	Businesses oriented toward permanence and subsistence, rather than profit/growth maximization
Crazy Quilt (contingent partnerships)	Builds informal support networks within the territory	Social relationships are central to economic organization	Organization through networks of trust and collectivity
Lemonade (leverage contingencies)	Transforms adversity into opportunity through improvisation	Constant reinvention in everyday life	Creative solutions to local social problems
Pilot in the Plane (create the future)	Acts continuously, adapting without formal planning	Emergent and processual management	Construction of the future through territorial action

Source: Prepared by the authors

The empirical data collected from women entrepreneurs affiliated with Asplande reveal, in everyday practice, what Chart 1 organizes conceptually: the five effectual principles not only describe the behavior of these women but also directly dialogue with the categories developed by Brazilian theories. Scarcity, despite being an obstacle, functions in their lives as a starting point. Improvisation becomes the method within situations where traditional methods are absent.

Bird in hand

The first effectual principle assumes that the entrepreneur starts with what they already have: identity, knowledge, networks. For the women entrepreneurs studied, this maxim takes on a familiar concreteness: knowledge passed down from mother to daughter, the only resource available when the formal market closes the door.



> I always saw my mother doing it (Interviewee 1, 2023).

These statements describe a transmission of competence that, in the absence of formal certifications, becomes legitimate for survival and improvisation (Afonso; Silva, 2024). Another interviewee articulates this rationality even more directly:

> Oh, what do I know how to do well? Well, I know how to make *brigadeiro*. So I'm going to sell *brigadeiro* to help with the household income (Interviewee 2, 2023).

This movement coincides with what Souza Neto (2003; 2005; 2008; 2009; 2013) identifies in the *virador* – the mobilization of practical knowledge as an exit strategy – and with what Carrieri, Perdigão, and Aguiar (2014) describe as ordinary management: the business is not separated from life, but constructed with the materials it offers (Rosa; Tessarini Junior; Carrieri, 2025). For the crossroads entrepreneur, it is the territorial experience and what this experience brings in common, relating scarcity and wealth, that functions as the initial asset (Afonso; Sarayed-Din, 2023; Afonso; Brufato; Orsi-Tinoco, 2025).

Affordable loss

The affordable loss logic reverses the mindset of the classic investor: it does not project the maximum possible return and proposes defining the minimum possible amount that can be risked without compromising oneself. In the trajectories analyzed, this limit is imposed by reality and, unlike what is taught in traditional business schools, does not emerge from deliberate financial calculation (Sarasvathy, 2001).

> The initial investment wasn't large, you know. I could manage with a lot of things I had at home (Interviewee 3, 2023).

Risk is measured by what already exists – some interviewees mentioned using their severance pay as working capital or household utensils as infrastructure. Another interviewee describes a cash flow strategy constructed



entirely in practice. She charged a 50% down payment, bought the material, and reserved the remainder as future inventory. It is ordinary management in its most literal sense, produced in everyday life, without a finance course, but with its own economic coherence (Carrieri; Perdigão; Aguiar, 2014). As Chart 1 summarizes, both the *virador* and the crossroads entrepreneur share the same orientation that the criterion is how much one can lose without ceasing to exist.

Crazy quilt

The crazy quilt principle recognizes that contingent partnerships, unplanned but well leveraged, are part of the entrepreneurial process. In the cases studied, this manifests itself mainly through organizations such as Asplande. Interviewee 4 goes further and articulates a structural critique based on this experience:

> The third sector does work that the government should do [...] the overall importance of the third sector itself, for those who are small, for those who are from the periphery (Interviewee 4, 2023).

This statement transcends the effectual principle and approaches what studies on crossroads entrepreneurs identify as collective and territorial rationality – businesses that are built in a web, not through solitary trajectories (Afonso, Silva, 2024; Afonso; Brufato; Orsi-Tinoco, 2025).

Lemonade

Lemonade assumes taking advantage of situations that were not planned and transforming contingencies into resources. Interviewee 5 (2023) provides an account of a fire that forced the premature closure of the business but made her prepare, even if involuntarily, for the pandemic.

> It came beforehand so that I could try to prepare myself before the pandemic. I reinvented myself before the pandemic! (Interviewee 5, 2023).



