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THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

poor women in rural Bangladesh

Anastasia A. Seferiadis

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copromotor:	dr. M.B.M. Zweekhorst

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

POOR WOMEN IN RURAL BANGLADESH

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad Doctor aan
de Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam,
op gezag van de rector magnificus
prof. dr. V. Subramaniam,
in het openbaar te verdedigen
ten overstaan van de promotiecommissie
van de Faculteit der Aard- en Levenswetenschappen
op donderdag 13 oktober 2016 om 13.45 uur
in de auditorium van de universiteit,
De Boelelaan 1105

door
Anastasia Alithia Seferiadis
geboren te Greenock

Account

Chapter 2:
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Chapter 6:
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PART I:

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1. General introduction

1.1. Aim and purpose

> *When we want to help the poor, we usually offer them charity. Most often we use charity to avoid recognizing the problem and finding the solution for it. Charity becomes a way to shrug off our responsibility. But charity is no solution to poverty. Charity only perpetuates poverty by taking the initiative away from the poor. (*Muhammed Yunus, 2003)

Recent commentators have argued that development is too important to depend on subsidies and charities alone while, at the same time, there is a growing understanding that businesses should not be motivated only by profit. The convergence of these trends has given birth to a range of new theoretical and empirical developments.[1]

One development approach embedded in the social fabric is social entrepreneurship, which is viewed as 'development beyond aid' (Fowler, 2000: 638) representing one alternative manner in which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can stimulate independent, sustainable development (Fowler, 2000). We can see an emergence of NGOs following the social

[1] For an overview of the social economy, see Frère, 2013.

entrepreneurship model as 'ideological imperatives that non-profit organizations should not be making a profit to achieve certain developmental goals are now contested' (Rashid, 2010). In a social entrepreneurship approach welfare and commercial aims are combined (Mair and Marti, 2006; Basu, 2012; Zahra et al., 2009). Social entrepreneurs have an 'embedded social purpose' (Austin, Stevenson, and Wei-Skillern, 2006:1) and are change agents in the social sector (Dees, 2001). They generally put their social goal first but need to generate require revenue for sustainability (Thompson, Kiefer and York, 2011: 205). Although social entrepreneurship can be seen as a 'micro solution' to overcome the poverty trap (Mair and Marti, 2007: 499), 'social entrepreneurs face a specific set of challenges because they purposely locate their activities in areas where markets function poorly' (Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey, 2010: 683).

Development discourse also recognizes that social capital, namely 'the aggregate of the actual and potential resources, which are linked to possession of a durable network' (Bourdieu, 1986: 248), is of extreme importance in the context of poverty alleviation. Indeed, it contributes to alleviating poverty because it is endowed with many productive outcomes. Many studies have shown its benefits: social capital has been shown to reduce the likelihood of being poor (Grootaert, 2001) and stronger social capital has been associated with economic gains and poverty alleviation (for a review see Halpern, 2005).

Interestingly, social entrepreneurship has strong links with social capital. For example, many studies have highlighted the importance of entrepreneurial networks for business success (Granovetter, 1985; Birley, 1985; Woolcock, 1998; Johannisson, 2000; Elfring and Hulsink, 2003; Hoang and Antonic, 2003; Hite, 2005; Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2010; Anderson, Dodd and Jack 2010; Leitch, McMullan and Harrison, 2013). In addition, there is evidence that social capital promotes the process of social entrepreneurship in development contexts (Bhagavatula et al., 2010; Mair and Marti, 2007, 2009). Social capital describes mutually beneficial relations and actions (Woolcock, 1998: 153), and social entrepreneurship is about win-win dynamics, as it combines social contributions with economic benefits (Folwer, 2000). Hence social capital might represent the best concept to reveal how social entrepreneurs function.

Social entrepreneurship seems to be particularly promising in socio-economic and environmentally constrained contexts (Babu and Pinstrup-Andersen, 2007) such as rural Bangladesh. As the World Bank argues, 'Poverty – in Bangladesh – remains a substantial and stubborn problem' (World Bank 2013: viii). In 2010, some 47 million Bangladeshis were still living in poverty and 26 million in

extreme poverty (World Bank, 2013). The situation for women is even worse (with a gender inequality index of 0.529, ranking 115/152 countries; UNDP, 2014). Although economic opportunities for women appear to be growing in urban Bangladesh, rural women have few opportunities to improve their livelihoods (Narayan and Petesch, 2002; World Bank, 2007). Given that when gender discrimination intersects with economic deprivation, women are not only poorer than men but also have fewer opportunities to overcome poverty (Kabeer 2003), creating paths for women's development is constrained by the social fabric. Indeed, women in Bangladesh face the social constraints of patriarchy, patrilineality, patrilocality and *purdah* (Larance, 1998; Feldman, 2001). The question is whether stimulating female social entrepreneurship would improve the situation of poor women in Bangladesh.

Not much is known about social entrepreneurs because they represent a 'hidden population', not easily identified by researchers (Huysentruyt, 2014). Some insights have been gained into how social entrepreneurship can be used as a development tool in resource-constrained environments (Naudé, 2010), but very little is known about how to stimulate (individual) social entrepreneurship among poor women. Moreover, while it is known that social capital matters (in particular in the context of social entrepreneurship), empirical evidence on how interventions can develop productive social capital is still scarce (Grootaert, 2002b; Vajja and White, 2008; Jicha, Thompson, Fulkerson and May, 2011).

The aim of this thesis is to acquire insights into the relationship between social capital, social entrepreneurship and development among poor women in rural Bangladesh. This leads to the following main research question:

> *How can social capital be strengthened to stimulate social entrepreneurship for poverty alleviation of poor women in rural Bangladesh?*

1.2. Insights from theory

1.2.1. What is social capital?

A full review of the nature of social capital is presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Here we summarize the main points raised.

Social capital comprises the resources that are available to individuals as a consequence of their social network. It refers to the idea that there is value in our social fabric. In the same way as our economic capital enables us to buy resources, our social capital enables us to access resources, providing access to information through the members of our networks and facilitating the achievement of common goals. The concept has become increasingly popular among scholars and development practitioners in the last two decades, largely influenced by Putnam's (Halpern, 2005: 9) analysis of the role of social capital in the differing systems of democratic governance in northern and southern Italy (Putnam, 1993). The concept has also gained widespread recognition of its relevance for development, having been endorsed by the World Bank, and even being described as the 'missing link' in development (Grootaert, 1998). As referred to in Chapter 2, there are many definitions of social capital. For the purposes of this introduction, we use the foundational definition proposed by Bourdieu: 'social capital is the aggregate of the actual and potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network' (1986: 248).

Bourdieu (1986) considers that profit can be derived from social capital, although this does not mean that profit is sought consciously. For Bourdieu (1986), profits derive from the establishment and maintenance of relationships, processes that involve obligations that are subjectively felt (through feelings of gratitude, respect or friendship) or guaranteed by social institutions (referring to family members, heirs or knights). Indeed, an effort of sociability is necessary for social capital to be produced, with relationships being established and maintained through exchanges (ibid). Social capital also carries 'opportunities for mutually beneficial collective action' (Woolcock, 1998: 153) and hence makes it possible to explore paths of win-win development.

Some scholars locate social capital at the individual level (for example, Lin, 1999) and others at the level of communities (for example, Putnam, 1993). As Foley and Edwards (1999) conceptualize it, the brokerage of social resources can be organized at different levels of networks: dyads and informal networks (Burt, 1997; Heying, 1997), voluntary or faith-based associations (Eastis, 1998; Wood, 1997), communities (Bebbington, 1997; Schulman and Anderson, 1999), cities (Portney and Berry, 1997), at national levels (Minkoff, 1997) and at the transnational level of social movements (Smith, 1997, 1998). Hence, the alleviation of poverty can be stimulated through social capital by acting at its different scales of operations. As reviewed by Halpern (2005): *micro*, at the individual level; *meso*, at the community level; and *macro*, at the societal level. Rothstein (2003) argues that it is a strength of the theory of social capital that it facilitates the unusual combination of macro-sociological structures with micro-

level mechanisms. From this perspective, these levels can constitute the levels of analysis as social capital: social capital can facilitate development at the micro level of collective action (groups, villages, associations) but also at the meso level of institutions.

Granovetter (1973) has focused on the conceptualization of interpersonal ties as an important element of social capital. He considers that such ties are of different strengths, depending on the '(probably) linear combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie' (Granovetter, 1973: 1361). Along the development path, varying uses are associated with these strengths: for example, weak ties can be an asset in seeking employment (Granovetter, 1973); or while intra-community ties are most useful for poor entrepreneurs when they start their business, extra-community ties become more useful when enterprises grow (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). A consensus is emerging in the literature on a classification of 'bonding', 'bridging', and 'linking' social capital: at the micro-level, bonding refers to familial networks, bridging to networks with peers, and linking to vertical networks with power-holders (Halpern, 2005). These three subtypes have different functions along the development paths and can be characterized as three functional subtypes.

As conceptualized by Uphoff, structural and cognitive components are the 'mechanisms by which social capital is built up and accumulated, stored, modified, expressed, and perpetuated' (Uphoff, 1999: 219). Structural components enable mutually beneficial collective actions through the establishment of social networks and roles (Uphoff, 1999), and comprise network resources (range of resources, best resources, variety of resources, contact resources) and network location (structural role, structural constraint) (Lin, 1999). Cognitive components consist of norms and values, and predispose people towards collective action (Uphoff, 1999) and have been operationalized as solidarity, trust and cooperation (Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2002; Krishna and Uphoff, 1999). Thus, cognitive and structural social capital can be considered to be investment components.

How social capital can be strengthened and leveraged through development interventions remains underdeveloped however (Grootaert, 2002; Jicha, Thompson, Fulkerson and May, 2011; Vajja and White, 2008). Furthermore, due to its lack of conceptual clarity the concept (and use) of social capital has been criticized (Portes and Landolt, 1996; Portes, 1998; Fine, 2001).

1.2.2. Benefits of social capital

Social capital is associated with many productive benefits. It has long been linked with better health outcomes (Berkman and Syme, 1979; Russek and Schwartz, 1997), and enhanced wellbeing (Donovan and Halpern, 2003 in Halpern, 2005; Helliwell, 2002). In addition, social capital has been associated with economic gains and poverty alleviation (Narayan, 1997; Fafchamps and Minten, 2002; Lyon, 2000; Grootaert, 2001). It has also been argued that social capital contributes to development outcomes: for example, social capital was shown to stimulate watershed management in India (Krishna and Uphoff, 2002), an irrigation scheme in Sri Lanka (Uphoff, 1996), water delivery in Indonesia (Isham and Kahkonen, 2002), waste collection in Bangladesh (Pargal, Gilligan and Huq, 2002), or group work in Bangladesh (Ahmad, 2003). In the past two decades, the concept of social capital has become enormously popular among scholars and development practitioners (Halpern, 2005: 9), and the World Bank has described it as the 'missing link' in development (Grootaert, 1998).

One main productive outcome of social capital comprises access to human capital (Coleman, 1998; Lin, 1999). Generally defined as skills and capabilities, knowledge, labour and good health (Scoones, 1998), 'human capital is created by changes in persons that bring about skills and capabilities that make them able to act in new ways' (Coleman, 1998: S100). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) conceptualized how social capital contributes to knowledge and knowing capabilities in the field of organizational and management studies. In their model social capital stimulates knowledge combination and exchange when actors anticipate value in the creation and exchange of knowledge, are motivated to combine and exchange, have the capability to combine and exchange, and have access to others for combining and exchanging. In the development context, knowledge is seen as playing an essential role. It is key in the Human Development Index (which helps the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) monitor national progress in human development) or in the Sustainable Development Goals (which succeeded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and have set the development agenda for the 2016–2030 period). It should be noted, however, that knowledge refers specifically to scientific and technological knowledge, while local, embedded and traditional forms of knowledge are largely ignored.

Although there are correlations between social capital and productive benefits, it is debated whether social capital can be deliberately leveraged to contribute to development outcomes. For some authors, the value of social capital resides in its ability to be productive (Coleman, 1998: 98), to facilitate collective actions

(Woolcock, 2001:13) and to provide resources 'accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions' (Lin, 1999: 35). For Bourdieu (1986), social capital cannot be instrumentalized, while in Putnam's work social capital is not compatible with purposeful strengthening as contemporary differences are ascribed to changes taking place over centuries (Putnam, 1993).

Despite its many associations with productive benefits, social capital is also associated with negative effects. Rubio (1977), for example, argues that there is not only productive social capital but also perverse social capital. Social capital can exclude the poorest as has been shown in Bangladesh (Dowla, 2006) and was also found to reproduce poverty in Tanzania (Cleaver, 2005). As the World Bank observes, social capital can exclude new entrants, constrain an individual's growth under community pressure, or be harmful to other groups (Mayoux, 2001). This is particularly detrimental for women whose social capital (or their husbands' social capital) can have negative externalities. In a study of a micro-finance project, social capital was shown to exacerbate gender inequalities in Cameroon (Mayoux, 2001), women's unequal position in relation to men within social networks in Indonesia were described as limiting their access to resources (Silvey and Elmhirst, 2003), and girls in India were described as being unable to attend school because of ties with their communities (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). It has been shown that the type of outcomes depends on the prevailing norms and values: for example Mayoux (2001) has shown in Cameroon that detrimental effect of social capital for women resulted from a failure to examine the prevailing norms in one development project.

1.2.3. Social entrepreneurship and social capital

Social entrepreneurs, like all entrepreneurs, recognize and exploit opportunities (Shane, 2000). Social entrepreneurship has been defined as one specific type of entrepreneurship comprising 'a way of thinking, reasoning, and acting that is opportunity based, holistic in approach and leadership balanced' (Timmons and Spinelli, 2009: 101). Social entrepreneurs effectively use opportunity recognition skills to create economic benefits and social value (Fowler, 2000). The social *bricolage* framework, adapted by Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey (2010), conceptualizes the way in which social entrepreneurs access resources on the basis of opportunism. In particular, the concept of *bricolage* has been used to analyse entrepreneurship in resource-constrained environments (Baker and Nelson, 2005; Garud and Karnoe, 2003). As originally introduced by Levi-Strauss (1967: 17), *bricolage* refers to the process of 'making do with what is at hand': entrepreneurs develop various strategies depending on the circumstances and

which are 'unrestricted *a priori*' (Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey, 2010: 685). *Bricolage* also encompasses a refusal to be constrained by limitations, in which entrepreneurs test and resist conventional limitations (Baker and Nelson, 2005). This is linked to processes of improvization through which entrepreneurs counteract environmental limitations (Miner et al., 2001; Weick, 1993). In addition to these different aspects of *bricolage*, namely unrestricted strategies, refusal to be constrained and improvization, Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey (2010) add three concepts specific to social entrepreneurship: social value creation, stakeholder participation and persuasion.

Social capital is a resource that has been shown to be particularly important for social entrepreneurs (Birley, 1985; Granovetter, 1985; Woolcock, 1998; Johannisson, 2000; Elfring and Hulsink, 2003; Hoang and Antonic, 2003; Hite, 2005; Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2010; Anderson, Dodd and Jack 2010; Leitch, McMullan and Harrison, 2013) also in the context of resource constraints in developing countries (Bhagavatula et al., 2010; Mair and Marti, 2007, 2009). Social capital is used as opportunity: entrepreneurs' recognition of opportunities can be conceived as the identification of 'structural holes', representing loose connections between networks which are identified by an entrepreneur as representing an opportunity (Burt, 1992). However, 'the academic community has not yet identified what kinds of networks bring a competitive advantage to entrepreneurs' (Bhagavatula et al., 2010: 245, cited in Maas, 2013). Moreover, if it has been suggested that social capital stimulates social entrepreneurship and even that social entrepreneurship could impact on social capital, it has also been argued that such a relationship needs empirical verification (Madhooshi and Samimi, 2015).

One way in through which social capital has been demonstrated to stimulate social entrepreneurship is through its impact on human capital because information and skills become accessible through social networks (Bhagavatula et al., 2010). There is a learning component in social entrepreneurship as entrepreneurs are engaged in a dynamic learning process (Cope 2005). In addition to knowledge, a set of cognitive skills is of particular importance (Davidsson and Honig, 2010; Unger, Rauch, Frese and Rosenbusch, 2011; Santarelli and Tran, 2012). Entrepreneurs are described as using the strategy of effectuation, namely making decisions that respond to situations rather than meticulous forward planning (Sarasvathy, 2004). Entrepreneurs 'actively exercise their creative and combinatorial capabilities, their tolerance for ambiguity and messiness and setbacks, and their ability to improvise and take advantage of emerging resources and opportunities' (Baker, Nelson and Carolina, 2005). These cognitive principles highlight how social entrepreneurs can change their

environments: a social entrepreneur 'creates, transforms and de-institutionalizes rules and norms' (Mair and Marti, 2007). Indeed, this shows that entrepreneurs change the system and do not merely seize existing opportunities. There have, however, been calls for more research on the link between human capital and social entrepreneurship (Blackburn and Kovalainen, 2009; Wang and Chugh, 2013).

1.3. Theoretical framework and research questions

In the previous section we have shown that there is some evidence that social capital and poverty are correlated, but that social capital can also lead to negative outcomes (for example, Mayoux, 2001). In addition, different components of social capital have different roles in terms of development: there are different functional subtypes and different investment components. But not only is there a lack of conceptual clarity regarding the concept of social capital (Portes and Landolt, 1996; Portes 1998; Fine, 2001) there is also lack of agreement on whether (and how) social capital could be instrumentalized for development (Coleman, 1998; Woolcock, 2001; Lin, 1999; versus Bourdieu, 1986; Putnam, 1993).

Social capital creates positive benefits but also has perverse costs, and context and gender greatly modulate such outcomes hence the conditions with which social capital can contribute to poverty alleviation. The alleviation of poverty can be stimulated through social capital according to three subtypes (bonding, bridging and linking), which have different functions in terms of development. And two components (structural and cognitive) can be invested in for strengthening social capital. Evidence appears to correlate social capital with poverty alleviation through an enhanced access to various forms of capital (Coleman, 1998; Lin, 1999; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998), but little is known about the creation (and co-creation) of embedded local knowledge for development. Moreover, if social capital can contribute to poverty alleviation, how this contribution can be activated and leveraged by development interventions remains underdeveloped (Grootaert, 2002; Vajja and White, 2008; Jicha, Thompson, Fulkerson and May, 2011).

Social entrepreneurship is perceived as a potential strategy to overcome the poverty trap. Social entrepreneurs use social *bricolage* (unrestricted strategies, refusal to be constrained, improvization, social value creation, stakeholder participation, persuasion) to obtain access to resources. Research has identified how tapping resources, such as social or human capital, helps to strengthen the

social entrepreneurship process. Social capital is linked to poverty alleviation because it has the capacity to stimulate access to resources, in particular to knowledge and information. Moreover, the concept of social capital makes it possible to describe exchange of win-win dynamics, and is hence a concept particularly suited to revealing how social entrepreneurs work.

The theoretical framework (Figure 1.1) used in this thesis was developed from the theoretical explorations set out in section 2. The framework hypothesizes the relationship between social capital and social entrepreneurship. In the literature, we established that the different subtypes of social capital and the structural and cognitive components play a role in strengthening social capital. In the framework, we see that social capital has a hypothesized relationship with poverty alleviation and that strengthening social capital can have an impact in terms of poverty alleviation. In addition, we hypothesize that strengthening social capital facilitates social entrepreneurship.

With the objective of contributing to how development interventions can promote the alleviation of poverty this thesis analyses the main research question:

> *How can social capital be strengthened to stimulate social entrepreneurship for poverty alleviation of poor women in rural Bangladesh?*

Focusing on the micro-level we therefore sought to understand how social capital contributes to poverty alleviation in development initiatives. This led to the following research question:

> *Research question 1: How does social capital plays a role in poverty alleviation projects?*

This research question was divided into two sub-research questions: 1 a) How can social capital contribute to poverty alleviation and how can development initiatives successfully invest in social capital at the micro-level?; 1b) Why a development project developed the objective to strengthen social capital for poverty alleviation in the specific context of rural Bangladesh and how the project conducted this?

Given the evidence from the literature that social capital contributes to poverty alleviation, we decided that the next step was to investigate strategies used by an NGO to contribute poverty alleviation, leading to the next research question:

Research question 2: How can social capital be strengthened to contribute to poverty alleviation?

This research question was divided into two sub-research questions: 2 a) How does strengthening of social capital at the grassroots contribute to knowledge creation and exchange, and what types of new know-how are being co-created by project participants?; 2 b) What types of social capital have been leveraged and which strategies have been developed to strengthen women's social capital for poverty alleviation in rural Bangladesh?

A considerable body of research shows that social entrepreneurship and social capital are tied to each other: in particular, both are concerned with win-win dynamics of development. Empirical evidence on the causal relationship between these concepts is lacking however (Madhooshi and Samimi, 2015). This led to the following research question:

Research question 3: How can strengthening of social capital result in stimulating social entrepreneurship?

This research question was divided into two sub-research questions: 3 a) What are the effects of a social entrepreneurship approach on entrepreneurial development and the outcomes produced by participating social entrepreneurs?; 3 b) How do social capital of social entrepreneurs develop over time and how does that influence entrepreneurial success?

Each research question is addressed by two sub-research questions and corresponding chapters, which are summarized in Table 1.1.

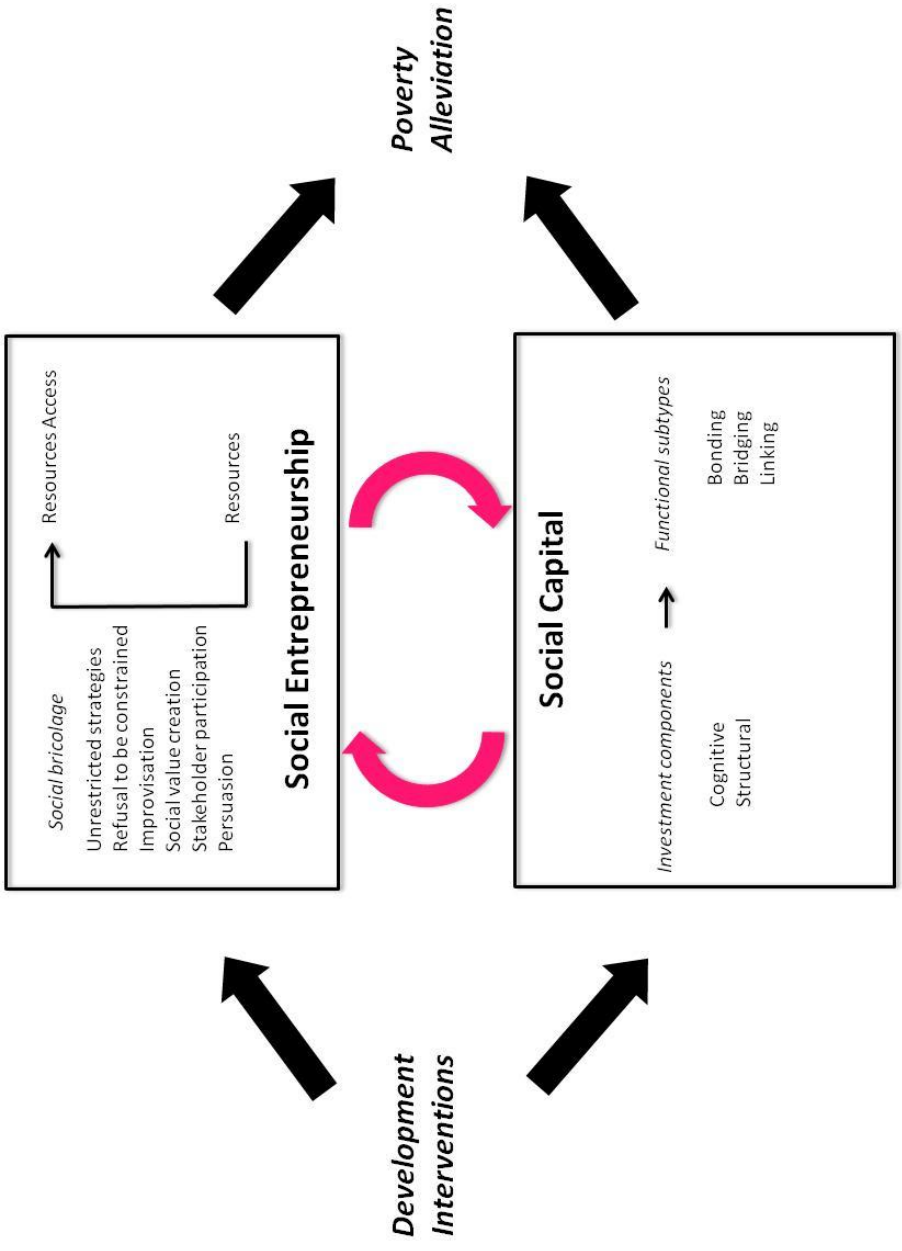

Figure 1.1: Theoretical framework.

Table 1.1: A summary of research questions.

Research questions	Sub-research questions	Chapter's numbers
How does social capital play a role in poverty alleviation projects?	*a) How can social capital contribute to poverty alleviation and how can development initiatives successfully invest in social capital at the micro-level?*	Chapter 2
	b) Why a development project developed the objective to strengthen social capital for poverty alleviation in the specific context of rural Bangladesh and how the project conducted this?	Chapter 3
How can social capital be strengthened to contribute to poverty alleviation?	*a) How does strengthening of social capital at the grassroots contribute to knowledge creation and exchange, and what types of new know-how are being co-created by project participants?*	Chapter 4
	b) What types of social capital have been leveraged and which strategies have been developed to strengthen women's social capital for poverty alleviation in rural Bangladesh?	Chapter 5
How can strengthening of social capital results in stimulating social entrepreneurship?	*a) What are the effects of a social entrepreneurship approach on entrepreneurial development and the outcomes produced by participating social entrepreneurs?*	Chapter 6
	b) How do social capital of social entrepreneurs develop over time and how does that influence entrepreneurial success?	Chapter 7

1.4. Research design

1.4.1. Research project

This thesis analyses how one long-term action–research project developed a road-map for alleviating women's poverty in Bangladesh through building on the social fabric to stimulate social entrepreneurship.

In this research project, we applied the Interactive Learning and Action approach (ILA) to stimulate building social capital in rural Bangladesh. The ILA approach was originally used to enhance farmer-oriented innovation processes in developing countries (Broerse, 1998; Bunders, 1990). The ILA approach has been applied in different fields: influencing public attitudes to genetically modified crops (see, for example, De Cock Buning et al., 2011), development of neurosciences (see, for example, Arentshorst et al., 2014; Pittens et al., 2014), reducing leprosy-related stigma (see, for example, Peters et al., 2015), patient participation in setting health agendas (see, for example, van der Ham et al., 2014; Pittens et al., 2014) and urban waste processes in Europe (see, for example, Broerse et al., 2013). It has also been applied in many countries, including Indonesia (see, for example, Peters et al., 2015), South Africa (Swaans et al., 2009), Bangladesh (Zweekhorst, 2004; Maas, 2013; Maas et al. 2014a, 2014b), Thailand (Sermrittirong et al., 2014) and the Netherlands (see, for example, De Cock Buning et al., 2014; Arentshorst et al., 2014). The approach comprises five phases (Bunders et al., 2010):

> *Phase 1– Initiation and preparation*: analysis of the context and establishment of the research team;
>
> *Phase 2– In-depth study of needs and visions*: identification, analysis and integration of the perspectives, needs and interests of the different stakeholders;
>
> *Phase 3– Integration:* integration of the knowledge perspectives and needs of the different stakeholders;
>
> *Phase 4 – Public priority setting and planning*: reflection on the previous phase results, priority setting and planning for the next phase;
>
> *Phase 5– Project formulation and implementation*: formulation and implementation of specific projects.

The first three phases of the ILA approach are referred to as reconnaissance, after which a spiral of activities recurs continuously (phases 4 and 5). This is similar to the action–research spiral developed by Kemmis and Mc Taggert (1988) (see Figure 1.2). Every cycle consists of revised planning, action, observation and reflection after which a new cycle starts.

Action–research was applied to investigate how development could be triggered in the specific context of Bangladesh. This action–research project was undertaken with a local NGO called PRIDE. Before the start of the project, the 'pre-reconnaissance phase', the Athena Institute had worked with the Grameen Krishi Foundation (GKF) Technology Assessment Unit from 1998 until 2004. Then some GKF staff started their own NGO, PRIDE.

PRIDE, established in 2004, focuses on improving the livelihoods of poor[2] people in rural agricultural communities in Jessore district in which between 48% and 60% of the population lives below the poverty line of USD 2 a day (Islam et al., 2012). This thesis focuses on one of PRIDE's projects: the Route to Sustainable Development (RSD) project, which later became the Social Entrepreneurial Leadership (SEL) project. The aim of this project is to alleviate poverty. The project trains poor women in starting up and managing Income-Generating Activities (IGAs) as a mean to enhance their own livelihoods, while also facilitating the development of other poor women in their village. The action–research project enabled us to develop, implement and evaluate an approach to stimulate the emergence of social entrepreneurship among local people living in poverty.

[2] 'Poor' follows the World Bank threshold of USD 1.90 per day (Ferreira et al., 2015), and BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee, one of the main development organisations in Bangladesh) which defines 'poor' as: four income sources, ability to eat two meals a day, a kitchen garden, short- and medium-term income-generating assets such as livestock or poultry, a sanitary latrine, a solid roof, and school-going children (Das and Mischa, 2010). As analyzed in Chapter 3, our definition of 'poor' has been in practice determined from participatory mappings and interviews with local people. These households are landless with, at best, a small garden to grow vegetables or raise a few poultry (one or two chickens); live in rudimentary houses with jute plants or sacks for walls, and roofs made of palm leaves; clothes are hung up on ropes and a small tin box is generally their only furniture; sanitation facilities, if any, are represented by a hole in the ground; and they cannot afford to eat more than two meals a day, sometimes only one meal, and cannot afford fish or meat. The community members selected through project participants as from the poorest wealth ranking categories of the village. The households selected were therefore ultra-poor from the community perspective: in Chapters 6 and 7 they are thus referred as such.

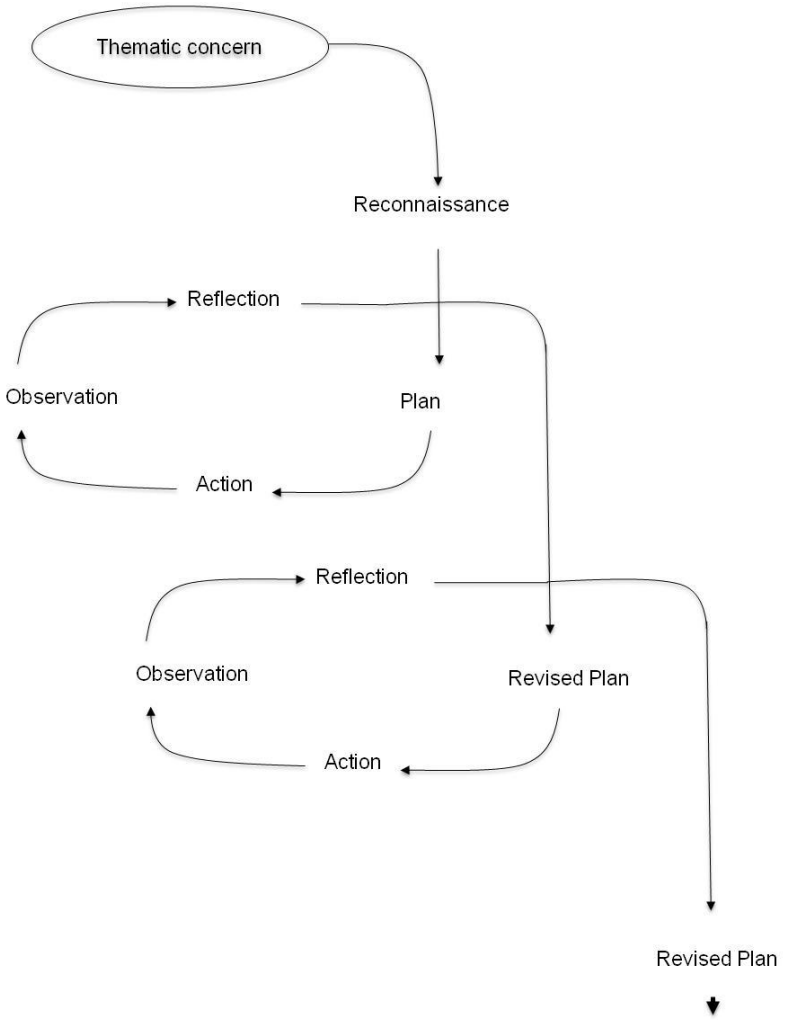

Figure 1.2: Action–research spiral, from Kemmis and Mc Taggert (1988).

The project started in 2004 with the first three phases of the ILA approach. In the reconnaissance phase we gained more knowledge about poverty in Bangladesh. In particular we learnt that better nutrition was a priority for families living hand-to-mouth. During this phase, PRIDE also developed experience in forming social networks. From 2006 the first learning cycle started. All activities were continuously monitored and evaluated. This thesis focuses on the ILA learning cycles applied in the RSD/SEL project[3]. We present data from

[3] Details of the project and its methodology are presented and analyzed in chapter 3.

2006 until 2012. In the various learning cycles we can identify three phases: (1) experimentation, (2) implementation and (3) scaling-up.

Experimentation phase (2006–2008)
In the experimentation phase, the NGO selected and trained poor women to experiment with IGAs. From mappings and interviews with local people, the nature of poverty was characterized: households that were landless with, at best, a small garden, living in rudimentary houses, eating two and sometimes only one meal a day, and not able to afford fish or meat, and with women facing additional constraints such as the *purdah* (for details see Chapter 3). This phase comprised three learning cycles of one year each. During the first (2006), two women were identified who were already managing IGAs and were relatively successful compared to other women in their village and who were willing to experiment with other IGAs in order to achieve more income for themselves as well as for other people in the community. IGAs comprised home-based gardening and backyard poultry rearing. Monitoring and evaluation of these IGAs resulted in designing an approach to developing social entrepreneurship. Since the project was still in an experimental phase and it was unclear whether the women could obtain a profit from the IGAs, they received a monthly stipend.

During the second learning cycle (2007), four additional poor women were included in the project. Through training sessions based on the lessons learnt from the first two 'intermediaries', PRIDE trained these four women in the knowledge and skills required to develop and manage IGAs. These women – 'intermediaries' – also received a monthly stipend. In order to assure a better income for other villagers, the women had to identify other local women, their beneficiaries, who were interested in starting IGAs. The idea was that the intermediaries would train the beneficiaries in IGAs, so that they could generate their own income. However, since the women had neither experience in IGAs, nor experience in training other people, the staff organized training for both intermediaries and beneficiaries. After the training the intermediaries and beneficiaries started up IGAs. PRIDE staff extensively monitored the intermediaries and the beneficiaries were monitored by intermediaries (initially joined by PRIDE staff). The intermediaries assisted the beneficiaries in generating an income from their activities.

During the third learning cycle (2008), 15 women were included in the project. As the project aimed to stimulating the development of all local people living in poverty, it experimented with training men as well. Hence five men were included in the project, but they soon left when they found other work, so from

then on the project focused exclusively on women. Since the previous learning cycle also drew out lessons on intermediaries training beneficiaries, the NGO focused on training only the intermediaries, who from then on would be responsible for training their beneficiaries. Training for intermediaries was organized on 10 topics: vegetable cultivation, integrated pest management (IPM), vegetable seed production, composting, primary health care (PHC), mother and child healthcare, fish cultivation, poultry rearing, nursery establishment, tailoring and handicrafts. Experiments were conducted with some new IGAs such as handicrafts or sewing, from which the intermediaries could earn money from their interactions with their beneficiaries. These included mediating sales of handicrafts made by beneficiaries or vaccinating the beneficiaries' poultry for a small fee. In this phase the NGO staff monitored particularly closely how the intermediaries trained their beneficiaries. The staff attended the beneficiaries' training sessions, but also was accompanying intermediaries when visiting their beneficiaries' homes. During the home visits the intermediaries monitored and evaluated their beneficiaries' IGAs. Training was given in the same 10 topics (vegetable cultivation, IPM, vegetable seed production, composting, PHC, mother and child healthcare, fish cultivation, poultry rearing, nursery establishment, tailoring and handicrafts).

Implementation phase (2009–2010)

In the course of 2008–2009 all participants were able to generate revenue from their activities. In 2009, the implementation phase was launched and 32 women were selected and trained as intermediaries, but without a stipend. From the 10 original topics, the training was condensed to only five, focusing on those the trainees found most profitable: vegetable and seed production, tree-nursery management, backyard poultry rearing and vaccination, tailoring and handicrafts, and farm management including a variety of topics such as fish production, goat rearing and cow fattening. Each training session was repeated twice in order to enhance learning. As processes became better understood, the NGO staff monitoring became less intensive: in particular, intermediaries' home visits were reduced over the years. In 2010 the fifth learning cycle commenced and 26 women were trained to become intermediaries. During this cycle, it became clear that women were meeting dual objectives by being involved in the project, namely contributing to the development of their community while developing themselves: women were becoming social entrepreneurs.

Scaling-up (2011–2012)

The scaling-up started in 2011. It is in this phase that it became a project explicitly aiming to stimulate social entrepreneurship. Women were not only creating social value but also enhancing their own development. In 2011, 26

women were trained as social entrepreneurs followed by another 26 women in 2012. During that period, it was questioned whether the intervention was stimulating women's development and in which aspects: evaluations were conducted. The project has continued to train women every year since then without any formal involvement of the Athena Institute.

1.4.2. Research methods

To answer research question 1, a literature review was undertaken to provide insights into what was known in terms of mechanisms for producing social capital (question 1a): sampling of literature was made, using a method 'akin to snowball sampling' (Babbie, 2013: 265). In parallel the action–research project was being carried out using the ILA methodology and was analysed using mixed methods in how it developed an objective to strengthen social capital (question 1b). In order to answer research question 2 we explored retrospectively PRIDE's long-term action–research project to study how the strengthening of social capital contributed to embedded knowledge to develop an approach that stimulated women's development (question 2a) and analysed strategies for producing social capital (question 2b). Then to answer research question 3 the project was evaluated to study the contribution of social entrepreneurship to the alleviation of women's poverty (question 3a) and how social capital stimulated social entrepreneurship (question 3b).

The action–research project spanned over six years and hence comprises a rich data set that enables detailed reflections. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect data, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), visual ethnography (photo-voice methodology), questionnaires and participant observation. As Gravlee (2011) describes, in-depth interviews were used to explore lived experiences from informants' perspectives and identify important issues, semi-structured interviews enabled better comparison between informants, FGDs enable group interaction and the ability to explore steps in a process. We used the photo-voice method as adapted from Wang, Burris and Ping (1996) to explore domains of change from women's perspective. This participatory method enables participants, despite their limited literacy, to 'record and reflect their lives (…) from their own point of view' (ibid). The method involves taking pictures that are then discussed with the participants in groups; such discussions foster a critical and collective analysis of the issues.

Respondents included the NGO staff, entrepreneurs and beneficiaries who participated in the project, and a range of community members. Data collected

from all phases of the action–research project (experimentation, implementation and scaling-up) was used to answer questions focused on learning processes: 1.b, 2a, 2b. Data more specifically collected during the scaling-up phase was used to answer questions focused on evaluation: 3a and 3c.

Table 1.2: Overview of data, stakeholder categories and data-collection instruments.

Respondents	PRIDE	Experimental phase		Implementation phase		Scaling-up phase		Community members
		Intermediaries	Beneficiaries	Intermediaries	Beneficiaries	Social entrepreneurs	Beneficiaries	
Data collection period: Experimentation phase								
In-depth interviews	1	1	8					23
FGDs	7	1	1					2
Data collection period: Implementation phase								
In-depth interviews	1	4	2	7	14			2
FGDs		2	2	2	2			
Photo-voice participants		5	5	7	6			
Questionnaires		25	2	38	6			1
Participatory mapping								5
Training observation	2			2				
Data collection period: Scaling-up phase								
Questionnaires						26		
Monthly reports						24		
In-depth interviews	11					20		17
FGDs						4		18

Table 1.2 summarizes the different research methods applied and the stakeholder categories. [4]

1.4.3. Validity

Different questions relating to bias in this research need to be posed. First is researcher bias, since the researchers involved in this action–research process were not distant observers but actively engaged in the project. Participatory research models seek to produce research that is non-hierarchical and non-manipulative (for example, Elberse, 2012). Second, this research focused on exploring participants' social capital and hence addressed topics such as reciprocity or solidarity, thus providing the ground for women to provide socially desirable answers. A range of strategies was therefore applied to enhance validity of the research.

We organized triangulation of researchers, instruments and data, as summarized in Table 1.3. Research questions, interview designs and data analysis were developed in a research team. Anastasia Seferiadis, and co-authors Jeroen Maas, Marjolein Zweekhorst, Joske Bunders, another researcher (Frea Haker) and Master's students (Ruth Peters, Irisa Ono, Leonie van der Snee, Danielle Branje and Lutien Bakker) all visited Bangladesh for periods ranging from one week to four months to participate in the research.

The researchers reflected with PRIDE staff on the progress and challenges of the project (Palash C. Torfder, Shipra Mollick, Pankag U. Mondal, Mitali R. Satpathi, Abdul Haque, Provat Roy, Amar C. Mondal and Shazim U. Sheikh). In addition PRIDE staff was continuously monitoring the entrepreneurs, and communicating with the Amsterdam-based research team by email and telephone. This enabled the reflection of the programme from different perspectives and allowed for multiple compositions of the research team to gather field data.

Several methods were used to triangulate the data. First of all, saturation was sought. In addition, questions were asked differently: from the very open photo-voice method, which asked women to depict changes in their lives, to the closed questionnaires asking for different themes on how much change had occurred

[4] The table presents the data collected during the three different project phases and hence does not follow research questions or the chapters of this PhD. The respondents were interviewed during these different project phases, hence sometimes the same respondents were interviewed several times (including the staff members, or some intermediaries/ entrepreneurs).

(and, for example, measured in terms of the quantity of specific vegetables grown). Various data-collections methods were used: in-depth interviews, FGDs, questionnaires, photo-voice, visualization techniques, participation in training and observations. Data obtained from one method was checked against data obtained from at least two other data-collection methods. For example, the results of the photo-voice with intermediaries on their activities were checked against questionnaires and in-depth interviews conducted with them. In addition data was checked by two different researchers or research teams. Different researchers applied the same instruments so that the data obtained by different researchers could be compared to check for inconsistencies. Data collected between different stakeholder categories was also triangulated. For example, data on relationships between intermediaries and community members was checked with interviews with intermediaries and against interviews with community members.

Table 1.3: Overview of data, data-collection instruments, and team members responsible for collecting the data used in this thesis.

Respondents	***PRIDE***	***Entrepreneurs***	***Beneficiaries***	***Community members***
In-depth interview	x	x	x	x
Group interview		x	x	x
FGD	x	x	x	x
Photo-voice		x	x	
Questionnaires		x	x	x
Participatory mappings				x
Training observations		x		

Continuous reflection of preliminary findings and concepts with local NGO practitioners, and informal conversations with local community members such as shopkeepers, contributes to the research validity. In particular, the first concepts of the SEL approach were elaborately discussed with various stakeholders. Feedback of the findings was also obtained from key informants outside the project, such as local private and non-government organizations, expatriates working in Bangladesh (in NGOs, as researchers, or for government organizations), Bangladeshi university professors and (inter)national researchers. The results and findings were also discussed with specialists in various fields such as sociology, social networking, anthropology, and economy among others.

1.5. Outline of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to provide insights into the role of social capital in social entrepreneurship in the resource-constrained environment of rural Bangladesh, focusing on social entrepreneurship among rural women. It considers the role of social capital in social entrepreneurship with a view to considering the interlinkages between them.

Part 1 comprises of Chapter 1 that is the general introduction. Part 2, comprising Chapters 2 and 3, addresses the first research question namely the role of social capital in poverty alleviation. Part 3, comprising Chapters 4 and 5, is concerned with the second research question and hence studies how social capital can be strengthened. Part 3, comprising Chapters 6 and 7, addresses the third research question that is the links between social entrepreneurship and social capital. Part 4 comprises of Chapter 8 that is the discussion and conclusions.

In short, in **Chapter 1** the research questions and study design are presented.

Chapter 2, 'Producing social capital as a development strategy at the micro-level' analyses theoretical perspectives and empirical studies of social capital, demonstrating that development initiatives can effectively stimulate social capital to contribute to poverty alleviation. Reviewing empirical studies finds that little is known about the mechanisms through which social capital can be strengthened in practice. In order to devise development strategies that are based on producing social capital, there needs to be a deeper understanding of mechanisms of strengthening social capital.

Chapter 3, 'From "having the will" to "knowing the way": Incremental transformation for poverty alleviation among rural women in Bangladesh' explores how the action–research methodology applied in this thesis made it possible to articulate development paths for poor women in rural Bangladesh. The ILA methodology facilitated a process in which stakeholders were able to articulate a development approach embedded in the local context. Indeed, it is women's challenges and goals along the learning cycles that made it possible to develop an approach to leveraging social capital which they used for their own empowerment and for engaging in social entrepreneurship.

Chapter 4, 'Strenghtening social capital for knowledge co-creation at the grassroots: evidence from development programme in rural Bangladesh' explores how structural, cognitive and relational social capital contributed to

knowledge co-creation of social entrepreneurship. Social capital enables the combination and exchange of intellectual capital, which stimulates the creation of new intellectual capital (new know-how and knowing capabilities) but also novel structural opportunities to meet – all of which represent mechanisms of social capital creation which in turn strengthen social capital.