Adversity is incorporated into the survival narrative as a functional element. This movement is what Brazilian authors call everyday reinvention: not an exceptional capacity, but as a condition that the *virador* expresses through improvisation, ordinary management incorporates as a permanent practice, and the crossroads entrepreneur transforms into a collective solution (Afonso; Silva, 2024; Souza Neto, 2003; 2005; 2008; 2009; 2013).

Pilot in the plane

The final effectual principle argues that the entrepreneur constructs the future through continuous action. The statements analyzed point to a rationality constructed through experience, which dispenses with planning as a precondition (Alves; Afonso; Silva, 2024):

> We learned in everyday life itself, making mistakes, getting things right (Interviewee 6, 2023).

Interviewee 6 (2023) articulates a precise strategic logic:

> You feel the market, you see what is working, what is not working and, you adapt to what you have (Interviewee 6, 2023).

The verb “feel” here is not a metaphor, but the available analytical instrument. Interviewee 7 (2023), in turn, describes a deliberate strategy of adaptation to fairs: the R$10 wildcard item that finances participation while the more expensive products wait for a buyer. It is the emergent and processual management that Chart 1 highlights in the ordinary management column; and it is the construction of the future through territorial action, as indicated in the crossroads entrepreneur column.

The approximation between effectual logic and Brazilian frameworks reveals an analytical convergence in which, in contexts of structural unpredictability, action precedes the plan, everyday life is the space of strategy, and networks operate as capital. What distinguishes these perspectives is the angle. Effectual logic describes how entrepreneurs act under uncertainty, while



the *virador*, ordinary management, and the crossroads entrepreneur explain under what conditions this uncertainty is produced and who carries it. Situating effectual theory in peripheral Brazil, with women who undertake entrepreneurial activity based on necessity, scarcity, and territory, reveals that the logic Sarasvathy identified in experienced entrepreneurs was what had already been operating, for a long time, in backyards, at fairs, and in the community networks of Brazilian peripheries (Afonso; Silva, 2024; Afonso; Sarayed-Din, 2023). Brazilian authors provide the conceptual ground that restores to these practices their historical, relational, and territorial density.

CONCLUSION

This editorial set out with the objective of broadening the perspective on entrepreneurial practices in peripheral areas, articulating Saras Sarasvathy's effectual logic with Brazilian theoretical approaches that share an equally emancipatory and territorialized orientation. The study demonstrated that the five effectual principles describe the behavior of the women entrepreneurs studied and find direct correspondence in the categories of the virador, ordinary management, and the crossroads entrepreneur. These perspectives are formulated from the Brazilian context itself and offer historical, relational, and territorial density to what effectual theory describes in terms of decision-making under uncertainty.

The main finding lies in this convergence: perspectives developed independently, based on distinct empirical objects, arrive at similar diagnoses regarding how economic action is organized in contexts of scarcity and unpredictability. Some elements cut across all the perspectives analyzed and are confirmed in the statements of the women entrepreneurs: scarcity as a starting point, improvisation as a method, everyday life as a strategic space, and networks as capital. What distinguishes the Brazilian frameworks from effectuation is the angle. While effectual logic describes how entrepreneurs act under uncertainty,



the *virador*, ordinary management, and the crossroads entrepreneur name the conditions under which this uncertainty is produced and who carries it.

This editorial brought together arguments that usually do not dialogue in literature as an analytical proposition. Brazilian authors restore to entrepreneurial practices their collective, territorial, and historically conditioned dimension and, in this way, shift the analysis from the individual level of decision-making to the structural level of life. Carrieri (2025) precisely names this movement when he says that ordinary management emancipates not only the small manager, but also the researcher, because looking at how things actually happen is, in itself, a political project of liberating subjectivity in the dynamics of research. This editorial is part of this project.

From an empirical standpoint, the trajectories of the women affiliated with Asplande illustrate how necessity entrepreneurship, frequently interpreted as an absence of planning or managerial capacity, follows a rationality of its own; rigorous in its own way, anchored in what one has, what one can afford to lose, and whom one can count on.

Finally, the implications of this study extend beyond the Brazilian context. Bringing Saras Sarasvathy closer to authors from the Global South is a commitment to a territorialized entrepreneurship that does not need to justify itself according to the criteria of another place (Afonso; Silva, 2024; Afonso; Brufato; Orsi-Tinoco, 2025; Souza Neto, 2003; 2005; 2008; 2009; 2013).

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