Chapter 5, 'A dynamic framework for strengthening social capital of women: strategies for community development in rural Bangladesh' analyses the mechanisms through which poor women's social capital was strengthened by the NGO strategies. This study shows that bonding, bridging and linking social capital of poor women were strengthened by the project. A novel framework analysing mechanisms of producing social capital showed that the NGO and the women used different strategies to produce social capital: some acting at the level of cognitive social capital (norms and ethics, self-worth and capacity to act) and some at the level of structural social capital (at the level of opportunities and at the level of social skills and knowledge).

Chapter 6 '**Social entrepreneurial leadership – creating opportunities for autonomy'** describes the development of the social entrepreneurial leadership approach and evaluates its effectiveness as a strategy to stimulate social entrepreneurship for poverty alleviation. It shows that six forms of capital of the entrepreneurs are strengthened through the approach: human, personal, economic, natural, physical and social.

Chapter 7 '**Bridging the disconnect: how network creation facilitates female Bangladeshi entrepreneurship'** studies how a third party stimulated the social capital of social entrepreneurs. It uses longitudinal data, gathered over two years, to study how entrepreneurial networks are developed and used by women entrepreneurs in rural Bangladesh.

Chapter 8 discusses and draws conclusions on the findings, answering the research question, considers whether the findings are relevant beyond the current context, reflects on the internal and external validity of the results, and maps the future research agenda.

Parts 2, 3 and 4 comprise of chapters written in the form of articles. The articles were kept intact because they each have their own line of reasoning and have clearly demarcated conclusions and discussion. This entails that some parts of the chapters overlap, mainly with regard to the research project descriptions.

PART II:

SOCIAL CAPITAL AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION

Chapter 2. Producing social capital as a development strategy: implications for the micro-level

Abstract

This paper considers how social capital can contribute to poverty alleviation at the micro-level, based on an analysis of the documentary evidence provided by theoretical perspectives and empirical studies. Across countries and contexts, micro-credit, agricultural production and marketing, environmental protection and knowledge networking are linked to productive social capital. Four mechanisms to strengthen social capital are identified: structural opportunity to meet, 'know-how' of social interaction, sense of belonging and an ethos of mutuality. We envision that opportunities within the development practice exist to foster such mechanisms, and recommend in-depth studies to enhance our understanding of social capital production mechanisms.

2.1. Introduction

Social capital refers to the idea that there is value in our social fabric. Like our economic capital enables us to buy resources, our social capital enables us to access resources, providing access to information through the members of our networks and facilitating the achievement of common goals. The concept has become increasingly popular among scholars and development practitioners in the last two decades, largely influenced by Putnam's (Halpern, 2005: 9) analysis of the role of social capital in the differing democratic governance performance in northern and southern Italy (Putnam, 1993). The concept has also gained widespread recognition as relevant for development with endorsement by the World Bank, with social capital even being qualified as the 'missing link' in development (Grootaert, 1998). The World Bank (web.worldbank.org) presents the following definition of social capital as:

> *(T)he institutions, relationships, and norms that shape the quality and quantity of a society's social interactions. Increasing evidence shows that social cohesion is critical for societies to prosper economically and for development to be sustainable. Social capital is not just the sum of the institutions which underpin a society – it is the glue that holds them together.*[5]

Despite the recognition of the potential of social capital for development, the concept has also been subject to much criticism because of its negative implications but also because of lack of conceptual clarity (Portes and Landolt, 1996; Portes 1998; and Fine, 2001).

In the past decade, this journal has included a number of review articles (Bebbington, 2004, 2007, and 2008; and Fine, 2008) which have presented the polarised discussion on the value of the concept of social capital in development. Social capital has been the location of 'a real battlefield of knowledge' (Bebbington, 2004: 344), both within the World Bank where it was part of the language of attempted reform (Bebbington, 2004: 345-346) and outside where it has been seen to play 'an ideological role in the neoliberal project, accommodating it rather than questioning it' (Bebbington, 2007: 158,

[5] http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTSOCIALDEVELOPMENT/EXTTSOCIALCAPITAL /0,contentMDK:20185164~menu PK:418217~pagePK:148956~piPK: 216618~theSite PK: 401015 ,00.html, accessed 25 October 2012.

presenting the argument of Mayer and Rankin, 2002: 807). In this way, the social capital terminology has been part of a broader, ideological debate to shift the onus of development from the state to civil society (Bebbington, 2007: 158). Although we are aware of this debate, the purpose of this article is not to contribute to it. Now that the dust has settled, we aim to take a new look at the concept and, in particular, how social capital contributes to poverty alleviation and how development initiatives can successfully invest in social capital. Therefore, this article consists of a first attempt to synthesise knowledge on the subject of mechanisms to produce social capital.

2.2. Methodology

This article examines the documentary evidence of the impact of social capital on poverty alleviation at the grassroots. We first intended to perform a systematic review of the literature, but the number of articles retrieved was consistently too high. A broad search with the key word 'social capital' on *Google Scholar* retrieves nearly three million records.[6] Attempts to narrow the search remained unsuccessful with, for example, a search on the *Science Direct* database with the key words 'social capital' and 'poverty' on articles published between 2002 and 2012 retrieving nearly 14,000 articles. Attempts to identify key words that would retrieve articles concerning the mechanisms of social capital production were also unsuccessful. Therefore, sampling of literature was undertaken, using a method 'akin to snowball sampling' (Babbie, 2003: 265), to identify the relevant literature on social capital. This is a recognised method in social research:

Once you identify a particularly useful book or article, note which publications its author cites. Some of these will likely be useful. In fact, you'll probably discover some citations that appear again and again, suggesting they are core references within the subject matter you are exploring… it's about digging into the body of knowledge that previous researchers have generated. (Babbie, 2013: 265)

In addition, we took a grounded approach which permits a review to accommodate diverse types of articles, to identify emergent themes and to establish connections between texts (Dedding et al, 2011: 50). In this way, we

[6]http://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&q=social+capital&btnG=&as_sdt=1%2C5&as_sdtp=

were able to identify articles describing a range of outcomes and a range of mechanisms of social capital production, both in the context of resource-constrained countries and at the micro-level.

2.3. Theoretical perspectives: what is social capital?

The evidence of the development impact of social capital is underpinned by theoretical perspectives. We first review the main theoretical perspectives and then consider the theoretical understanding of the components of social capital. At the end of this section, we review current understandings of how social capital can contribute to development at the grassroots.

2.3.1. Definitions

Definitions abound. Although much of the popularity of the concept is due to Putnam's work (1993, 1995), Bourdieu and Coleman are both responsible for its original conceptualization. Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualization of social capital is based on the recognition that capital is not only economic and that social exchanges are not purely self-interested and need to encompass 'capital and profit in all their forms' (Bourdieu 1986: 241). Bourdieu introduced new forms of capital: cultural and social capital. For Bourdieu (1986: 248), 'social capital is the aggregate of the actual and potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network.' This definition highlights the fact that individuals and groups derive profits (whether material or symbolic) from their social capital, although this does not mean that the profits are consciously pursued. Profits derive from the establishment and maintenance of relationships, processes that involve obligations that are subjectively felt (through feelings of gratitude, respect or friendship) or guaranteed by social institutions (referring to family members, heirs or knights). Indeed, an effort of sociability is necessary for social capital to be produced, with relationships being established and maintained through exchanges.

In Coleman's conceptualization, social capital's value resides in its function: 'Like other forms of capital, social capital is productive, making possible the achievement of certain ends that in its absence would not be possible' (Coleman, 1998: 98). In another definition, Lin defines social capital as the resources 'accessed and/or mobilized in purposive actions' (1999: 35), hence leaving space for the agency of the individual. Woolcock argues that definitions

of social capital should focus on its sources instead of its outcomes, and also that some consensus on a definition has been reached, namely that social capital comprises 'the norms and networks that facilitate collective actions' (2001: 13).

In Bourdieu's understanding, social capital cannot be instrumentalised to contribute to grassroots development but according to other commentators (Coleman, Lin and Woolcock) it is productive and can be accessed for development, being roughly equivalent to the social processes that facilitate collective action.

2.3.2. Components of social capital

In the theoretical literature, a number of components of social capital are identified which can contribute to development, namely collective action, scale of operation, interpersonal ties, and cognitive and structural elements.

Collective action
As it carries 'opportunities for mutually beneficial collective action' (Woolcock, 1998: 153), social capital can be perceived as a tool to explore humans both acting for their own good and for the good of the others. As Requena (2003: 331) puts it, social capital 'brings together several important sociological concepts such as social support, integration and social cohesion.' Hence, in the context of poverty alleviation, it permits an analysis of a development that carries the potential to be mutual. It does not talk about redistribution, or earning at the expense *of*, it talks about 'win-win' situations, and calls on a sense of goodness.

Scale of operations
Some scholars have described social capital as the property of communities (for example Putnam 1993) while others have described it at the individual (or relational) level (for example, Lin 1999). Indeed, social capital exists at a variety of levels. Foley and Edwards (1999) argue that brokerage of social resources can be organized at different levels of networks: dyads and informal networks (Burt 1997; Heying 1997), voluntary or faith-base associations (Eastis 1998, Wood 1997), communities (Bebbington 1997; Schulman and Anderson 1999), cities (Portney and Berry 1997), at national levels (Minkoff 1997) and even at the transnational level of social movements (Smith 1997, 1998). According to Halpern (2005), social capital can be located at different levels: *micro*, at the

individual level; *meso*, at the community level; and *macro*, at the societal level. For Halpern (2005), these levels can constitute the levels of analysis as social capital is a multi-level concept. Rothstein (2003) argues that it is a strength of the theory of social capital that it facilitates the unusual combination of macro-sociological structures with micro-level mechanisms. From this perspective, social capital can facilitate development at the micro-level of collective action (groups, villages, associations) but also at the meso-level of institutions.

Interpersonal ties

The interpersonal ties of which social capital is composed are of different strengths, which has implications in terms of capacity for change. Granovetter (1973), who understands ties as being either weak or strong, originally defined the strength of inter-personal ties as the '(probably) linear combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie' (1973: 1361). Taking the case of diffusion of innovations, Granovetter (1973) found that while safe innovations are taken up by central actors, controversial innovations are taken up by marginal actors with many weak ties. In addition, he showed that weak ties are an asset in the job market and that strong ties can be disadvantageous and fragment closed communities.

In addition to different combinations of social capital elements impacting differently upon welfare, different sets of combinations provide optimal utility along development paths. For example, poor entrepreneurs initially draw support from intra-community ties but, as their businesses expand and hence they develop, they participate in extra-community networks (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000, Maas, et al 2014d). This modification of social capital can entail a disinvestment in some networks (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). Indeed, economic growth, as emerging from innovations, is associated with transformative processes. This may involve a creative destruction which impacts on social capital domains as it can, for example, require replacing older contacts with newer ones (Bezemer et al, 2004).

In the literature, there is a consensus on the classification between three subtypes: bonding, and bridging, and linking social capital (see Table 2.1). At the micro-level, bonding refers to the familial networks, bridging to the networks with peers, and linking to the vertical networks with power holders (Halpern, 2005).

Cognitive and structural components

Uphoff (1999) conceptualizes social capital in two analytical categories: structural and cognitive components. Structural components enable mutually beneficial collective actions through the establishment of social networks and roles (Uphoff, 1999). These networks are valuable because potential resources are embedded within one's contacts and because these resources can be mobilized (Lin, 1999). Or, as Coleman (1998: S108) argues, one source of social capital consists of the 'appropriable social organization'. As conceptualized by Lin (1999), social capital elements comprise network resources (range of resources, best resources, variety of resources, contact resources) and network location (structural role, structural constraint).

Cognitive components consist of norms and values, and are predisposing people towards collective action (Uphoff, 1999). They have been understood, for example, as solidarity, trust, or cooperation (Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2002; Krishna and Uphoff, 1999). The different types of norms and values which make up social capital have also been described as resulting in different impacts. For example, Mayoux (2001) has argued that a failure to examine the norms and traditions constructing social capital can result in contradictory outcomes for women.

Table 2.1: Bonding, bridging and linking ties at different levels of social interaction (Source: Halpern, 2005).

Ties	*Bonding*	*Bridging*	*Linking*
Micro-level	Family	Peers	Power-holders
Meso-level	Intra-community	Inter-community	Between stratas
Macro-level	Nation	International networks	Global organizations

2.3.3. Differing perspectives on social capital

Social capital is a concept that has received an enormous amount of attention as can be seen in the prolific literature on the subject. It has also been the subject of controversies, with many authors even questioning its capacity to be useful (for an early statement see Harriss and de Renzio 1997). Some commentators conceive social capital as a collective good while others as an individual good at the micro/ meso/ macro scale. Others argue that the sources

and the benefits of social capital are sometimes not differentiated (ie what it is versus what it does) and that different types of networks serve different functions (bonding/ bridging/ linking ties). In addition, some authors emphasize the place of trust (such as Putnam), others conceive trust as a precursor of social capital (such as Lin), while it is absent from Bourdieu's theory. This theoretical complexity provides the background against which the empirical studies of the role of social capital in development will be analysed. Indeed, both positive and negative perspectives have been identified which Rubio (1997) has identified as 'productive social capital' and 'perverse social capital.'

2.4. Empirical perspectives: productive social capital

There is considerable evidence that social capital contributes to economic gains and poverty alleviation; health and wellbeing; and to development initiatives.

Economic gains and poverty alleviation

*S*ocial capital is often correlated with economic gains by reduced transaction costs but also by enhancement of factors conducive to economic growth, such as entrepreneurship (as reviewed by Halpern 2005). A World Bank study (Grootaert, 2001), across countries, has shown that increased levels of local associational life do help the poor and contribute to poverty alleviation. High social capital characterized by heterogeneity of ties was shown to have a positive effect on the welfare at the household level through knowledge exchange and pooling of risks, and higher returns were observed for the poor than the rich. Furthermore, social capital was shown to reduce the probability to be poor. In Tanzania (Narayan 1997), higher levels of social capital were translated into higher household income through better public services, greater use of modern agriculture, more community activity, and greater use of credit in agriculture. In Panama, more social capital resulted in greater access to aid from both government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and less violence (Pena and Lindo-Fuentes 1998). Social capital of traders in Madagascar, as embodied in networks of trust, was linked to business success and, in particular, higher incomes (Fafchamps and Minten, 2002). Social capital in the form of trust has been described as particularly relevant for people deprived of access to formal institutions. In Ghana (Lyon, 2000), trust built between traders and resource-poor farmers allowed both parties to enter new markets and increase income. In summary, higher social capital is associated with lower

poverty. At the household and the level of communities, it contributes to improved welfare, improved income and greater access to resources.

Health and wellbeing

There are many studies describing the positive consequences of social capital for health (Halpern, 2005). For example, strong family bonds decrease the likelihood of developing serious diseases (Russek and Schwartz, 1997) and a wider social network has been associated with lower mortality rates (Berkman and Syme, 1979). Satisfaction with interpersonal relationships is a better predictor of happiness than economic pathways (Helliwell, 2001), married people are generally happier than the unmarried (Donovan and Halpern, 2003, in Halpern 2005), and membership of groups or associations is correlated with higher happiness (Argyle, 1987; Helliwell, 2002). At the level of the individual, social capital contributes to improved health and wellbeing.

Development initiatives

Social capital has often been found to contribute to the success of development initiatives. Social capital of farmers in Rajasthan, India, resulted in successful watershed management (Krishna and Uphoff, 2002). The success of the Gal Oya irrigation scheme in Sri Lanka was linked to increases in social capital (Uphoff, 1996) with evidence of a fourfold increase in water production as a result of inter-ethnic cooperation (Uphoff and Wijayaratna, 2000, Wijayaratna and Uphoff, 1997). Water delivery in Central Java, Indonesia, showed that the design of the most appropriate water delivery system for a given community depends on the level of social capital within the community because its members are more familiar with cooperation (Isham and Kahkonen, 2002). Higher levels of social capital of neighbourhoods in Dhaka, Bangladesh, increased the likelihood of inhabitants organizing their own waste collection (Pargal, Gilligan and Huq, 2002). Social capital also facilitates the implementation and success of NGO projects based on group work (Ahmad 2003) and facilitates the diffusion of programme benefits to non-beneficiaries (Bandiera et al, 2009).

These empirical studies show that social capital can improve development outcomes at the individual, household, community and project level. However, there are also a number of empirical studies which show that social capital can have a detrimental effect on development outcomes.

2.5. Empirical perspectives: perverse social capital

According to Mayoux, the World Bank identified three problematic components of social capital construction on its website:

> *(1) social networks which provide people with access to markets through reputation and repeated transactions can exclude new entrants, (Collier, 1998: 24) (2) community pressure can be harmful to individuals as "traditions can stifle individual growth and creativity and members who do not comply with norms and their families can be ridiculed or ousted from the community" (3) communities with a lot of social capital, particularly if organised along ethnic or religious lines, can be harmful to each other and to society as a whole. (Mayoux 2001: 439)*

There is evidence that social capital can exclude. Cleaver (2005) demonstrates that the poor in Tanzania are unable to use social capital as a resource for their development. In such cases, social capital reproduces chronic poverty by excluding the poorest because the poor have no means to invest in social relations or lack the ability to negotiate in unequal exchanges where their agency is constrained. In a study of social capital of micro-finance groups for women in Cameroon, Mayoux (2001) shows that social capital exacerbates inequalities. Moreover, other studies identify the gender-specific challenges of social capital. Woolcock and Narayan (2000) describe how girls in India are prevented from attending school because of their ties with the community. Not all household members have access to the same kind of social capital and, in particular, men's social capital can differ from women's (Bebbington 2007). Moreover, men's social capital can be detrimental to women (Silvey and Elmhirst 2003, Mayoux 2001, Bebbington 2007).

Social capital can also produce negative (anti-social) externalities for the outside environment (Portes and Landolt, 1996; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). For example, street youths in Toronto and Vancouver, Canada, were found to have strong social capital within communities where crime is 'normal' and their type of social capital favoured crime (Hagan and McCarthy, 1997) and the famous example of organized crime of the Mafia (Servadio, 1976).

Moreover, social capital's outcomes are context-dependent (Foley and Edwards, 1999). Krishna and Uphoff (1999) also support the context-dependent analysis with data showing that heterogeneous networks are sometimes better from a

social capital perspective while sometimes it is horizontal networks. From this perspective, different networks can produce different outcomes. To summarize, different components of social capital are associated with different welfare outcomes, and the types of combinations that will lead to positive outcomes are inherently context-dependent.

2.6. How to facilitate strengthening of productive social capital?

Bourdieu conceptualizes social capital as 'the cultural mechanisms that reinforce the boundaries of a particular status group' (Woolcock 1998: 156) therefore depicting social capital as a force to maintain the status quo and not as agent of change. Putnam (1993) considers that contemporary differences in social capital levels between northern and southern Italy date back to the Middle Ages, hence not situating social capital as a target for change. Putnam's (1993) account or Bourdieu's (1986) structuration standpoint do not assume that is feasible for social capital to be modified. In addition, in the context of development, Fukuyama (2001) warns that it may be difficult to modify social capital through policies or NGOs. However, some studies show otherwise and demonstrate it is possible for exogenous interventions to modify social capital. For example, micro-credit NGOs in Bangladesh have been described as augmenting both the structural and cognitive social capital of women beneficiaries (Dowla 2006, Larance 1998). The possibility to facilitate social capital production has, however, not received the attention it deserves. This section presents the empirical evidence, focusing on projects and programmes that have strengthened social capital at the micro-level, in resource-poor settings across the globe. We do not differentiate between purposeful development of social capital and development of social capital as a consequence.

2.6.1. Development initiatives

Within a wide range of domains, studies have shown that development projects can strengthen social capital. For example, micro-credit (for example, Larance, 1998) has been described as producing social capital. In the domain of agricultural production, examples comprise (community based) fisheries management in Vietnam (Sultana and Thompson, 2004) and Bangladesh (Islam et al, 2011, Sultana and Thompson, 2004), or the collective production of agricultural outputs in Rwanda (Elder et al, 2012). Through the development of

agricultural marketing, social capital has also been modified through, for example, the establishment of farmers' associations to sell to modern food outlets in Uganda (Kaganzi et al, 2009). Initiatives focusing on environmental production have also been linked to change in social capital, such as in the case of the collective management of a coral reef area in Tobago and the coastal defence in Vietnam (Adger, 2003); an environmental service programme in India which triggered cooperation (Kerr, 2002); a market-based approach to agrobiodiversity in India, Vietnam, Thailand and Syria which generated collective action, enhanced trust and mutual understanding (Kruijssen, 2009); and a community initiated development in Taiwan which triggered network formation, collective action and reinforced trust (Tai, 2007). Intentional efforts to foster social links of migrant populations have also been associated with change in social capital, such as in the case of resettlement following a typhoon in Vietnam (Da Costa and Turner, 2004), and formalized rural-urban migrant organizations in Indonesia (Silvey and Elmhirst, 2003). The common approach of fostering information networks has also been linked to social capital, examples include farmer research teams in Honduras (Humphries et al, 2012; Classen et al, 2008) and the Honey Bee Network, a knowledge network in India which aims to augment grassroot innovations by linking different actors which, by promoting learning networks and transforming mind-sets, enhanced reciprocity, trust, and common-good values (Gupta et al, 2003). Another domain, although not a development enterprise, concerns the social capital development brought about by churches (Cilliers and Wepener 2007), an approach that is consistent with the fact that the attendance of churches is used as one of the proxies to measure social capital levels (for example Putnam, 1995).

These cases refer to both structural and cognitive social capital. We have reviewed cases where structural social capital was modified. In these cases, development initiatives were described as modifying structural social capital as they are enhancing networks at different levels (bonding, bridging and linking). In addition, examples concerning cognitive social capital were also mentioned as studies describe a modification of norms and values such as trust, reciprocity, common-good values, shared norms and love. Moreover, the strengthening of social capital is also described in terms of group dynamic: strengthening of cooperation, social cohesion, mutual understanding, interdependence, and collective response. If it is becoming increasingly clear that development initiatives are able to produce social capital in its different components, it remains much less explored 'how' initiatives can produce social capital. This will be the focus of the remainder of this paper.

2.6.2. Categories of mechanisms

Within the development field, Humphreys, Bebbington and Gomez (2006) have argued that rituals play a central role in the creation of social capital through micro-finance institutions in Peru and Guatemala. In the poverty stricken context of Paarl area, South Africa, Cilliers and Wepener (2007) not only show that rituals contribute to social capital production but also describe this process occurring at four different levels: (i) *the material level* comprising places to meet; (ii) *the sense of belonging* and creation of trust (via hospitality, shared meals, prayers for the sick); (iii) *civic literacy* including skills to communicate and organize (via singing, meetings); and (iv) *the ethos to foster equity* which challenges power-holders to engage in reciprocal, equitable relationships and processes (linking social capital) via cooperative planning and redistribution of resources (Cilliers and Wepener, 2007). This classification of levels at which social capital can be generated is applied to our findings. We will therefore describe how, at the micro-level, development initiatives are able to produce social capital at these different levels.

The material level of structural opportunities

Most initiatives describing enhancement of social capital involve the facilitation of physical social interaction. For example, churches constitute a material space to meet (Cilliers and Wepener, 2007). In addition to a place to meet, the creation of opportunity to meet has also been observed as a method to strengthen social capital. Micro-credit, with the example of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, was described as fostering women's social capital because women have to go to the 'village centre' in order to meet the micro-credit field staff to repay their loans which gives them the opportunity to interact with other women, strengthens women's networks and, hence, develops their social capital (Larance, 1998). Collective wash stations in Rwanda have also been shown to foster trust and a sense of community which the authors hypothesize is due to the opportunity for interaction created by the wash station (Elder et al, 2012). Group formation, such as in the case of fisheries management in Bangladesh (Islam et al, 2011), is also a method to facilitate social capital production. Another example concerns social capital promoted by 'stakeholder platforms' for collective action by poor farmers in the remote highlands in Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador (Devaux et al, 2009). Initiated by a research & development institution, the participatory market chain approach was used to support market chain actors in their analysis of new business opportunities, leading to market chain innovations for native varieties of potatoes (ibid). Interaction and trust between

different actors was fostered by stakeholder platforms which promoted social capital formation and permitted collective action (ibid). Some studies also show that cooperative farming, such as of coffee farming, builds networks and trust (Milford 2004, Majee and Hoyt 2010) while for others such effects remains doubtful (Elder et al, 2012). Development of disadvantaged communities through sport has shown capacity to build social capital in Western communities (Skinner and Zakus, 2008), a role which sport can also play in the developing world (Schulenkorf, 2012). For example, the 'Games for Peace' aimed to foster social ties between the Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim communities in Sri Lanka after the Tsunami (Schulenkorf, 2012, Schulenkorf, 2010).

Therefore, creating structural platforms that provide opportunities to meet are a way to produce social capital which have been used in a variety of contexts.

A sense of belonging

Cognitive social capital, such as common norms, goes together with a sense of belonging in a group. Sense of belonging has been shown to be fostered by different initiatives. Learning skills for group work in Uganda fostered shared norms, interdependence and trust (Kaganzi et al, 2009). Cultural habits were developed during the compulsory meetings linked to micro-credit initiatives (Anderson and Locker, 2002). In the latter case, common-good norms were developed through routinization (Anderson and Locker, 2002).

In addition to fostering shared norms, a sense of belonging enhances recognition in the eyes of the other. Micro-finance activities in rural Bangladesh have had a positive impact on social capital because new networks have been established and existing networks strengthened. Larance (1998) describes the process of enhancement of social capital as women's personal recognition increases, enhancing their confidence, dignity and sense of identity. Furthermore, collective identity is built on individual identity, facilitating community cooperation. Such changes have an impact on the direct beneficiaries but also enhance networks and cooperative norms at the village level (Larance, 1998). This is consistent with Bourdieu describing cognition and recognition building the relations of social capital.

Linked to a sense of belonging between individuals is the trust that can be created. Indeed, mechanisms have been described that are used by individuals to strengthen mutual trust at the micro-level. In his study of farmer-trader relationships in Ghana, Lyon (2000) considers that people build trust within their

working relationships through continuous interactions over time where information is shared and reciprocity enacted, but also by 'tests' of trust (such as lending money). In addition, working relationships develop into friendships which also foster trust, such as when a trader attends the funeral of a customer's family member or when a farmer names a child after a customer (ibid).

Civic literacy

The skills of cooperative social interaction, or what Cilliers and Wepener (2007) call civic literacy, can be learned. Indeed, skills for group work have been learned by 'learning by doing' in Ugandan farmer associations (Kaganzi et al 2009). Small-scale potato farmers were led to organize collectively and hence had to develop their social capital in order to access new market opportunities linked with urbanization. These farmers formed groups, and together were able to successfully develop market channels to supply a fast food restaurant in the capital city of Kampala. Farmers developed new skills for group work throughout the process which played an important role in the success of their collective actions. They developed the skills of social capital formation in the process of engaging in cooperative action.

The ethos of mutuality

Many initiatives have been found to foster equity within the social fabric, even when this is not the explicit aim. Roles can be redefined in more equitable terms and, in particular, participation of the disempowered is facilitated. One example involves the establishment of cooperative fair-trade certification groups in Rwanda which enhanced one aspect of structural social capital, namely farmers' participation and, in particular, the participation of women (Elder et al, 2012). Another example concerns strategies to improve the management of common natural resources that involved collective action between different stakeholders, implying that social capital was intentionally built. In this case, the participatory action plan development method was used, consisting of local workshops led by facilitators, which aimed to develop consensus and led to perceived gains in trust, cooperation and social cohesion (Sultana and Thompson, 2004). In the Andes, better development of federations of the rural poor was attributed to the sustained support of external actors, such as religious leaders and NGOs, who could develop federations' social capital (Bebbington and Carroll, 2000). External actors were indeed able to develop social capital of the federations by mediating conflicts and ensuring transparency. An external NGOs was also found to play a role in mediating the building of networks of social entrepreneurs in Bangladesh (Maas et al, 2014d).

A sense of goodness is also described in different ways. Gupta et al (2003) describe the ability of the Honey Bee Network to foster an ethical capital with a modification of values and norms. Candland (2000) describes four faith-based NGOs in Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Thailand who participate in community development and foster social capital. These NGOs promote the norms underlying social capital (cooperation and trust) as a good in themselves. Candland (2000) shows that government policies can foster faith-based NGOs' ability to strengthen social capital for social development but that the effectiveness depends on the state not promoting a civic religion. Another example shows that social capital can be developed through remittances. Senegalese people living in France and Italy send remittances to their home country: which represent a way of maintaining migrants' social capital with their home community (Chort, Gubert and Senne 2012). Remittances can be viewed as a fee that allows migrants to keep access to their networks. Payment is enforced through social control, namely the fear of being marginalized, and this reinforces solidarity norms within migrant communities (ibid). Hence, sending remittances contribute to social capital as this enhances common-good norms between migrants (ibid).

2.6.3. Overview of mechanisms and elements of modified social capital

Reviewing these different studies, it is apparent that each initiative relies on different mechanisms for the modification of social capital and that different types of social capital are modified by different mechanisms. When mechanisms such as group formation play a role, particularly in the development of structural components, these mechanisms also trigger cognitive social capital. The literature identifies mechanisms to trigger bridging social capital but there appear to be fewer mechanisms to trigger linking capital and none to trigger bonding capital. This leads to the conclusion that the theoretical and empirical understanding of how to trigger and build social capital is currently little developed. It is, however, probable that there are more mechanisms to build social capital already in existence but they are not yet interpreted in terms of social capital. In addition, although development initiatives have been found to build social capital, other initiatives, such as churches (Cilliers and Wepener, 2007) and remittances (Chort, 2012), also appear to be able play a role in social capital formation.

Hence, we show (Figure 2.1), how these mechanisms fit into our conceptual framework of social capital to produce it.

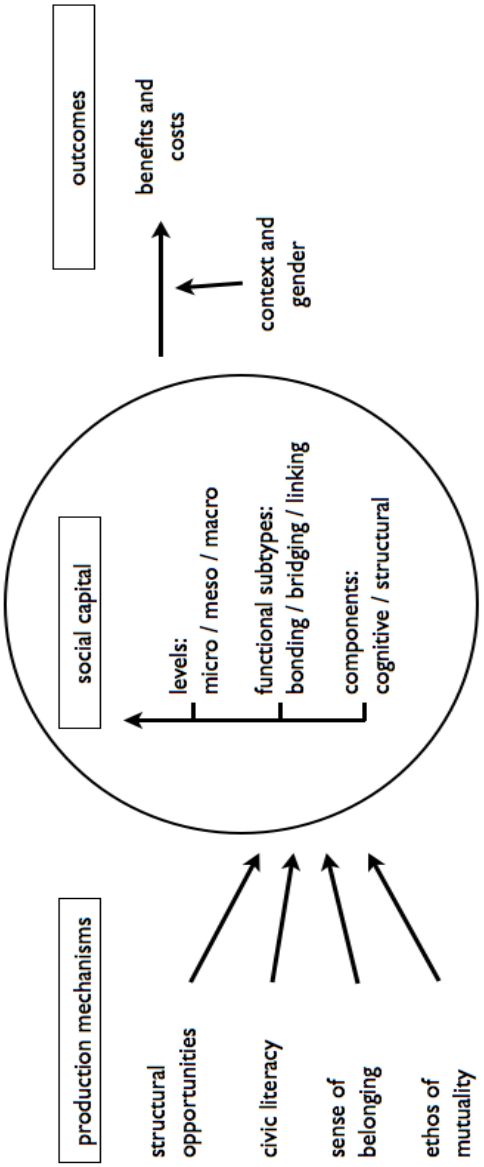

Figure 2.1: A synthesis of the concept of social capital (source: authors).

2.7. Conclusions and discussion

This paper aims to contribute to understandings of how we can invest in mechanisms to strengthen social capital in order to alleviate poverty and facilitate development at the grassroots. To do this, it first reviewed theoretical perspectives of social capital and then considered productive and perverse social capital as described in empirical studies. We found that social capital is a complex concept and that strengthening of social capital will not necessarily result in positive outcomes. This has important implications when trying to intrumentalise social capital for poverty alleviation because different combinations of the components of social capital lead to different outcomes, in a context-dependent manner. The third part of this paper on facilitation of the production on social capital should be seen against this background. In this part, we provided a review of mechanisms described as strengthening social capital as part of development initiatives, mechanisms which are triggering different combinations of social capital and in different contexts. Although we aim to contribute to development practice with this paper, it is important to emphasize the importance of context and the limitations in replicating mechanisms.

In our study, we analysed mechanisms described as enhancing social capital. We have found that these mechanisms fit into the four categories described by Cilliers and Wepener (2007). Across contexts, these appear recurrent domains where development initiatives exert leverage. We have identified mechanisms for developing social capital that fall under the four categories of Cilliers and Wepener (2007), including (i) structural opportunity to meet; (ii) 'know-how' of the social interactions; and (iii) a sense of belonging with norms shared and a sense of community(reminiscent of the 'being nice' strategy of Axelrod (1984) for successful cooperation). In addition, (iv) the ethos of mutuality, comprising equity and goodness, was shown to foster social capital production. This echoes the fair treatment described by Axelrod (1984) as a strategy for winning through cooperation, and the moral compass identified by Lockhart (2005). In the USA, Lockhart (2005) considered a faith-based work programme that explicitly aimed to build social capital, highlighting norms of mutuality and responsibility. These four categories appear to be strongly interwoven with one project component able to leverage various mechanisms.

Through different mechanisms, development projects are able to strengthen social capital for positive development outcomes. The four mechanisms-

categories for social capital production are four paths that can serve to identify opportunities for social capital production. These opportunities can be created, or already existing and taken advantage of. One way of doing this is by facilitating structural opportunities to meet. For example, we can envision that opportunities to meet could be facilitated in the group meetings often organized when development initiatives are set up. At these meetings, learning of the skills of social interaction can be facilitated and civic literacy can also be developed. The ethos of mutuality can be fostered by the promotion of transparency and of consensus in decision-making. Developing a sense of belonging is a possible path to follow: proud 'members' of a programme can find themselves empowered with this new identity.

The four categories of social capital production mechanisms identified in this article are interesting mechanisms that offer potential for replication in the aim of producing social capital to alleviate poverty. However, this does not spare us from a heightened attention to the kind of outcomes that are generated: one must remain observant. Indeed, social capital outcomes are context-dependent. In addition, the mechanisms we studied trigger different combinations of social capital sub-types. And as different set of combination of social capital have been shown to be linked to outcomes, and as outcomes can be negative, it remains to be in-depth studied which mechanisms trigger which components and what are the outcomes. A level of details we could not get to by our literature study.

We are convinced it is possible for development initiatives to consciously develop social capital and establish frameworks for such. If producing social capital offers promises of mutuality for development, it remains that one must be attentive whether it is the glue that holds the community together, and do not severe from their network the ones not conforming to its norms, or do not produce capitals at the expense of others communities hereby lighting up conflicts. Hence, more studies of initiatives aiming at producing social capital and analysing mechanisms of social development production are needed. Studies of effects of interventions on different social capital components and on its outcomes need to be carried out in a participatory manner, such as by using the Interactive Learning Approach (ILA) (Zweekhorst, 2004). Transdisciplinary approaches (Regeer and Bunders 2003) would here take all their relevance as offering a framework for the collective analysis of development practitioners, scientists and target populations.

Chapter 3. From 'having the will' to 'knowing the way': Incremental transformation for poverty alleviation among rural women in Bangladesh

Abstract

Short-term, linear, externally funded, project-based approaches to complex problems like women's poverty in rural Bangladesh are often unsuccessful. Taking a different approach, this paper documents a transdisciplinary action-research methodology that led to sustainable poverty alleviation for rural Bangladeshi women, gradual changes in gender relations at the household and community level and strengthened women's capabilities while simultaneously developing an approach to social entrepreneurship. Defining characteristics of this research process were clear articulation of objectives in which poverty alleviation always received priority, learning cycles in which women were the central actors of the research-action process, and fluid and changing leadership among different stakeholders at different stages in the process. The project demonstrates the strength of action-research in addressing complex challenges, such as poverty alleviation and unequal gender relations. Key lessons for development practice include the need for interventions that take place over a longer time-frame and for a vision of development that is not transformational but comprising small incremental, locally embedded changes and which recognizes the role of social capital.

3.1. Poverty alleviation in rural Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in Asia with some 47 million people living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2013). About 80% of the population lives in rural areas where poverty has a higher prevalence than in urban environments (USAID, 2012). The burden of poverty is unequally distributed between the sexes with women facing particular inequality in terms of reproductive health, access to the labour market (UNDP, 2015) and nutritional status (Scaling up Nutrition, 2014). Through limitations in women's empowerment, for example with a low mobility due to the social norms of *purdah* or female seclusion, women's opportunities for income generation outside the home are restricted (Das and Mohiuddin, 2015). In 2006, PRIDE, a local non-governmental organization (NGO), decided to set up the Route to Sustainable Development Project in Jessore District, Kulna Division, western Bangladesh, with the specific objective of developing sustainable poverty alleviation strategies in a participatory way. PRIDE decided to employ a transdisciplinary methodology called Interactive Learning and Action (ILA). Initially focused on both male and female members of poor households, the men dropped out over time because they had other opportunities as day labourers. From 2009, all participants were women. The project was located in Jessore District, selected by the proximity of PRIDE in Jessore rather than any formal criteria. Some 48-60% of the population in Jessore District are below the poverty line of USD 2 per day (Islam et al 2012). These people are landless with, at best, a small garden to grow vegetables or raise one or two chickens. They live in rudimentary houses with jute plants or sacks for walls, and roofs made of palm leaves. Their clothes are hung up on ropes and a small tin box is generally their only furniture. Sanitation facilities, if any, are represented by a hole in the ground. They cannot afford to eat more than two meals a day, sometimes only one meal, and cannot afford fish or meat. As one participant noted:

> *We do not have our own land, we are on the government land. If my husband doesn't work we cannot eat. It happens often, and we do not get any help from other people.* (Menoka, beneficiary, 2008)

Various researchers from the Athena Institute – a research arm at the Vrije University, Amsterdam, the Netherlands - were involved in the project and reflected with PRIDE staff on progress and challenges. This was done face-to-face during visits to Bangladesh, but also via e-mail and telephone. Four of the authors (AS, JM, MZ and JB) visited the project at various intervals, ranging from

one week to three months. In addition, five Masters' students from the VU visited the project for three months and wrote their Masters' thesis on the project, and another researcher visited the project. The further author (SC) was involved at a later stage in the data analysis.

3.2. The transdisciplinary action research methodology: ILA

The ILA methodology can be considered a form of transdisciplinary action research and has any similarities to action research and its myriad offshoots and offspring. Developed during the 1980s and 1990s by Bunders and Broerse at the Athena Institute (Broerse 1998, Bunders, 1990), the approach has supported diverse multi-stakeholder processes aimed at inclusive agricultural, health and biotechnological innovation. PRIDE staff had previously used the ILA methodology while working at the Grameen Kishi Foundation (GKF), supported by the Athena Institute (Zweekhorst 2004). For this new project, they again asked the Athena Institute for support in the use of the ILA methodology and in the implementation of the project. Given that PRIDE was aiming to develop an approach to sustainable development which would largely rely on communities' own resources, there was no intention to fund the project in the traditional sense. The Athena Institute contributed less than €10,000 per annum to support monitoring activities, while PRIDE provided some funds from its seed project. The project was different to a standard development project as explained by a member of PRIDE staff in an interview in March 2011:

> *So we start from their problem... We are providing training. Other organizations would think their job is finished [when they have given the training]. For us, that's when our job starts: then we visit. We don't just advise [the women]. We like to see how much progress [they have made]. What is their thinking? We are sharing their information and our information. Our duty doesn't end after finishing the training. We don't burden them with other problems. We don't press our ideas on them, otherwise it would bring problems for them.*

The ILA approach comprises five phases: initiation and preparation; collection, exchange and integration of information; integration; priority setting and planning; and implementation (Zweekhorst 2004). The timelines for each of the phases and the activities involved as it relates to this project can be seen in Table 3.1. After the reconnaissance, a series of learning cycles occurred

continuously (phases 4 and 5), similar to the action research spiral of Kemmis and McTaggert (1988) (see Figure 3.1). Every cycle consists of revised planning, action, observation and reflection after which a new cycle starts. Seven learning cycles took place, encompassing setting priorities, planning and implementation. Figure 3.2 summarizes important aspects of these seven cycles, and arranges them within a larger process of 'experimentation', 'implementation', and 'scaling up' phases of the overall action inquiry process.

Table 3.1: An overview of ILA phases and timelines.

Description	*Dates*	*ILA Phase*	*Activities*
Pre-reconnaissance	1998-2004		Involvement in ILA project and training with the GKF project (Zweekhorst 2004)
Reconnaissance	2004-2006	1 - Initiation and preparation	Context is analysed and the research team established
		2 - Collection, exchange and integration of information	Perspectives, needs and interests of the different stakeholders are identified, analysed and integrated
		3 - Integration	Knowledge perspectives and needs of the different stakeholders are integrated
Action research cycles	2006-2012	4 - Priority setting and planning	Stakeholders to reflect on the previous phase's results, set priorities and plan the next phase
		5 - Implementation	Specific projects are formulated and implemented.

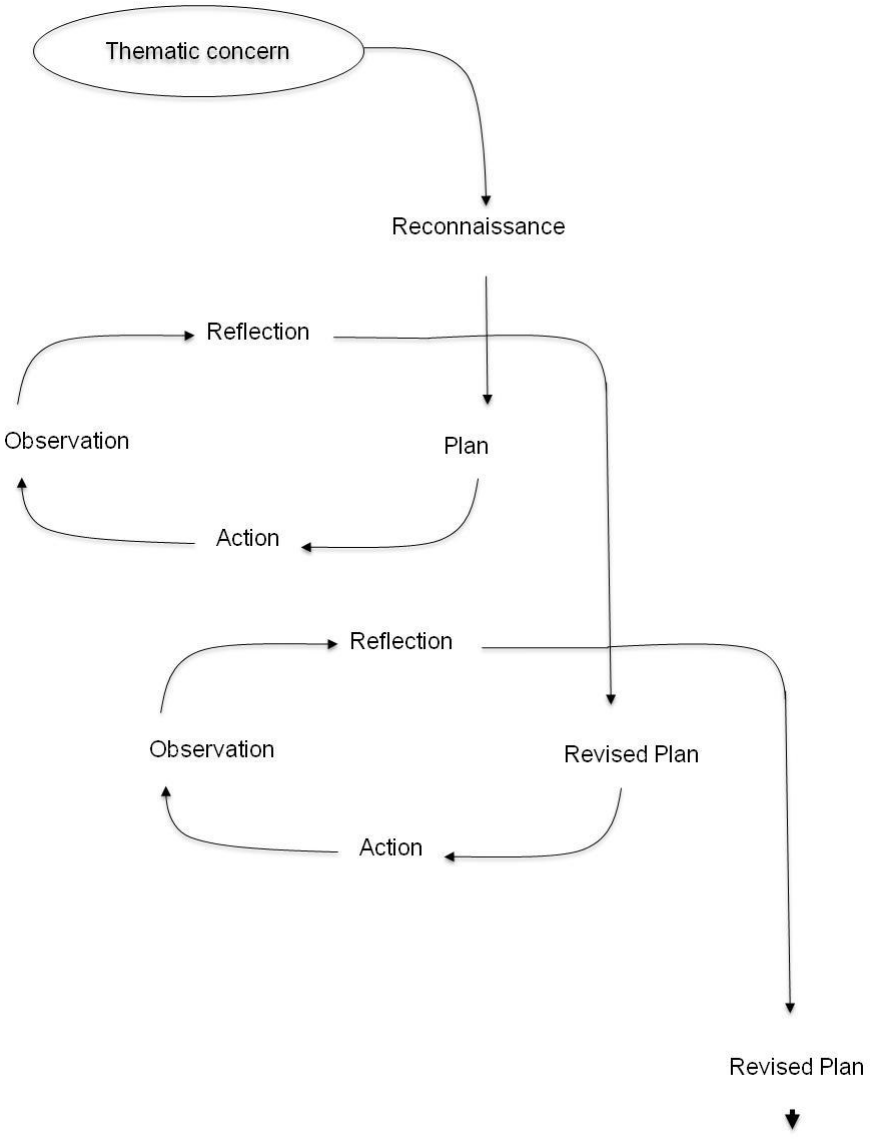

Figure 3.1: Action research spiral (after Kemmis and McTaggert, 1988).

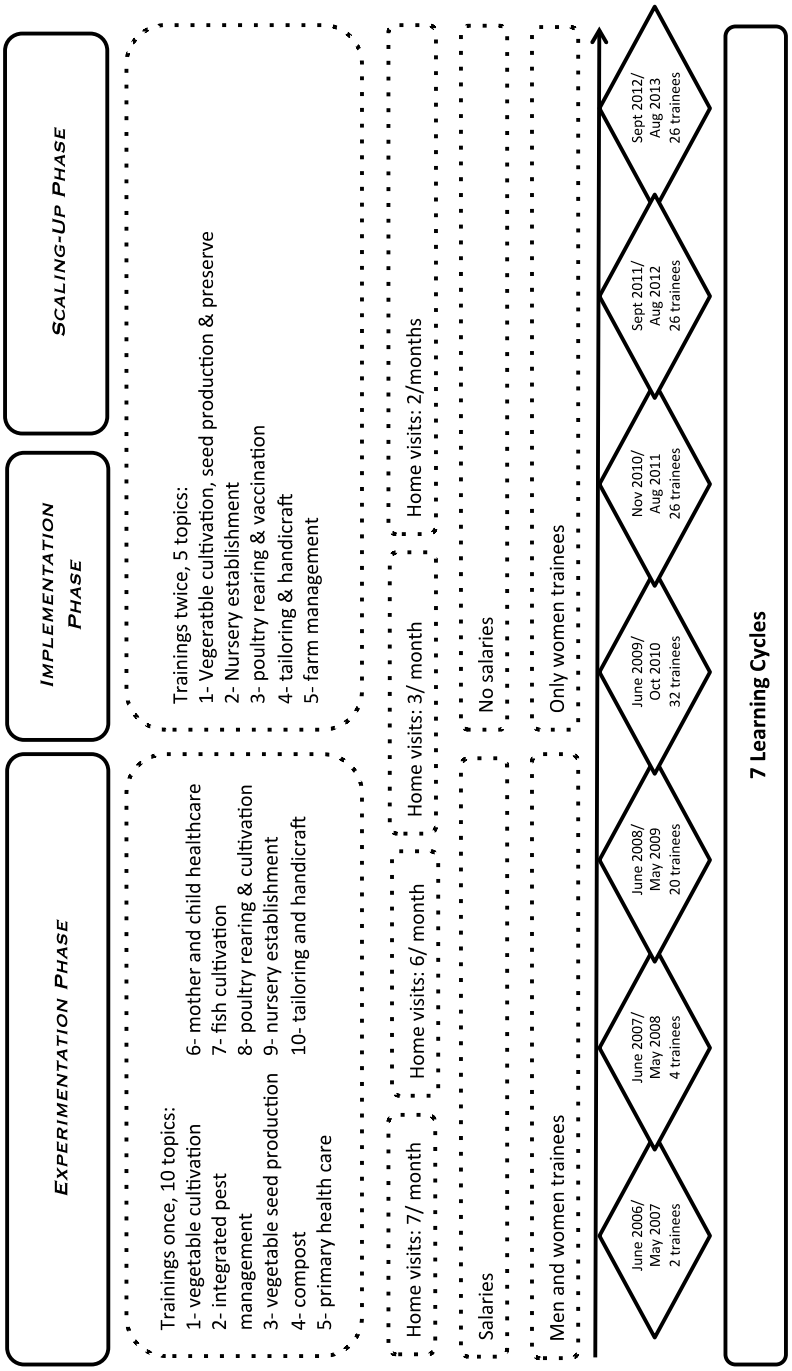

Figure 3.2: Overview of the stages and learning cycles.

Prior to the project, identified as the 'pre-reconnaissance phase'[7] , the Athena Institute had worked with the GKF's Technology Assessment Unit. At the end of the project, staff of the Unit left GKF to start their own NGO, PRIDE, because they did not fit well into the more hierarchical structure of GKF. PRIDE was created with the motto 'Farmers help themselves', aiming to stimulate sustainable development, not relying on subsidies. Based on their work with the GKF, PRIDE was familiar with the ILA and wanted to employ it again in its new project.

During the reconnaissance phase (2004-2006), PRIDE and the Athena Institute started to analyse the needs of poor rural households in the Jessore area. In order to learn more from the local context, we started with participatory visualisation methods. Various visualisations of the local surroundings were made by the community members. The community members themselves decided what they wanted to show to us and we only asked for clarification. This was followed by various walks through the village in which the community members showed us important features of the local surroundings. This provided insight into, amongst other things, the local area, the assets of local people, and the composition of the various households and the constraints and challenges they face.

Next, we gained more detailed insights into specific topics which were selected by the community members. For example, from visualization of the day-to-day activities (daily time use chart), we learnt that several families only had two meals a day and lived, literally, a hand to mouth existence. Moreover, the second meal was often late in the evening so the children sometimes even missed this meal because they were already asleep. Women of these families were very willing to discuss this constraint further in a focus group and to assess with the team opportunities to improve the situation. We learnt that the husbands of these very poor families work, for example, as rickshaw drivers. The husband buys food (most often vegetables) from the money earned during the day and then comes home. As there is no other food in house, the wife has to wait for his return before she can start cooking. In a group discussion with the

[7] The pre-reconnaissance phase was dubbed as such in retrospective, it is a not a stage of the ILA as referred to, but in this particular project where we applied and hence developed further the ILA methodology we could makeuse of such a pre-reconnaisance phase, hereby strengthening our approach.

women, we considered whether a small vegetable garden would improve their situation.

The identification of the possible solution 'vegetable garden', resulted in the identification of three new constraints. First, no land was available for a vegetable garden. The project team, in collaboration with the women, became very creative, using space in and around the houses, under the washing line, against the walls of the house, and space above water. Second, although seeds were sold in the market in small quantities (5-10 grams), these were too large quantities for women to afford. The women only needed 3-4 seeds for each vegetable. This constraint was addressed by PRIDE who provided the seeds in these very small quantities. Third, women did not know how to cultivate the seeds. Therefore, training was developed to teach the women to cultivate vegetables. To assess how the women were getting on, the team visited the vegetables plots of the women. One challenge or opportunity led to the next elaboration, and there was an increasing urgency to experiment as new opportunities arose. It was then necessary to test whether an opportunity would improve the situation of the poor because these people are so poor they could not risk failure. In addition, the question arose of how to train local community members most efficiently to make the most of these new opportunities. This issue was addressed in cycle one as described below.

In a similar way, these and other opportunities and challenges were discussed by the project team and community members. Depending on the topic, the community members sometimes preferred to discuss these issues alone, sometimes in small groups when dealing with sensitive issues and sometimes in larger groups. Suitable methods were chosen to facilitate these discussions, including in-depth interviews, focus-group discussions (FGDs), visual ethnography (photo-voice methodology), questionnaires, and participant observations. These different methods were selected and implemented by members of the Athena team (together with translators), PRIDE staff, and a local research assistant. In this phase, PRIDE also started to develop criteria for the selection of upazillas (sub-districts) and villages.

3.3. The learning cycles in practice: developing an embedded approach to poverty alleviation

Cycle 1: June 2006-May 2007

During the first learning cycle, the project team deepened their understanding of the context and identified community constraints and opportunities. Staff and students of the Athena Institute were in Bangladesh for over three months and PRIDE facilitated participatory village maps that helped identify poor households. In this way, PRIDE met two women who were relatively successful compared to other women in their village. These women were already conducting some income generating activities (IGAs) and were interested to experiment with home-based gardening and backyard poultry rearing.

To protect them from risk, the women received a very small monthly stipend. PRIDE helped them experiment with vegetable production and fish raising in micro ponds. Intermediaries also experimented with how to engage other women. An important learning of this phase was the characteristics of a successful intermediary, such as being poor, with rudimentary education, and married, characteristics that would grow and evolve throughout the program.

Cycle 2: June 2007-May 2008

Armed with knowledge of what makes for success, four additional intermediaries were selected through participatory mapping with the community members. In keeping with local norms, before approaching the women, husbands and in-laws were asked for permission to involve them. After this, the women themselves were asked in.

PRIDE trained these four women to conduct home-based gardening and poultry rearing. They were asked to identify other local women interested in starting IGAs who became their beneficiaries. Knowledge now began to flow in two ways: from PRIDE to intermediaries via training, and from intermediaries to beneficiary networks. For example, one woman taught others how she managed to protect her gourd from pests using an old sari she had wrapped around it. Intermediaries and their beneficiary networks experimented with vegetable and fruit cultivation (on small pieces of land not exploited before or on pergolas above houses), poultry rearing in the backyard, or fish cultivation.

At this point in the project process, PRIDE and community members became increasingly aware that lack of social capital represented a barrier to accessing resources and hence constrained the ability of women to achieve a sustainable livelihood: women were expected to stay at home, unable to move about the village freely on their own and were also restricted in their ability to interact with other women. As one woman noted:

> *People who have lots of friends, who communicate freely with others, they progress. But people who are poor, who cannot communicate nicely, their progress is not like that. They don't know other people, they cannot get information.* (Nasrin, beneficiary)

Purdah also restricted women from engaging in IGAs outside the homestead because of social control enforced by gossip:

> *Other people talk, they ask: 'You have a husband, why do you work?' Therefore my husband says you need not to work, stay inside, but I need to work or we can't survive. I have to stop working otherwise there will be conflicts with my husband. I am afraid he will divorce me*. (Jasmin, beneficiary)

These dominant social customs and norms became important to how the project would proceed, as women respected and maneuvered within their boundaries, boundaries crucial to social capital in the community.

Cycle 3: June 2008-May 2009

Participatory mapping and discussions with communities let to 20 more women, each from a different village, to become intermediaries. During this cycle, PRIDE trained only intermediaries and intermediaries independently trained their beneficiaries. Intermediaries were trained in 10 topics: vegetable cultivation, integrated pest management, vegetable seed production, composting, primary health care, mother and child healthcare, fish cultivation, poultry rearing, nursery establishment, tailoring and handicraft. Beneficiary activities remained in the homestead with intermediaries moving within their own village to monitor activities or collect handicrafts.

Cycle 4: June 2009-October 2010

In 2009, the project was extended to another 32 intermediaries in 32 new villages. The Athena Institute visited to inquire into the necessity of stipends. Evaluating that they were unnecessary, the researchers convinced PRIDE to cease payments to new and previous trainees: all participants remained active in the project, proof of its benefits. Another incremental change in the project in this phase was that intermediaries moving forward would have to be either married or divorced: young, unmarried women had stopped participating because their movement was frowned upon. The phase also saw a focusing of training to the most profitable topics: 1) vegetable and seed production, 2) tree nursery management, 3) backyard poultry rearing and vaccination, 4) tailoring and handicrafts, and 5) farm management including a variety of topics such as fish production, and goat rearing.

Cycle 5: November2010-August 2011

In the fifth learning cycle, the Athena team sought to understand impacts on women's lives. The inquiry was intensive and predominantly qualitative and some of the most robust insights were generated by photo-voice (Wang, Burris & Ping 1996). Participants were given disposable cameras, asked only to portray 'changes in their lives' since joining the program, then left on their own. Two weeks later women came together to discuss their photos

Pride in the photos was palpable. Some took pictures of their vegetables, demonstrating their ability to grow them and collect seeds. Women had also learned to identify land previously unconsidered for cultivation:

Photograph 3.1: The space between ponds for growing vegetables

I am 25 years old, and Muslim. I am married, my husband makes furniture, and he is employed. I have one son, he is 4 years old, and one daughter, and she is 10 years old. I have been a beneficiary for 1½ year (…) This is the nolukhal plant that I am now growing in that narrow space between the ponds. (Mukta, beneficiary)

The photographs documented the importance of peer-to-peer assistance:

Photograph 3.2: A group of women being helped by a beneficiary.

> *I am 22 years old, and a Muslim. I am married to a businessman working in a grocery shop but I live with my parents. I have been divorced for 2 years now. I have been to school up to class 11, I can read and write. I am a member of Toura* (the intermediary) *for 2 years now (…) It is a group of neighbouring women. I sit with 15 to 20 women, they know I am learning from Toura so they are very much interested. When I have been trained by Toura, I train them. In the group, they ask questions, but they also come to me at other times to listen to my suggestions*. (Sherina, beneficiary)

Intermediaries and beneficiaries emphasized their involvement with others, and how the project had given them the opportunity to enhance their relationships. Numerous photos showed women helping other women in their fields, and of handing vegetables to other women. Indeed, when women described change, they framed it as exchange of gifts. In their eyes, they gave gifts of seeds, and received gifts of vegetables or seeds in return, representing a form of barter.

Another woman portrayed change by staging before and after photos: children washing in a pond only with water versus children washing with soap, or

unsanitary latrine versus sanitary latrine. In some of the photographs, women demonstrated very complex changes, including evidence of empowerment. For example, one woman staged a photograph with her husband in which she was giving him money, representing her new power to earn income and contribute to the household income:

Photograph 3.3: A woman giving money to her husband

> *I am 45 years old, I am Muslim, I am married, and I have 2 daughters and 2 sons. I have been an intermediary for 1 year (…) I can now buy the things for my children to study. I do not depend anymore on my husband (…) In this photo, I am giving money to my husband*. (Rebeka, intermediary)

The ability to send daughters to school was an important theme. One woman staged a photograph of her whole family discussing the education of her daughter:

Photograph 3.4: A family photograph

Anamika (beneficiary): 'I am 24 years old. I am Hindu. I am married, my husband works as a hairdresser for someone in Jessore. I have one son who is 7 years old and one daughter who is 11 years old. I have started 2 years ago as a beneficiary. I went to school up to class 4, so I can sign my name. I married when I was around 11 years old. I live with my husband, my children and my mother in law. (…) In this photo, it is me, my husband and my daughter.'

(Researcher): 'Is it a family picture?'

Anamika: 'No! On this picture we are making the decision together of sending our daughter to school to class 6 and on how to pay. Before I was dependent on my husband, and now he takes suggestions from me. As I am a beneficiary of Malika (intermediary) and earning money so now we take decisions together.'

In this project, women did not confront dominant practices. Instead, they negotiated their empowerment. Women reported proudly that they contributed to the family income and that their husbands now 'love them more', but they did not report stories of confrontations. They navigated within boundaries using tact and patience:

> *We are making the meetings at times when it doesn't hamper with our husbands(…) First they were doubtful whether it will be beneficial, now they think it is good, they are happy. The family members were interested but the neighbours were doubtful. Now they are supporting us because they see the house is cleaner, we eat more, we are more solvent.'* (Rina, intermediary)

In this cycle, it became clear that women were meeting dual objectives by being involved in the project, namely contributing to the development of their community while developing themselves. Women became 'do- gooders' in the eyes of their community with their gifts having a symbolic importance, providing the women with higher status and greater networks. Women were becoming social entrepreneurs: creating social value but also harnessing economic value.

Cycles 6-7: September 2011-August 2012 and September 2012- August 2013

During the final stages, the project explicitly targeted social entrepreneurship (Maas 2013, Maas et al 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d) and scale-up. Criteria for selecting villages and women became explicit and applied systematically (Table 3.2). The candidates for social entrepreneurship needed to be married, divorced or widowed; to be able to write, have good networking, communication, organizational and interpersonal skills and an eagerness to learn; be at least 25 years of age; have children over 5 years of age; and be from the poorest group in the village. These criteria relate to women's individual skills and education, but also their ability to move around the village. In 2011, 26 women were trained to be become social entrepreneurs (Cycle 6) and in 2012 another 26 women were trained (Cycle 7). The project is continuing to train women every year since 2012, although the research team from the Athena Institute is no longer formally involved.

Table 3.2: Selection criteria used by the community members, NGO staff and research team members.

Village selection criteria	*Intermediary selection criteria*
Housing: over 50% of houses made of mud, bamboo, straw, tin; less than 30% having access to sanitation facility	Married or divorced female, minimum 25 years old (married for long time to avoid criticisms)
Women poverty: less than 5% of women have any form of income, practice of dowry prevalent, cases of women's repression and of child marriages in the village.	Education: class 5 to class 10, eagerness to learn and do new activities
Infrastructure: over 70% of roads are mud road, no connection to main roads/ no bus service, less than 20% of the village has access to electricity, no market in the village, no health care (only quack doctors)	Social skills: good networking skills, good interpersonal behaviour, communicative, no 'communalism' i.e. not focused on one group of people (for example Muslims or Hindus)
Employment: over 70% of the population living from daily wages; day labour opportunities limited; low day labour wage; less than 20% of population have a government job contract	Organizing skills (for example: clean household), problem solving capacities
Land: 8-10% landless people, over 40% of homestead area suitable for vegetable cultivation, government has land or rich farmer fallow land available.	Allowed by their family to move around in the village
Density: over 650 people / m^2	From poorest group of their village (as per wealth ranking maps performed by community)
Practical for PRIDE: less than 10 km from branch office, terrorism free	With children at least 5 years old (to allow free time for IGAs)
Lack of support: few/no other NGOs in the village, less than 5% of people have food support from the government, flawed village social justice. Education level: less than 25% finished 2^{nd} grade.	Fit and active (many poor are sick and unable to work).

3.4. Discussion of the project from the perspective of action research

In this discussion, we consider the defining characteristics of the project, its development impact and lessons for development practice. To establish these aspects of the project, we use some of the main 'choicepoints' for action research in an effort to be 'transparent about the choicepoints we make and about the limitations that come as a result of these choices' (Bradbury Huang 2010, 101). The choicepoints comprise the articulation of objectives; working with practitioners in a participatory mode; contribution to action research theory, practice and methods; reflexivity and actionability; and significance, namely whether the lessons from this project are relevant to other development projects (Bradbury Huang, 2010). For the purposes of this paper, we also add an additional 'choicepoint', namely development impact. Space consideration does not allow us to fully address all of these choicepoints. We focus on three: contribution to action research theory/practice/methods; relevance to other projects, and development impact.

Contribution to action research theory, practice and methods

The paper links to a body of knowledge on ILA, described in more detail above and coming from the tradition of transdisciplinary research, similar to other action research methodologies. It is consistent with the understanding that action research is '… a broad church, movement or family of highly desirable activities' (McTaggart 1994, 314). It contributes to theory and practice by demonstrating how a development project, implemented using an action research process, can bring about gradual, positive change based on local realities.

Participation in practice: shifting leadership

Although many different methods were employed during the lifetime of the project, visual methods appeared particularly adapted to elicit information through participatory action research as has been shown in other settings (for example street children: Young and Barret, 2009). In particular, the photo-voice method appeared to be particularly powerful in allowing participants to demonstrate what they perceived as benefits of the project and what they identified as opportunities. This community-based participatory method enables women, despite limited literacy to 'record and reflect their lives […] from their own point of view' (Wang, Burris & Ping 1996: 1). The women explained to each

other with pride how they were succeeding, how their families and in particular their husband loved them more. Women analysed not only the activities they had engaged in but also the paths they had taken. For example, one participant took a photo of a young man from her village who had been through many difficulties in his life and had now a university degree and a successful career. She explained that he was not part of the project but that he had also experienced 'the struggle' but that she 'didn't otherwise know how to show the struggle in a photo'; his photo was used to symbolize the struggle that she had faced in developing IGAs. The women also explored paths they wanted to take. For example, one beneficiary who had just started to plant seeds took a vegetable in a picture and she said it was a gift for her intermediary. However, she then explained she could not yet give it as a gift but wanted to do so as soon as she had cultivated enough vegetables. The women also explained to each other with pride how they were succeeding and how their families, and in particular their husbands, loved them more. They were able to tell their stories with the help of photos. Other important tools were the participatory visualization which also facilitated *conscientization* (as from Freire developed epistemology) but also discussions with local people.

However, our main aim was to facilitate emergence of poverty alleviation strategies truly efficient and sustainable. Hence while participatory action research was seen as the best fit manner to develop such we selected the research methods, explain participants how to express themselves through these methods (whether photographs, drawings or shared dialogue in focus-group discussions) and we also did mix with more traditional research methods, such as evaluations through questionnaires. Moreover, if participatory methods were employed throughout the project and attention to have women's voices but also community voices at the center of the research-action project, there was also the reality of sometimes externally stimulating decision-making and planning. There were times when we were insistent (for example for the withdrawal of payments). In part, therefore, our research is a story about how university- bound, foreign action researchers in collaboration with a local NGO can help shift planned development efforts in new directions. As Kemmis had put it action research is 'a more or less systematic, more or less disciplined process that animates and urges change in practices, under-standings and the conditions of practice' (Kemmis, 2009: 463). Hence, throughout the project, we remained attentive that 'these methods and approaches are deployed within a participatory framework committed to genuinely democratic and noncoercive

forms of research 'with' and 'for', rather than 'on' participants' (Kindon, Pain and Kesby, 2009).

Fostering change: incremental steps

The project never wavered from the intention to improve livelihoods of poor rural householdsby action reseach, since we had to learn how to conduct this process. Women did not wish to engage in confrontation with their husbands or with their communities. Transformation on the level of the social fabric (women's social capital and in particular gendered relations) was eventually addressed and gradually strategized by the project, facilitated by the learning cycles of the action research methodology. Hence here we show that instead of aiming at a radical transformation of women's lives, we facilitated the kind of change women desired: gradual incremental steps. Aiming to do no harm it is not empowerment which the project first triggered. As Gilligan (1982) theorized autonomy can follow and not precede the establishment of caring links. Indeed, this appears quite in contrast with traditional visions of empowerment, as for example Fine and Glendinning (2005) had put forward, if concepts of autonomy and independence are accepted as universal goals, the concepts of dependency and care are more problematic. For example Riger (1993) had criticized that the empowerement concept might be orietned towards masculine visions of individualism, mastery and power. Instead, our project did value empowering the local poor however while not undermining their capital-base, and in particular family or community ties, hence stimulated change in harmony with dominant customs, with women navigating within boundaries.

Significance: implications for development practice

In what ways do our results have meaning and relevance beyond our immediate context (Bradbury Huang, 2010)? This project further demonstrates the strength of action research in addressing complex challenges, such as poverty alleviation or unequal gender relations. Three aspects, in particular, are important to practitioners and action researchers in development contexts: timescales of interventions, the nature of transformation, and social capital.

Timescales of interventions – Many development projects have a short timescale of intervention. They enter a local context and go straight into implementation. In this project, implementation was not attempted until after the completion of four learning cycles. Although this might be seen as a waste of resources by those in favour of a quick fix, developing interventions to alleviate poverty must

be appropriate to the needs and context in which they are being developed if they are to have any chance of succeeding. This study demonstrates that interventions that are dealing with complex issues, such as poverty alleviation and unequal gender relations, also require longer timescales. This in contrast with short-term interventions which are not capable of generating the positive spirals at the basis of sustainable change.

Transformation - The project was based on the dissemination of applied knowledge or knowhow – on how to grow vegetables, produce seeds, rear poultry etc. Although this was 'new' knowhow for the participants, it represented successful traditional techniques identified by the staff and the earlier project participants. However, this knowledge could only be applied after the participants had received training in these techniques. Probably even more important than knowhow of agricultural techniques was the increased knowhow of social interaction among intermediaries and beneficiaries. Women started helping and sharing with each other only after they had gained the 'confidence' to do so, but also the capacity to motivate other women. The intermediaries and beneficiaries often used the word 'inspire' to describe this first step of dissemination. Women's attitudes were transformed: women were more positive, with more strength and more energy. Women claimed that what occurs is a shift from 'having the will' to 'knowing the way', as exemplified by this beneficiary's comment: 'I had the will in mind before but I didn't know the way. Now I have many ways.'

Social capital - During the first learning cycle, we observed two successful women entrepreneurs which helped us to understand that very poor women lack social networks through which they could access resources. Economic vulnerability was as much a problem of social capital as it was economic or physical capital. And we discovered, as others had before us, the negative effects of social capital for women in situations where *purdah* is a social norm (Andrist 2008). Over seven learning cycles, we saw women determining for themselves the meaning of development and investing time and social capital for instrumental ends, such as feeding their families or sending their children to school. By the end of the project, they portrayed themselves as stronger and more autonomous vis-à-vis their husbands and other powerholders, such as imams and rich men. Theoretical conceptions of social capital which demonstrate how social capital both simultaneously enables and constraints women, particularly in contexts of *purdah*, played a crucial role in helping the research team to understand the complexity of the local context.

The action research project analysed in this article is inscribed in a long time frame. It proposes a vision of development that is not transformational but made of small incremental changes embedded in the local context. Mayoux (2001), for example, has described that micro-finance can exacerbate inequalities due to a failure to examine the norms and traditions of social capital in a particular context. The gradual changes triggered by this project were instead conservative steps accepted by all stakeholders and hence not undermining women's support networks. Therefore, we argue that development is not always 'transformational'; instead, as we show through our empirical study, development interventions should first and foremost ensure that 'no harm' is done.

Development impact

Improvements in women's livelihoods went hand-in-hand with gradual change to gender relations in the household and community in which women's improved access to social networks was a symptomatic part. Although women's livelihoods improved considerably over the project period, demonstrated by the results of the photo-voice exercise, the greatest, most sustainable impact was probably the improvement in women's capabilities to take action and see opportunities in their own environment. Women see opportunities to grow vegetables or cultivate fish but also opportunities to engage into activities as this intermediary explains of a photograph she had taken:

> *She is my neighbour and her husband, they are making baskets. He used to make them alone, I have suggested her to help him, because before she used to sit here and there after finishing her household work, now she helps him. I have learnt it from the intermediary that if you give suggestions to others and show the way they can improve.* (Rehena, Beneficiary)

The project seems to have started a positive spiral in which women's contribution to the community have been enhanced, and their self-esteem and their social status have been improved; it is this positive spiral which is at the basis of sustainable change. Through their contribution, women said they gain 'satisfaction' and are 'now known'. Women's social status has improved as community members acknowledge their results and this social status facilitates further impact: 'We are more known so people give importance to what we are saying so they develop themselves,' said one participant. Women's improved

status also contributes to their capacity to innovate with IGAs and, because of their enhanced status, they are able to participate more effectively in the improvement of others. Women's knowledge is both in demand and demanded by other women. This article shows some of the challenges inherent to women's development: where transformative change is sought for their welfare but where constraints are located within what gives meaning to their lives, namely the social relations in which they are embedded. Social capital's contradictory role is particularly challenging for women as highlighted by Kabeer:

> *How then is it possible for women to recognize and deal with the injustices embedded in the social relationships that define their identities and give meaning to their lives without at the same time negating or undermining these relationships?* (2011, p503)

3.5. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the project's 'choicepoints', we conclude that the ILA methodology, and the action research approach more generally, played an important role in enabling poor women and other stakeholders to articulate and develop a development path fit to the local context. Defining characteristics of this process comprise: a clear articulation of objectives in which poverty alleviation always received priority and in which risk for the women was minimized; the development of learning cycles in which women were the central actors of the research-action process; and the fact that the different stakeholders took on the role of main change agent at different times in the process.

The project demonstrates action research's efficacy in addressing complex challenges, such as poverty alleviation or unequal gender relations. Key lessons for development practice include the need to develop interventions over a longer-time frame; the need for a vision of development that is not transformational but made of small incremental changes, embedded in the local context; and the importance and contradictory role of social capital. In terms of development impact, efforts to alleviate women's poverty by improving their livelihoods involved gradual changes to gender relations at the household and community level and improved women's capabilities, both of which have the potential to be a motor for sustainable development. We conclude that these defining characteristics, development impact and lessons for development

practice have their roots in the iterative process which kept the main objective of the project, namely poverty alleviation, central throughout.

PART III:

STRENGTHENING SOCIAL CAPITAL

Chapter 4. Strenghtening social capital for knowledge co-creation at the grassroots: evidence from a development programme in rural Bangladesh

Abstract

This article examines the relationship between social capital and the creation and exchange of knowledge for grassroots development. It applies a framework that originated in developed countries to the initial, experimental phase of a successful entrepreneurial development programme undertaken between 2006 and 2012 in rural Bangladesh. Although the framework was generally applicable, its structural dimensions are further developed and divided into the three functional subtypes of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking) following distinct pathways in their contribution to the creation and exchange of knowledge, and demonstrating the domains where programme participants co-created know-how.

4.1. Introduction

> *Knowledge is like light. Weightless and intangible, it can easily travel the world, enlightening the lives of people everywhere. Yet billions of people still live in the darkness of poverty.* (World Bank, 1999:1)

As illustrated in the above quote, development discourse often sees knowledge as an antidote to poverty. Indeed, sweeping assumptions are made about 'lack of knowledge'. Koanantakool, for example, opens a paper with the unsupported statement that '… the main causes of poverty in Thailand are the lack of knowledge and management skills' (2004: 127). Knowledge is also seen as playing a key role in development. For example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) monitors long-term, national progress in human development against three fundamental dimensions: long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and standard of living (Gaye, 2011). The knowledge dimension of the HDI is, however, measured in terms of formal education and pays no attention to societies' own capacities to create and exchange knowledge. This emphasis on external, exogenous knowledge in development processes is shared by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), agreed by the UN member states in September 2015, which will set the international development agenda for the 2016-2030 period. The SDGs give primacy to scientific and technological knowledge, largely ignore traditional knowledge, which receives only one mention, and are based on the assumption that knowledge flows from the North to the South. As Ramalingam argues '…the overriding mentality is still that developing countries are vessels to be filled with knowledge and ideas' (2015, no page reference). Despite the general recognition of the importance of knowledge, the significance of local, endogenous knowledge, and its role in development, is not mentioned or clarified. Is knowledge at the grassroots important for local development and, if so, how is this demonstrated, understood and disseminated?

In developed countries, specifically in organisations and communities of practice, many researchers have charted the relationship between social capital and the creation and exchange of knowledge. This seems to be an interesting approach for development because social capital – roughly synonymous with the resources accessible through one's social network – is an endogenous resource with particular potential to support development processes at the grassroots, partly because it is present in all contexts. To explore the link between social capital and knowledge at the grassroots, we address the

following two-pronged research question: based on the example of a development programme in Bangladesh, how does strengthening the structural, cognitive and relational dimensions of social capital at the grassroots contribute to the creation and exchange of knowledge, and what types of new know-how are being co-created by programme participants?

Although there has been considerable research on social capital in development, which we review briefly in the next section (see, for example, Seferiadis et al., 2015), such research is not specifically focused on the creation and exchange of knowledge. To support our efforts to make the contribution of social capital more visible, we used the influential Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) framework, which focuses on the hypothesised relationship between social capital and intellectual capital in organisations, seeking to establish whether it is applicable to development processes among the poor in rural Bangladesh. We were aware that we could not assume that the framework would be directly applicable to this context. Nahapiet and Ghoshal's research is populated by anonymous employees working together in organisations, literate and probably with tertiary or at least secondary education, eating three meals a day, with networks of friends and acquaintances, bank accounts and bank loans, televisions and telephones, computers, refrigerators, cars and houses. Would their framework yield insights into the process of creating and exchanging knowledge among poor women in rural Bangladesh, with primary schooling at best, constrained by norms of female seclusion (*purdah*) in which they are unable to work outside the home or go out to meet other women, subject to strong social control from their husbands and in-laws, with inadequate food, very few possessions and living in makeshift houses?

The development programme studied here was not originally focused on the link between social capital and knowledge but participants themselves identified social capital as an important element of their access to knowledge as is illustrated by this quote:

> *People who have lots of friends and who can communicate openly with others: they can improve their lives. But people who are poor and cannot communicate well are not able to make that sort of progress: they do not know other people, they cannot have information.*

The programme took place between 2006 and 2012[8] and, after a period of learning and experimentation, was eventually scaled up to cover 136 villages involving 1,300 social entrepreneurs (see, for example, Maas et al., 2014a, 2014b, 2014c and 2014d). In this paper, we focus on the early phase of the programme because it shows gradual increases in knowledge and know-how among the participants, which were intricately linked to strengthened social capital. It is this initial, micro-level process, in which the women participants started with very restricted social networks and not much knowledge of how to improve their livelihoods, but surviving against all the odds, which is of interest as a possible route to sustainable development.

4.2. Poverty, knowledge and social capital

This section offers a short review of the link between development, poverty and knowledge. This is followed by an introduction to social capital in development research, and then the Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) framework.

4.2.1. Poverty and knowledge

Many development interventions aim to reduce poverty but are often unsuccessful and follow the pattern of 'exciting new development idea, huge impact in one location, influx of donor dollars, quick expansion, failure' (Hobbes, 2014: no page reference). One reason for their failure is the inability to deal with the complex and emergent nature of poverty. In complex adaptive system theory, systems are conceptualised as comprising many interrelated components that interact with each other and the wider environment in a series of feedback loops (de Savigny, 2009). This implies that the total system cannot be understood by looking at its individual parts because the properties of these complex systems 'emerge' from the patterns of their interactions (Ramalingam et al., 2008). Against this background of complexity and unpredictability '…interventions based on simplifying fictions – such as neoclassical economics – often simply don't work' (Ramalingam et al., 2008: 60).

New forms of learning and problem-solving, such as transdisciplinary research, are needed to address challenges such as poverty. Transdisciplinary research is founded on mutual learning in which the emergent design is developed in

[8] The researchers are not formally involved since 2012, however the project is continuing.

collaboration with multiple stakeholders, including non-academic actors such as ordinary citizens (Defila and Di Giulio, 1999; Bunders et al., 2010). Transdisciplinary research 'goes beyond measuring and understanding the issues, but includes transformative action as part of the research process' (Cummings, Regeer et al., 2013: 20). The research design evolves along learning cycles in which all stakeholders learn together to develop an appropriate, socially embedded intervention. One key aspect of transdisciplinary research is the co-creation of knowledge. According to Bunders and Regeer, transdisciplinarity can be defined as 'an umbrella term for interfaces in which different actors generate socially robust knowledge in meaningful interactions in order to contribute to solving unstructured problems' (2009: 47). This is a very different approach to development knowledge than the linear model of knowledge transfer in which knowledge is assumed to flow from the North to the South.

4.2.2. Social capital and knowledge

There is an enormous literature on social capital, defined as 'the aggregate of the actual and potential resources, which are linked to possession of a durable network' (Bourdieu, 1986: 248). Much of this literature is in the field of development studies because social capital can facilitate or hamper development at the micro, meso and macro-levels with three functional subtypes of social capital have been found to have an impact on development outcomes, namely bonding, bridging and linking social capital (for a full review of the concept see Seferiadis et al., 2015). Essentially, at the micro-level, bonding capital is found in family connections, bridging within horizontal networks of similar actors (peers), and linking to actors outside the horizontal network, which provide access to resources (vertical ties). These subtypes have distinct impacts in their capacity to facilitate development. For example, entrepreneurs initially draw support from their families and communities but this is later replaced by ties outside their communities (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). Empirical studies demonstrate that development interventions can successfully stimulate the development of social capital (for example, Bebbington and Carroll, 2002). Seferiadis et al. (2015), strongly influenced by Cilliers and Wepener (2007), identified four additional mechanisms which play a role in creating social capital, namely the material level of structural opportunities, a sense of belonging, civic literacy, and the ethos of mutuality.

A number of academics have made the link between social capital and access to information, although most of the seminal works on this theme are located in developed countries. Coleman (1988), for example, describes aspects of social relations that provide useful capital resources for individuals, arguing that one form of social capital resides in the information potential that can be accessed via social relations maintained for other purposes. For Lin (1999), social capital facilitates the flow of information. The link between social capital and information has also been made in rural Bangladesh. For example, Bakshi et al. identified social capital as 'a powerful tool that affects human behaviour by mitigating information asymmetries among individuals' (2015: 1604). In the literature, social capital has been identified as having a number of implications for organisations and networks. First, networks of social relations, particularly those characterised by weak ties or structural holes (disconnections and non-equivalences among actors) are considered to make the diffusion of information more efficient by reducing redundancy (Burt, 1992). Second, social capital has been found to encourage creativity and learning (Fischer et al 2004, Burt 2002). Third, it has been shown to support cooperative behaviour, facilitating innovative types of organisation and new forms of association (Fukuyama 1995, Putnam 1993). For organisational and management sciences, social capital is an important concept for understanding institutional dynamics, innovation, and value creation (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998) (cited in Cummings et al., 2006).

Scholars in the field of organisational and management studies have developed frameworks which hypothesise how social capital contributes to knowledge (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998; Adler and Kwon, 2002). Probably the best known of these frameworks is Nahapiet and Ghoshal's (1998) three-dimensional model which describes how social capital contributes to intellectual capital, defined as the 'knowledge and knowing capability of a social entity' (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998: 245). By 2014, the framework had been cited 9,430 times and it is 'widely acknowledged by scholars in different scientific disciplines' (Ehlin, 2015: 27). The framework shows how social capital stimulates organisational innovation by creating intellectual capital, based on hypothesised relationships between social capital and the processes necessary for the creation of intellectual capital (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) distinguish between the structural, relational, and cognitive dimensions of social capital at the level of organisations as contributing to intellectual capital:

1. Structural dimension: patterns of connections between actors, including network ties and network configuration. For this dimension, descriptors include density, connectivity, hierarchy, and 'appropriable organisation'.
2. Cognitive dimension: shared representation, interpretation, and systems of meaning among actors, such as shared language, codes and narratives.
3. Relational dimension: key aspects of personal relationships developed based on a history of interactions, including trust, norms, obligations and expectations, and identification.

In this model, the combination and exchange of knowledge takes place because actors anticipate value in knowledge creation and exchange, are motivated to combine and exchange, have the capability to do so, and have access to others for combining and exchanging. Appropriable organisation in this framework relates to the fact that norms and trust developed in the context of an intervention can be transferred from one social setting to another, for example the transfer of trust and relationships from families to organisations.

In the next section, we provide an overview of the PRIDE programme in Bangladesh and of the transdisciplinary methodology followed by this programme. Following this, we apply the three-dimensional model (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998) to consider dimensions of social capital that facilitated the combination and exchange of knowledge in the PRIDE programme.

4.3. The study and the methodology

4.3.1. The project

Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in Asia with some 47 million people living below the poverty line (World Bank, 2013). It is challenged by an extremely high population density, poor economic growth and high unemployment (Mabud, 2008). Poverty is more prevalent in rural areas than urban areas with more than 20 per cent of the rural population living in 'extreme poverty' in 2010 (Mangani et al., 2015). Many development programmes aim to alleviate poverty but are unable to reach the poorest members of the population (Abed and Matin, 2007; Mair and Marti, 2009). In addition, women face a greater burden of poverty than men, as women also face considerable inequality in terms of reproductive health, empowerment and

access to the labour market (UNDP, 2015). Women's opportunities to earn a living outside the home are also restricted by social norms of female seclusion, known as *purdah*.

In 2004, the Route to Sustainable Development Programme was started by the local non-government organisation (NGO), PRIDE, with support from the Athena Institute of the VU University Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The programme, aiming to reach the local poor in rural areas, was located in villages of Jessore District in the Khulna Division of western Bangladesh, starting with two villages and expanding every year to reach 136 villages by 2012. The programme had two main objectives: to train poor households in income-generating activities (IGAs) and, at the same time, to make it possible for them to stimulate development of other people in their communities. As mentioned above, social capital was not the original focus of the programme but it became increasingly relevant as the participants emphasised the importance of their social network in providing access to resources. Given that the programme was successful in stimulating social entrepreneurship and strengthening the capital base of poor households (Maas et al., 2014a, 2014b, 2014c and 2014d), this paper examines the programme's success from the perspective of knowledge co-creation.

The research started with an experimentation phase in which the NGO selected and trained women to pilot new approaches to development. In 2006, two women were identified who were already involved in IGAs and had developed a social network, involving contacts with other people in their village and other organisations. These two women were willing to experiment with other IGAs, such as home-based gardening and poultry rearing, to improve their incomes and to try to help others. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of these activities resulted in suggestions on how to train other poor women in IGAs.

In 2007, four new poor women were included in the programme. PRIDE trained these women as 'intermediaries' in the knowledge and skills required to conduct IGAs and to disseminate these skills to other poor people, who represented the intermediaries' beneficiaries. The training sessions were based on the lessons learnt from the first two participants. PRIDE organised training sessions with the intermediaries and with their beneficiaries on a variety of topics. In 2008, 20 participants were included in the programme, 15 women and five men. The NGO focused on training only the intermediaries who, from this time onwards, were responsible for training their own beneficiaries. New IGAs, such as handicrafts and sewing, were introduced and trialled. Other IGAs were

developed so that intermediaries could earn incomes from their interactions with their beneficiaries, such as mediating the selling of handicrafts and vaccination of poultry. The NGO monitored the training of the beneficiaries by attending the group training sessions, and also by accompanying the intermediaries on home visits. In 2008, the men left the programme to pursue other employment opportunities. From this point onwards, the programme focused only on women.

In the course of 2008-2009, all participants were able to earn money from the IGAs. This led to the launch of the implementation phase. Some 32 women were selected and trained as intermediaries in 2009 without receiving a stipend. Previously trained intermediaries also remained in the programme although they were no longer paid to take part. From ten original subjects, the training sessions were condensed to cover only the five most profitable ones: vegetable and seed production; tree nursery management; backyard poultry rearing and vaccination; tailoring and handicrafts; and farm management, including fish production, goat rearing and cow fattening. In 2010, 26 women were recruited, and actively monitored to analyse the changes occurring in their livelihood strategies. As processes became better understood, monitoring by PRIDE became less intensive. Building on the previous learning cycles, the scaling-up phase started in 2011 and took an explicit social entrepreneurship approach. In 2011, 26 entrepreneurs were trained and in 2012, an additional 26 women were recruited.

For the sake of clarity, the women trained by PRIDE whether in the first two phases (intermediaries) or in third one (social entrepreneurs) are referred to 'entrepreneurs' in the rest of this article.

4.3.2. Data collection and analysis

Field data, collected by the first author (AS) from February 2008 to April 2011 was derived from in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), questionnaires, and photo-voice methods. It also involved observations of the entrepreneurs and beneficiaries, including visits to their gardens or participation in handicraft making and cooking. Data were also drawn from a study of the NGO's internal documents and observations of its working practices, including participation in training sessions for entrepreneurs and in mapping activities. The study questions comprised: (1) exploring barriers for development encountered by community members; (2) domains of changes resulting from

the programme; (3) how the programme stimulated development; and (4) how the community perceived the programme.

Photo-voice was used to assess the changes that women had experienced due to the programme. This community-based participatory method made it possible for women to 'record and reflect on their lives (…) from their own point of view' (Wang, Burris and Ping 1996: 1) despite their limited literacy. Disposable cameras were distributed to 24 women who had been selected by PRIDE staff as being active in the programme and willing to take part. Cameras were distributed to 12 entrepreneurs and 12 beneficiaries, all of whom were requested to take photographs of what had changed in their lives since the start of the programme. After one week, the cameras were collected and the photographs were developed. Some 23 participants then considered their photographs in eight group discussions, comprising small groups of three to four women. Participants were asked to describe and explain their photographs while the groups were asked to reflect on these stories.

In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted over the years with 32 entrepreneurs, 24 beneficiaries, and 42 community members and 14 PRIDE staff members. Interviews were conducted with a translator, and transcribed verbatim from the English translation. FGDs were conducted with the staff of PRIDE (nine), entrepreneurs (one), beneficiaries (one) and community members (three). Questionnaires were administrated to 89 entrepreneurs and eight beneficiaries.

In the experimentation phase of the programme, PRIDE characterised its target beneficiaries as lacking in social capital. For example, during a FGD in March 2008, they described their target populations' communication in terms of having 'few friends', 'poor networking skills', 'low social abilities' and 'low speaking power', and poor access to information and technology. PRIDE considered that the low level of social capital was a barrier to the development of their target beneficiaries because they could not obtain information or land. Facing challenges linked to the social domain, PRIDE developed strategies to strengthen the programme participants' social capital.

4.4. Dimensions of social capital that facilitate knowledge co-creation and exchange

In this section, we apply the framework developed by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) and, at the same time, adapt it to fit the findings from the PRIDE programme. In this way, we answer the first part of the research question, namely how does strengthening structural, cognitive and relational dimensions of social capital at the grassroots contribute to knowledge creation and exchange?

4.4.1. Structural dimensions

The structural dimensions of social capital relate to network ties, network configuration, and appropriable organisation. In considering network configuration, we have also introduced bonding, bridging and linking capital because they have differing implications in terms of the access they provide to knowledge.

Network ties

According to Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), network ties provide benefits in terms of access, timing and referrals to information. In this development programme, many beneficiaries mention better access to information. For example, entrepreneurs helped their beneficiaries find out who they should contact for their IGAs, such as for selling handicrafts, but also for other domains related to livelihoods. For example, entrepreneurs helped their beneficiaries to navigate the complicated maze of health-service providers: entrepreneurs know who to contact, for example they have phone numbers of health providers or ambulances; and who to avoid, such as quacks, fake organisations, non-accredited doctors and the like. The entrepreneurs explained that they mediate contacts for their beneficiaries until this is no longer necessary because the beneficiaries have developed their own networks. Women also claimed they are now more active in gaining knowledge and in requesting support. As one beneficiary explained:

> *Before I was also getting in touch with the governmental agricultural officer but it was less necessary. Now I am working more and needing more support so contact is taking place more often than before.*(beneficiary)

Network configuration

Network configuration – density, configuration and hierarchy – are also hypothesised to play a role in information access. In this programme, specific aspects of network configuration representing bonding, bridging and linking capital were found to be of importance in providing access to resources. Initially, PRIDE negotiated with village power-holders and with women's families to identify suitable candidates to take part in the programme and to gain permission for them to be engaged in IGAs. Bonding capital with husbands and families was very important because women needed their families' consent to take part and to leave the home. As their families saw that they were contributing to the household's food supply (vegetable gardens, fish ponds) and income (selling goods and services, such as handicrafts and poultry vaccination), women's position in their family improved: they became more 'valued' by their husband and wider family. In one FGD, entrepreneurs explained: 'Our husbands love us more because we can contribute money.' In addition, women's opinions and advice started to carry more weight: 'My husband takes more notice of my decisions than before' (beneficiary). In one example, a woman explained that now that her husband listens to her, they have decided to send their daughter to school. This bonding capital not only played a role in changing the value of women's knowledge within the household but was also a basic precondition of women's ability to develop their networks with other women, their bridging capital.

The programme stimulated bridging social capital, namely ties between poor women. The women reported knowing more people and having closer and stronger ties with other poor women since the start of the programme. As a result, women are able to exchange knowledge:

> *I talk to my friends* (My friends help me with) *lots of knowledge. I get solutions for some problems. (…) I talk to people who are a bit educated and they give me suggestions: you can go here and there…* (beneficiary)

In terms of linking capital, namely vertical links with power-holders, women also developed ties with other actors – landowners, the Imam, members of local government – which they used to gain access to land, permission to leave their homes to undertake social and economic activities, access to local legal judgements, and greater knowledge. This linking social capital is of instrumental importance in knowing how to gain access to markets and for solving problems, as this quote from an entrepreneur exemplifies:

> *Most of the time my beneficiaries ask me for advice concerning problems. If I know the answer already, I will make a suggestion. Sometimes I suggest going to someone else to ask for help, such as a village elder who might know how to help. Then I go with her and will learn from the elder too.* (entrepreneur)

Appropriable organisation

This part of the structural dimension seems to be highly relevant to the programme because the knowledge and knowing developed during the programme were evident across all domains. In fact, improvements in livelihoods would not have been possible without changes at the level of social interactions. The transfer of skills can also be seen from livelihoods to health, for example, as explained by one beneficiary:

> *This is a photograph of me making a fire with leaves with the neighbours. I suggested to them it is not good for your health to stay too near the fire* (because of the smoke); *it is better to keep warm by using a blanket. This is not something I learnt from the entrepreneur, this is my own understanding and the neighbours are listening to me*. (beneficiary)

In addition, when beneficiaries demonstrated skills in one dimension, their capacities in other dimensions were increasingly recognised:

> *They are interested in asking me for suggestions because my vegetables are growing well and the chicken and ducks are well too.* (beneficiary)

Structural opportunities to meet

Evident among the poor women, one structural aspect that appears to be a precursor to social capital is 'structural opportunities to meet', identified by Cilliers and Wepener (2007). This is not exactly a dimension of social capital but rather a mechanism through which social capital can be created. Before the arrival of PRIDE, *purdah* restricted women's ability to leave the home, to be involved in IGAs, and to interact with other women. PRIDE built on a momentum initiated by other NGOs (such as micro-credit) to facilitate women's capacities to interact with each other:

A few years ago actually, women in our village didn't talk to each other very much. But since the NGOs came, things have changed. Now there are meetings in the village and we can talk to each other. (beneficiary)

PRIDE purposefully created these structural opportunities to meet by negotiating with the power-holders in the village – women's husbands, their in-laws, rich men and Imams – making it possible for women to meet each other regularly and to attend training sessions. This aspect appears to be very similar to one of the mechanisms identified by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) for the creation and exchange of knowledge, namely access to others for combining and exchanging.

4.4.2. Cognitive dimensions

The cognitive dimension in the Nahapiet and Ghoshal framework is related to 'what' is being shared, including the production of the shared language, codes, and narratives. In one additional aspect, which is evident in the PRIDE programme, women also have shared livelihoods.

Shared codes, narratives and livelihoods
The women involved in the programme not only share a language and a history but also have similar livelihoods. They are either landless or have tiny gardens; they live in rudimentary houses, have sparse furniture (at best two tin boxes and a rack to stock their belongings) and few poultry; and they generally eat only twice a day (sometimes three times, sometimes only once), rarely including fish or meat. Women stay within the confines of their home, and their activities generally revolve around taking care of the house and children. They rely on their husband to earn money and to buy everything; they even need to ask him to buy a few biscuits to offer guests. Before the advent of the programme, they were stuck in poverty, not seeing the way out.

Given the shared livelihoods, changes and improvements made by one woman were directly applicable to others. In addition, they could exchange knowledge about the same livelihood base. Given their shared livelihoods, their codes and also their narratives are shared to describe their situation. As one women highlighted, 'the poor understand the pain of the poor, the rich people cannot understand' (beneficiary). This highlights ties established within networks based upon common life histories in which norms and values are shared. This facilitated the exchange and co-creation of knowledge because women had

shared frames of reference. The participants also noted the difficulties they faced in sharing knowledge with people from different socio-economic backgrounds. With other community members, such as older men, knowledge is not co-created but passed on vertically.

4.4.3. Relational dimensions

Identification

Identification represents the process by which individuals identify themselves with another person or group (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998). This is very closely aligned to the shared narratives and livelihoods in the cognitive dimension. Women interviewed were consciously developing and accessing strong ties with members of the same social stratum because they recognise a sort of 'like-mindedness'. This is linked to altruistic behaviour, such as giving gifts. Participating in others' improvement also adds to the participants' quality of life: 'I feel happy to give gifts and see people around improve.' As one beneficiary explained: 'I feel happy that I am giving suggestions and that I am right and that people come to me when they have problems. In the village, everyone is happy to help others.' This also strengthened women's status within the community as an entrepreneur explained in a FGD: 'We are pleased because members of our groups are improving: it is the outcome. Also, we are respected.' Such recognition was not only limited to other women of similar socio-economic status but also extended to village power-holders.

Women in the programme often avoided contact with people even poorer than they were and who would be less able to reciprocate in exchanges. In addition, they also tended to denigrate people who are poorer than they are themselves, holding them responsible for their own poverty.

Trust

Development of trust was an important issue within the programme and is the subject of another paper in its own right (Maas et al., 2014a). Given that the programme was taking place in an environment with a high level of institutional distrust and a low level of institutional trust, PRIDE played an important part in developing trust within the villages and with the participants. As one village leader put it, 'They (PRIDE) came suddenly into the village and we could not trust them. Many NGO people come here and cheat people' (Maas et al. 2014a: 74). In addition, the entrepreneurs needed to develop the trust of their beneficiaries across four domains: the personal domain of intentions and benevolence; their stories and capacities; the 'proof of principle' that the

entrepreneur could be successful in vegetable production; and the advantages accruing to their beneficiaries (Maas et al., 2014a). Only when they had proved their trustworthiness in these four domains was their advice listened to and followed. Even when the entrepreneurs had shown their trustworthiness in the first three domains and had shown 'proof of principle', their beneficiaries still needed convincing that they could also be successful and were hesitant to buy seeds. To overcome this barrier, PRIDE gave seeds to the entrepreneurs who then gave them to their beneficiaries, representing the inaugural gift. This is explained by an entrepreneur in the following quote: 'It was difficult during the first two months to make them understand but the (gift of) seeds helped them to understand.'

Norms, obligations and expectations

The programme sought to avoid conflict with local norms. While it sought change to enable the development of vulnerable families, activities remained in harmony with the local norms, thereby not detaching women from dominant customs or their place within the community. The NGO negotiated within these norms without confronting them, in particular *purdah*. For this reason, the IGAs were generally home-based, such as farming and handicrafts. In addition and of crucial importance, the programme was able to leverage the norm of altruism to encourage women to support each other.

4.5. Co-creation of know-how and knowing capabilities

In this section, we answer the second part of the research question, namely what types of new know-how have been co-created by the programme participants? The programme developed new know-how across a range of domains, including livelihoods, social interaction, giving advice and social entrepreneurship. This made it possible for women to identify paths for improvement based on the co-creation of knowledge but also provided a momentum for change as one beneficiary reported:

> *The entrepreneur also motivates us to develop our family. She says: 'There are things that I may not be able to teach you but that you can do for yourselves'.* (entrepreneur)

4.5.1. Know-how of improved livelihoods

Through the photo-voice activity, entrepreneurs and beneficiaries ascribed many positive changes to the programme, including improvements in livelihood strategies, both agricultural and non-agricultural. The livelihood activities shown in the photographs included the cultivation of the kitchen garden, the rearing of animals (poultry, goats and cows), and aquaculture in small ponds. Non-agricultural activities included sewing and handicrafts (generally embroidery), the making of nets and baskets, and the production and selling of cooked food.

Many women reported a diversification of their livelihood strategies. For example, some women started cultivating vegetables and selling handicrafts as a result of the programme. Many women also took photographs that demonstrated an intensification of their activities: they now produce more vegetables; their animals survive; and their chickens now produce more eggs and their cows more milk. Moreover, many photographs show how women have extended the land they can use for their agricultural activities. In a context of land scarcity, photographs show how women are better able to use all available land, including land that was previously 'vacant' or 'empty'. For example, they now use 'that narrow space between the ponds' to cultivate vegetables. They also make use of opportunities for aquaculture, for example rearing fish in 'small holes' of one square metre. In particular, the women now construct pergolas on their house, above their garden, or above the ponds to cultivate vine crops, thereby creating additional scope for agricultural production. The women also took photographs of other changes in their lives: for example, they showed that they were now able to invest in food for their family or in their children's education.

4.5.2. Know-how of social interaction

During the programme, women have developed networking and communication skills as one beneficiary explained:

> *Since I started working with PRIDE many things have changed. I now know how to communicate with rich people (…) I have learnt how to speak to rich people, how to speak to poor people, how to lease land.* (beneficiary)

They have also learned how to use their social network to gain access to knowledge as the following quote illustrates:

> *If we need to talk to someone else that we don't know, we will ask some other rich person we know. We will ask 'Uncle, I need to talk to this person who has knowledge. How can I go about it?'* (entrepreneur)

4.5.3. Know-how of giving advice

In tandem with their increased social status, entrepreneurs and beneficiaries have become increasingly recognised for the good advice they are able to offer others: 'women come and ask' and people 'listen' to their advice:

> *Before I felt shy and now I feel confident to give suggestions, it is mutual, it is also the women who are attracted: they know I will give good suggestions because I have good vegetables.* (entrepreneur)

The giving of advice is helped by material exchanges as this beneficiary (who is gradually becoming an entrepreneur herself, copying the entrepreneur in her village) explained: 'To whom I gift seeds, I also teach.' Similarly gifts are made to entrepreneurs by beneficiaries as a 'thank you' for advice as one beneficiary explained:

> *Willingly, I present the entrepreneur with vegetables as gifts. I am using her suggestions and improving so I think I should give her something but there is no pressure to do so.* (beneficiary)

4.5.4. Know-how of social entrepreneurship

Women have developed their ability to identify economic opportunities at the same time as further developing their ability to help others. They are also seeing the opportunities that are available to others, as this quote from a beneficiary shows:

> (In this photograph you can see) *my neighbour and her husband, they are making baskets. He used to make the baskets alone. I suggested that she should help him because she would sit down after finishing her household work. Now she helps him. I have learnt from the*

entrepreneur that you can give suggestions to others and show them how they can improve. (beneficiary)

4.6. Discussion

This paper investigates how social capital contributes to the creation and exchange of knowledge for grassroots development. In our effort to make the role of social capital more visible, we used the influential Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) framework. The framework was able to demonstrate the relationship between strengthening social capital and knowledge creation and exchange at the grassroots, although it did require some adjustments. Our amended framework (see Figure 4.1) not only shows the main dimensions of social capital that contribute to knowledge co-creation and exchange but also demonstrates the domains where participants have co-created the know-how. These domains are self-reinforcing capabilities that will support the women and their communities in processes of sustainable development. PRIDE was very effective in stimulating the combination and exchange of knowledge by encouraging participants to anticipate value in knowledge creation and exchange, to be motivated to combine and exchange, to have the capability to do so, and to have access to others for combining and exchanging. These processes led to the development of the different forms of know-how described above.

Despite having been developed for a very different hypothesised group of people, the Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) framework is applicable to the grassroots in developing countries and the context under study. We have, however, added to the framework in order to enhance our understanding of how development interventions stimulate social capital for knowledge creation and exchange at the grassroots. In addition, we have established that bonding, bridging and linking social capital are different functional subtypes that have different functions in terms of the usefulness along development paths. In our study context, characterised not only by poverty but also by limited access to a social network (due to *purdah*), bonding social capital represents the first type of social capital to which the programme participants have access, followed later by bridging and linking capital. Hence, we have further developed the structural dimensions of Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) by dividing it into the three functional subtypes of (bonding, bridging and linking) in order to distinguish between three distinct processes by which social capital contributes to the creation and exchange of knowledge at the grassroots. In addition, we have

added to the framework by identifying the capabilities and know-how that have been co-created.

What appears from our analysis is that bonding, bridging and linking social capital have different implications in terms of access to knowledge. Bonding capital with husbands and in-laws was a necessary precondition for women to be able to participate in networks and IGAs; bridging capital predominantly provided access to like-minded advice and knowledge about livelihoods, health, and other problems; while linking capital provided access to resources, such as to land, and advice from the government extension officer. Moreover, bonding, bridging and linking social capital have different modes of knowledge creation. Bridging social capital not only enables women to share narratives and co-create knowledge, stimulated by a strong motivation to exchange and combine knowledge, but also generates a very strong capacity to identify opportunities for development, identified as value anticipation by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998). On the other hand, bonding and linking social capital enable transfers of knowledge (migratory knowledge) that the poor women combine with their own (embedded knowledge) to produce new knowledge and know-how, which becomes highly relevant and strengthens their capacities for development. In addition, the capacity to co-create and exchange knowledge is mediated by the cognitive and relational dimensions of social capital. Only when women have shared codes and livelihoods are they able to co-create knowledge. Prior identification of women as 'knowing' but also as 'known' to others – which also generates trust – is required for knowledge to be exchanged. The exchange and co-creation of knowledge is enacted between community members who have expectations but also obligations to help each other, based on norms of solidarity.

Gift exchange played an unexpectedly important role within the context under study. Indeed, a gift seems to be the visible manifestation of social capital: gifts can be material, such as seeds and vegetables, but also non-material such as advice and knowledge. Exchanges were intensified as a result of the programme and this strengthened social capital. Moreover, gifts display circularity, which is endowed with sustainability. Although the importance of making gifts does not appear to be widely recognised in the development literature, the close relationship between social capital and gift exchange in the business environment is recognised. For example, Dolfsma and colleagues consider that 'building a new social capital community, or extending an existing one, requires

protracted investments in the form of gift exchange between individuals' (2009: 32).

Linked to the exchange of gifts, trust appears to play a far more important role in this context than it does in the Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) framework, possibly because the programme was taking place in a context with low levels of trust – where NGOs are not trusted and where women are not trusted to be able to contribute to their own, their household's and their community's development. Initially, the gift exchange of seeds was chosen as an alternative to market exchange because it overcame this lack of trust. Fisher has identified the link between trust and knowledge, arguing that 'trust provides an essential catalyst enabling passive information to be transformed into usable knowledge' (2013: 1). In addition, the positive feelings of the women involved in the programme, their feelings of self-worth and of being valued, should not be underestimated. Gift, trust and positive feelings are the hidden mechanisms of this development programme.

Although the framework successfully reveals processes underlying the leveraging of social capital for the creation and exchange of knowledge at the grassroots, it is very much a static framework because it was originally designed to show the hypothesised relationship between social capital and intellectual capital at a given point, and was not designed to leverage change. As a result, the framework is less able to demonstrate the dynamic relationship between social capital and knowledge, and strategies by which both social capital and knowledge can be strengthened by a development intervention.

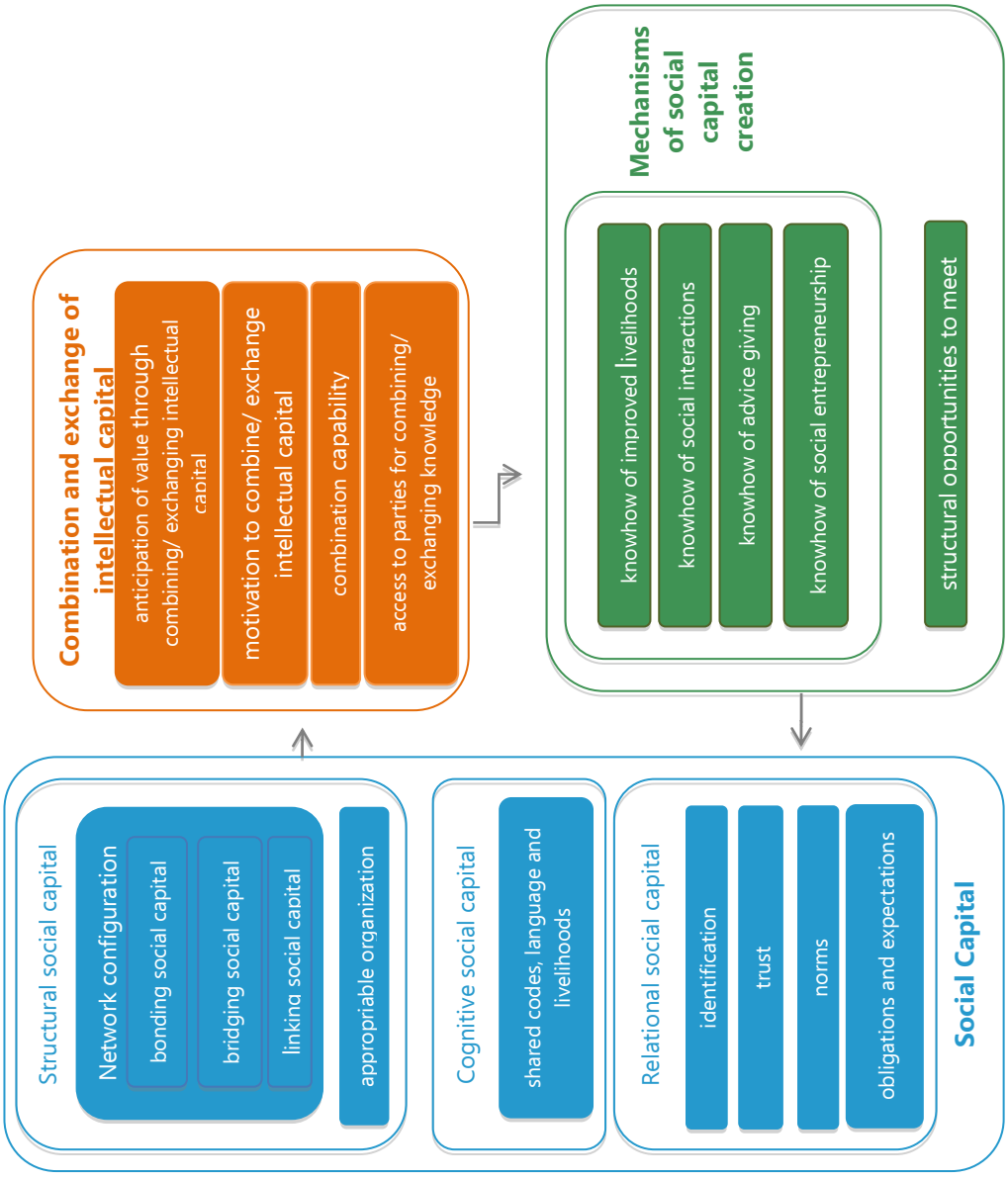

Figure 4.1: Framework of dimensions of social capital in the co-creation and exchange of knowledge

4.7. Conclusions

This paper considered the dimensions of social capital that contribute to the creation and exchange of knowledge at the grassroots. Despite having been developed for a very different hypothesised group of people, the Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) framework is applicable to the grassroots and the context under study. We have, however, expanded the model in order to enhance our understanding of how development interventions stimulate social capital for knowledge creation and exchange. Based on these findings, we plan to develop a framework to support researchers in their efforts to understand the dynamic relationship between social capital and development. This framework will also provide a tool to help those responsible for development interventions to design strategies to leverage social capital as a resource to stimulate grassroots development.

According to the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy, 'the ultimate task of high-quality development policy remains to search for mechanisms to initiate self-reinforcing processes of endogenous change' (van Lieshout et al., 2010: 232). This programme fits within this category because it has facilitated poor women to develop self-reinforcing processes of endogenous change, based on endogenous knowledge. The capabilities developed in the programme foster the development of women and their communities in a sustainable manner. In addition, it is striking that the potential to develop the know-how co-created in the programme existed before PRIDE initiated it. In that sense, the programme has been built on the potential within the social network, the potential being part of the definition of social capital. This potential also appears to be linked to what have been called 'affordances', namely action possibilities available in the environment to an individual, independent of the individual's ability to perceive this possibility (McGrenere and Ho, 2000, cited in Cummings et al., 2006). The endogenous nature of knowledge and know-how generated are consistent with Ferreira's definition of development as 'most of all, the result of the synergy among millions of innovative initiatives people take every day in their local societies, generating new and more effective ways of producing, trading, and managing their resources and their institutions' (2009: 99). This study demonstrates that knowledge is of huge importance for development at the grassroots but that leveraging knowledge and social capital is not a simple process: it requires concerted efforts and dedication from people at the grassroots and NGOs who are helping them.

Chapter 5. A dynamic framework for strengthening women's social capital: strategies for community development in rural Bangladesh

Abstract

Social capital contributes to the alleviation of poverty but evidence on how to strengthen it remains scarce. This article describes strategies to strengthen social capital developed by a non-governmental organization (NGO) and women as part of a development programme in rural Bangladesh between 2006 and 2012. The NGO and the women involved leveraged bonding (familial), bridging (peers) and linking (vertical links to powerholders) social capital in efforts to improve women's livelihoods, simultaneously changing household- and community-level gender relations. Against a background of local norms and ethics, the NGO and the women employed strategies that created opportunities for women to meet and exchange, and develop their social skills, know-how, self-worth and capacity to act. Drawing on these strategies, the article presents a dynamic framework for strengthening social capital for community development, providing theoretical insights into the mechanisms for doing so.

5.1. Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the world's poorest countries, ranked 142 of 187 countries in terms of human development (UNDP, 2015). Women bear a disproportionate burden of poverty, demonstrated by high levels of gender inequality (UNDP, 2015). Women have fewer resources, and little or no access to networks, banks, and other private and public institutions. They are subject to constraints on their mobility and participation in public life because of the social norm of female seclusion, *purdah* (Mair and Marti, 2009) which limits women's ability to leave their home alone or to work. Against this background, it is very difficult for rural women to escape poverty.

Social capital, 'the aggregate of the actual and potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network' (Bourdieu, 196: 248) is recognized as having the capacity to alleviate poverty though development interventions which include micro-credit, agricultural production and marketing, environmental protection and knowledge networking (Seferiadis et al., 2015). In Bangladesh, for example, social capital has been found to facilitate organization of waste collection by slum residents (Pargal, Gillian and Huq, 2002), to strengthen women's assets in terms of the diffusion of agricultural technologies (Quisulbing and Kumar, 2011), and to play a role in improving livelihoods and food security (Ali, 2005). Social capital can, however, make women more vulnerable and expose them to greater gender-based discrimination (Thieme and Siegmann, 2010; Molyneux, 2002) and restrict individual freedom in contexts of *purdah* (Andrist, 2008). Some micro-credit interventions have been shown to make women more vulnerable by building on negative aspects of social capital (Rozario, 2002a) while efforts to strengthen women's social capital in the Farmer Field School project in Bangladesh were not sustainable due to lack of male support (Islam et al., 2004). Although social capital is associated with many positive effects, especially in terms of poverty alleviation, evidence on how social capital can be strengthened by development interventions remains scarce (Seferiadis et al., 2015; Grootaert, 2002).

This article is concerned with the strategies that community development projects can use to strengthen social capital as a means to alleviate poverty. It is based on a development programme in the rural Jessore District in Bangladesh, undertaken between 2006 and 2012 by the local non-governmental organisation (NGO), PRIDE. The research question this article addresses is: What types of social capital have been used and which strategies have been

developed to strengthen women's social capital for poverty alleviation in rural Bangladesh? Following a literature review, the paper presents the programme's methodology and learning phases. The strategies developed by the NGO and by women are presented in the section on results. Drawing on these strategies, the article develops a dynamic framework for strengthening social capital for community development, providing theoretical insights into the mechanisms that achieve this. The framework can also support NGOs in their efforts to strengthen women's social capital for poverty alleviation.

5.2. Social capital and community development

Scholars locate social capital at different levels. For example, Lin (1999) locates it at the individual level and Putnam (1993) at the community level. As reviewed by Halpern (2005), social capital is located at three levels: *micro*, at the individual level; *meso*, at the community level; and *macro*, at the societal level. Moreover, social capital can promote development through different functional sub-types. As Granovetter argued, ties are of different strengths depending on the '(probably) linear combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterise the tie' (1973: 1361). Varying uses are associated with these strengths: for example, weak ties can be an asset in seeking employment (Granovetter, 1973). Intra-community ties are most useful for poor entrepreneurs at the start-up phase, while extra-community ties become most valuable when enterprises grow (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). The three functional sub-types of social capital comprise bonding, bridging and linking. At the micro level, bonding refers to the familial networks, bridging to the networks with peers, and linking to the vertical networks with powerholders (Halpern, 2005).

Some researchers have conceptualized mechanisms of social capital production in development projects. According to Uphoff (1999), structural and cognitive phenomena are the 'mechanisms by which social capital is built up and accumulated, stored, modified, expressed, and perpetuated' (Uphoff, 1999: 219), hence they are 'specific things that can be identified and invested in' (ibid.: 220). Structural social capital enables mutually beneficial collective actions through roles and rules, and social relationships; while cognitive social capital consists of norms, values, attitudes and beliefs which predispose people towards collective action and cooperation (Uphoff, 1999). Cilliers and Wepener (2007), building on Ammerman (1999), identified four mechanisms that strengthen social capital in

South Africa, related to church attendance rather than to development interventions. In a literature review based on these mechanisms and a further review of the literature on social capital for poverty alleviation, Seferiadis and colleagues (2015) identify four categories of social capital which appear to strengthen social capital for poverty alleviation, namely the material level of structural opportunities, a sense of belonging, civic literacy, and the ethos of mutuality. This paper focuses on strategies to strengthen social capital developed by a development programme, rather than mechanisms which strengthen social capital. However, we hypothesize that the mechanisms are being leveraged by the strategies, and will briefly reflect on this in the discussion.

5.3. The development programme and its methodology

The development programme aimed to reduce rural poverty in Jessore District. It was implemented by the local NGO, PRIDE, which employed an action–research methodology: the Interactive Learning and Action approach (Bunders, 1990). Each year involved one learning cycle: monitoring and evaluation (M&E) resulted in adaptations in the following year. The programme went through a number of phases: reconnaissance, experimentation, implementation and scaling up. For further details of the scaling-up phase and social entrepreneurship see Maas 2013, Maas et al. 2014a, 2014b, 2014c and 2014d.

5.3.1. Learning phases

In the **reconnaissance phase** (2004–2006), the local context was analysed, the research team was established, and perspectives, needs, interests and knowledge of different stakeholders were analysed and integrated through focus group discussions (FGDs) and visualization techniques in villages.

In the **experimentation phase** (2006–2008), two women were identified in different villages who were already relatively successful compared to other people in their village: they were already engaged in some income-generating activities (IGAs), were well-known to others, and had been in contact with other NGOs in the past. These women were invited to experiment with new IGAs, such as home-based gardening and poultry-rearing, in order to achieve a higher income for themselves and others in the community. They were also paid a small salary for their activities in the programme. These women were called

intermediaries and the people they involved in their network activities were known as their beneficiaries.

In 2007, four additional female intermediaries were included in the programme. Based on the lessons learnt, PRIDE trained these women in the knowledge and skills required to conduct IGAs and to disseminate them to their network of beneficiaries. In 2008, 15 more women were included in the programme. They experimented with new IGAs, such as handicrafts and sewing.

In the course of 2008–2009, all intermediaries were able to generate revenue from their activities. This led to the launch of the **implementation phase** (2008–2009). In 2009, 32 additional women were selected and trained as intermediaries, without being paid. Payment to the original intermediaries from the experimentation phase was also stopped but none of the women dropped out, suggesting that the programme was beneficial to them. Drawing on previous learning cycles, the **scaling-up phase** was started in 2010. From this phase onwards, the programme explicitly took a social entrepreneurship approach and focused only on the role of the intermediaries who had become 'social entrepreneurs', as can be seen in Table 5.1.

5.3.2. Methodology

During the annual learning cycles, various M&E tools were used. During the reconnaissance phase, we used in-depth interviews and FGDs to understand obstacles and opportunities for development. During the experimentation stage, PRIDE staff and the intermediaries believed that social capital was an essential resource for development of the poor. In order to investigate the mechanisms underlying the strengthening of social capital during the implementation stage, we adopted the photo-voice methodology (Wang et al., 1996). Cameras were distributed to intermediaries and beneficiaries, who were asked to portray 'what has changed in your life since the NGO came to your village?' Women were then invited to consider the photographs in FGDs. We also carried out in-depth interviews and questionnaire surveys. An evaluation was undertaken during the scaling-up stage.

The study also involved observations by the first author of the intermediaries and the beneficiaries, including visits to their garden or participation in handicraft or cooking activities. We also drew on data from the NGO's internal documents and observations of its working practices, including participation in

training sessions for intermediaries and in mapping activities. In total, this article draws on 111 in-depth interviews, 30 FGDs and 98 questionnaires; participants included NGO staff, intermediaries and their beneficiaries, but also community members (see Table 5.1).

5.4. Strengthening different types of social capital

This section first considers the processes of strengthening social capital within the programme before going on to the next section to describe strategies for strengthening social capital.

The programme strengthened participants' social capital at the level of the functional sub-types identified earlier, namely bonding, bridging and linking capital, at different stages of the programme.

Bonding social capital
Family bonds appeared to be essential during the experimentation stage: women who lacked their family's support (especially of their husband and in-laws) would be forbidden to work, while women who were successful in engaging in IGAs reported this was possible thanks to the support of their family. Different strategies were experimented with, one of the most important being to deal effectively with *purdah*: only intermediaries needed to leave their home to take part and all IGAs were home-based.

During the implementation stage, both intermediaries and beneficiaries reported that their husband and in-laws had started to have 'faith' in them. Some also described a change in their domestic bargaining power, which is of considerable significance in a context where strong power imbalances are common within the household, as can be seen from this beneficiary's story from the photo-voice methodology:

> *In this photograph, you can see me, my husband and my daughter (…) On this photograph, we are together taking the decision about sending our daughter to school to class six and on how we are going to pay for this. Before I was dependent on my husband, and now he takes suggestions from me. As I am a beneficiary* (of the programme) *and earning money, we now take decisions together.*

Table 5.1: An overview of data-collection during programme phases.

Respondents	PRIDE	Intermediaries			Beneficiaries			Community members
		Experimental phase	Implementation phase	Scaling-up phase	Experimental phase	Implementation phase	Scaling-up phase	
Data collection period: Experimentation phase								
In-depth interviews	1	1			8			23
FGDs	7	1			1			2
Data collection period: Implementation phase								
In-depth interviews	1	4	7		2	14		2
Photovoice FGD		2	2		2	2		
Photovoice participants		5	7		6	5		
Questionnaires		25	38		2	6		1
Participatory mapping								5
Training observation	2		2					
Data collection period: Scaling-up phase								
Questionnaires				26				
Monthly reports				24				
In-depth interviews	11			20				17
FGDs				4				18

Hence, strategies to strengthen bonding social capital appeared to be successful and were applied in the next phase. In this scaling-up phase, intermediaries reported that their families were initially strongly discouraging but, with the intermediaries' success, including their capacity to earn money, they became more favourably disposed, with some husbands even helping them in their activities.

Bridging social capital

From observations during the experimentation stage, PRIDE assessed that bridging social capital is valuable to poor people because it gives them 'power as group': women help each other to strengthen their capacities but also mediate access to resources. Hence, different strategies were trialled. The importance of strengthening the participants' bridging capital was evident in the photographs taken during a photo-voice activity carried out during the implementation stage in 2010. Nearly half of the 346 photographs taken by intermediaries and beneficiaries display other people (for example, other women or family members), while more than 20% show the participant with another person, often someone she is helping.

In the discussions following the photo-voice activities, all intermediaries reported having interacted with beneficiaries they did not know before. Half of the beneficiaries of the first two phases also reported such changes in the extent of their networks. Social exchanges increased during the programme: women helping each other and also exchanging materials, giving seeds or vegetables to each other, and earning gradually through these exchanges. Both intermediaries and their beneficiaries not only indicated that they have extended their bridging social capital by knowing other women but also explained that their relationships with other women were 'better' and more 'intimate/close.'

Linking social capital

During the experimental stage, it became evident that women need to develop links with local powerholders who could, on the one hand, impede women's development and, on the other, provide access to resources. Religious leaders can forbid women to work outside the home; rich men can provide access to land; and NGOs can provide access to knowledge; while elected officials of the village council (*Shalish*) can mediate with other actors.

During the learning cycles, different strategies to strengthen linking social capital were piloted. With the assistance of PRIDE, intermediaries were able to

use linking social capital with powerholders to mediate access to resources for their beneficiaries, such as land or access to health care. The intermediaries also negotiated with teachers and elected local government officials to help their beneficiaries. During the scaling-up phase, it became clear that linking social capital was the most difficult to accumulate.

5.5. Strategies to strengthen social capital

During the programme, a number of strategies have been identified through which PRIDE and the women themselves strengthened social capital. These are considered below in terms of strategies consistent with norms and ethics, strategies which create opportunities, strategies that develop women's social skills and know-how, and strategies which develop women's self-worth and capacity to act.

5.5.1. Strategies consistent with norms and ethics

Working in harmony with norms and customs
PRIDE staff were aware of local customs, such as *purdah*, which prevent women from going outside the home. In recognition of this, from the start of the experimentation stage, the IGAs could be undertaken at home. In the implementation stage, an intermediary explained during a FGD how she organized her activities with her beneficiaries in order to comply with local norms:

> *We plan meetings at times when it doesn't get in our husband's way.*

As this quote shows, women sought to avoid conflict with local norms. Rather than confronting dominant norms and customs, in particular *purdah*, PRIDE encouraged women to engage in home-based IGAs that were acceptable to their family and local powerholders, representing bonding and linking social capital respectively. In this way, the programme strengthened shared norms and hence avoided severing women from their social capital. From the implementation stage onwards, however, some degree of empowerment was observed. In the scaling-up stage, it had become more socially acceptable for women to seek change.

Selecting change agents with more freedom of movement
During the implementation stage, PRIDE observed that husbands and in-laws could forbid women from leaving the house and taking part in the programme, and that these restrictions were more likely to apply to young or recently married women. PRIDE gradually learned that women over 25 years of age and widows had more freedom of movement than younger women who might be hassled by men if they moved around the village or had young children. In response, PRIDE developed criteria for selecting intermediaries, change agents needing to leave their home.

Developing trust
PRIDE established relationships of trust with powerholders and developed its capacity to transfer its acquired linking social capital to intermediaries. PRIDE facilitated intermediaries' contacts in their respective villages with elected local government officials, such as the chair and members of the Union Council and teachers, but also with entrepreneurs and other NGOs. PRIDE leveraged its village-level social capital, making it accessible to the intermediaries. For example, PRIDE invited powerholders to come to training sessions and also initially accompanied the intermediaries to talk to them. In interviews during the scaling-up phase, powerholders said that they started to trust PRIDE because of regular staff visits and because of the way in which they were directly involved.

Engaging with resistance
Although working in harmony with norms and customs, it was also necessary for the NGO to deal with resistance or potential opposition. During the experimentation and implementation phases, PRIDE developed strategies to establish connections with the powerholders, investing time in regular visits and also actively involving them. PRIDE's staff engaged with the local elite before starting a village programme, explaining it, and preventing elite capture of resources. They also actively engaged them in the participatory mapping.

From the start, PRIDE learnt to involve women's families. PRIDE staff contacted the families of proposed intermediaries to secure their support, and also negotiated with husbands and in-laws to gain their cooperation *before* asking women whether they wanted to participate. For the beneficiaries, intermediaries tried to mediate the families' cooperation, and some even mediated within the private sphere of domestic problems.

Ethos of mutuality

During the experimentation phase, intermediaries received a small allowance so they could help their respective beneficiaries. From the implementation phase onwards, intermediaries were no longer paid because the IGAs had become profitable but they continued to 'help' and 'share' with other women. When the women described their social exchanges, they explained them as being based on altruism. Women's accounts show that they strive to enable others to improve, as they themselves have done. Hence not only do intermediaries help and share with their beneficiaries, but also beneficiaries also help and share with others, saying that they value providing good advice to others: 'I feel happy that I am giving suggestions' and 'I do this for their improvement, and they have reported to me that they have improved'. As 'everyone is happy to help' and making gifts explained as part of the culture, this norm of altruism or mutuality was not created by the programme but was already present and drawn upon during the learning cycles, as the programme provided the opportunity for the exchange of gifts and gradually developed into an approach that stimulated social entrepreneurship. As mentioned in the theoretical section, Cilliers and Wepener (2007) identified this mechanism as the ethos of mutuality.

5.5.2. Strategies that create opportunities

Opportunities to meet other women

PRIDE brought intermediaries and beneficiaries together to receive training in IGAs. For the first time, this gave women opportunities to meet other women. This served a triple purpose: women could learn about IGAs, exchange knowledge about their challenges and possible solutions, and extend their social networks among their peers. In particular, this gave women the opportunity to accumulate bridging social capital. Cilliers and Wepener (2007) also identified this as the material level of structural opportunity to meet.

Opportunities to make social exchanges

At the start of the experimentation phase, the intermediaries received seeds from PRIDE to start vegetable and seed production. They distributed seeds to their beneficiaries and, after the harvest, returned seeds to PRIDE. All intermediaries were involved in these exchanges and even beneficiaries started distributing seeds. These exchanges occurred along different reciprocity patterns. A primary type of exchange represented classical market exchange and/or barter between the beneficiaries and the intermediaries. Gradually, however, intermediaries, beneficiaries and neighbours started exchanging seeds

and vegetables, calling them 'gifts', saying explicitly that these are 'different from a "contract" as they are from the heart'. As one beneficiary put it: 'giving gifts increases the relations between neighbours'. Gifts initiate relationships, leading to further dissemination of skills and goods, such as the inaugural gift of seeds from intermediaries to beneficiaries. The programme created structural opportunities to exchange gifts, and thus stimulated bridging social capital.

A second pattern of exchanges encompassed an expectation of return (women say there is 'duty' and a 'responsibility' to make gifts or help others) while there was a denial that this expectation existed. This clearly corresponds to Bourdieu's (1986) description of exchanges that build social capital. This pattern was prevalent between the beneficiaries and intermediaries but also between the neighbours and beneficiaries. Exchanges with flexibility on the timeframe of exchange and with whom reciprocity is enacted take place in *balanced reciprocity*[9]. In the scaling-up stage, the approach became explicitly a social entrepreneurship approach, strengthening patterns of exchanges that included gifts and barter but also financial exchanges.

5.5.3. Developing social skills and know-how

Pre-existing social and networking skills

During the implementation phase, PRIDE developed a set of criteria to identify women who could become successful intermediaries. The criteria evolved to include 'having the ability to make friends' and 'good networking skills', both capacities that would facilitate the development of social capital, and 'without communalism'[10] so as to not foster closed religion-based networks. Based on these criteria, PRIDE started searching for women with the capacity to develop a social network, even if they did not yet have one. In this way, PRIDE developed criteria to identify women with capacities to build fruitful social capital.

Know-how of social interaction

During the implementation phase, PRIDE trained intermediaries in how to invite people, form groups and hold group meetings. In addition, PRIDE facilitated the first group meetings and initially accompanied the intermediaries during their

[9] The term 'balanced reciprocity' refers to Sahlin's (1972) terminology.

[10] Communalism: strong allegiance to one's own ethnic group rather than to society asawhole(http://www.kdictionaries-online.com/DictionaryPage.aspx?Application Code =18#&&DictionaryEntry=communalism&SearchMode=Entry).

daily activities: meeting their beneficiaries and conducting the IGAs. PRIDE then gradually reduced its direct involvement and helped the intermediaries to become independent, supporting them until they had the skills and the social capital necessary for their activities. Cilliers and Wepener (2007) identified this process as civic literacy.

Know-who of social interaction
In addition to developing know-how on how to facilitate social interaction, participants also learned with whom to engage, for example with rich men in order to hire land. In many cases, beneficiaries would seek the intervention of the intermediary, while in turn PRIDE supported intermediaries. This is a particularly important mechanism for strengthening linking capital. Know-who also played an important role in engaging with resistance, although this specific strategy relates more to the participants' knowledge than to PRIDE's strategy.

Know-how of motivational leadership
PRIDE also supported intermediaries in developing motivational leadership skills in which they would enable other women to become change agents. This is strongly linked to the next category of self-worth and capacity to act.

5.5.4. Developing women's self-worth and capacity to act

Capital of recognition
In the experimentation phase, different strategies were experimented with to develop the poor. During the implementation phase, intermediaries said that they appreciated being 'known to many', 'valued' and 'loved', and having 'more strength'. Beneficiaries also appreciated being better valued and known. As one beneficiary noted, 'I am more valued because what I say is right'. Such recognition was not limited to other women of similar socio-economic status but also to the village powerholders. Women's social status was enhanced by the recognition of their contribution to the community. This higher social status facilitated further impact as this quote from an intermediary shows:

> *We are more known so people give importance to what we are saying so other women are also able to develop themselves.*

As a result of their enhanced status, the women are able to participate more effectively in the improvement of others because there is a demand for their knowledge: 'women come and ask' and people 'listen' to their advice. Hence the

programme strengthened women's place within the community. During the scaling-up phase, this symbolic capital was strengthened and it also, in turn, strengthened entrepreneurs' social capital.

Becoming a change agent

From the first learning cycle, intermediaries were stimulated to lead change in their village. As intermediaries reported, they started helping and sharing only after they had gained the confidence to do so. From 2008, this confidence was developed during training sessions with other intermediaries. The intermediaries also had to acquire the capacity to motivate other women. Beneficiaries report that before the programme, women were 'not so interested' or 'not so curious' about profit but that their attitudes have now changed. The intermediaries and beneficiaries often used the word 'inspire' to describe this first step of dissemination. There is a transformation in the women's attitudes: more positive, with more strength and more energy, they work more. Women claimed that what occurs is a shift from 'having the will' to 'knowing the way', as exemplified by this beneficiary's account:

> *I had the will in my mind before but I didn't know the way. Now I have many ways.*

During the implementation stage, women explained that the inaugural gift of seeds is necessary for starting, for inspiring them both for its material and its symbolic value in stimulating women to engage on a path of development.

In conclusion, we have identified 13 strategies that PRIDE and women employed to strengthen social capital, divided into four categories. In the discussion, we use these strategies to develop a dynamic framework for strengthening women's social capital within communities with the social norm of *purdah*. Below, we discuss how this new dynamic framework compares with insights from the literature on social capital and how it relates to the empowerment of women.

5.6. Discussion

5.6.1. The dynamic framework

In Figure 5.1, we illustrate how the programme developed strategies to strengthen women's social capital. Some of these strategies were developed by

PRIDE, others were developed by the women themselves, such as working in harmony with norms and customs and becoming a change agent. The four categories are closely related to mechanisms of social capital production previously identified by Cilliers and Wepener (2007) and by Seferiadis et al. (2015), but we have also identified a number of new strategies. First, PRIDE leveraged norms and ethics, working within current norms, selecting women who already had more freedom of movement because of age and lack of family relationships through widowhood, navigating resistance to change, and reinforcing the value of altruism, already valued in local society. As shown in a knowledge network in India (Gupta et al. 2003), it fostered an 'ethical capital'. Second, corresponding to Seferiadis et al's (2015) material level of structural opportunities, our study shows how PRIDE provided opportunities for women to meet other women, although in the particular context this did not require a building but rather opportunities to gather outdoors, reminiscent of other studies of poverty (for example, Larance 1998; Elder et al., 2012). The programme gave women the opportunity to make 'social exchanges' (Wels, 2000), including gift exchanges, barter and financial exchanges. In our opinion, creating opportunities for women to meet and exchange is a pre-condition for strengthening social capital and improved livelihoods for women living in *purdah*. Third, we have demonstrated that developing know-how but also know-who of social interaction are important mechanisms for strengthening social capital, building on the identification of pre-existing social and networking skills. A study of a Ugandan farmers' association similarly shows how developing the know-how of social interaction was performed by 'learning by doing' (Kaganzi et al., 2009). Fourth, improved self-worth and increasing the capital of recognition led to a situation in which women themselves became change agents, able to develop themselves and their communities. This then becomes a virtuous cycle in which these new capacities are then increasingly valued from the norm of altruism, taking us back to the first category in the framework.

5.6.2. Reflections on types of social capital

In the literature, there is evidence that bonding (familial), bridging (peers) and linking (vertical links to powerholders) social capital are of different utility along development paths from the perspective of social entrepreneurship because bridging capital becomes redundant with success and may be discarded in favour of more profitable linking capital (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). In our study, we found that women first had to strengthen their bonding capital –

because they needed their family's permission to leave the home and engage in IGAs – before they were able to develop their bridging capital with women peers. This bridging capital was the main powerhouse of the programme, based on women helping and sharing with each other. Linking capital was frequently more problematic: intermediaries often needed help in their negotiations with the village powerholders, part of PRIDE's strategy in engaging with resistance. There is evidence, however, that as women gradually became change agents, they also began to receive more recognition and respect from powerholders. This indicates, as can be seen in Figure 5.1, that bonding capital first needs to be developed, then bridging capital and that the latter then has spill-over effects on linking capital, and that all three types need external intervention in situations of *purdah.* Linking capital, however, may require continuing interventions, even when the establishment of strengthened social capital in bonding and bridging domains has been achieved.

5.6.3. Empowerment of women

As this paper has emphasised, PRIDE worked within local norms in its efforts to improve the livelihoods and capacities of poor women. The programme was not designed to empower women but rather to improve their livelihoods. To improve women's livelihoods and capacities, PRIDE and the women themselves needed to bring about changes in gender relations within their families and communities, simultaneously building women's feelings of self-worth and their capacities to act.

While some studies of social capital in Bangladesh have shown that strengthened social ties are not always associated with benefits (for example, Islam and Morgan, 2012), our study shows that, in some circumstances, Bangladeshi poor women value the strengthening of their social capital. A study of another Bangladeshi NGO, Saptagram, similarly showed that participants valued the organization because it enhanced their relationships (Kabeer and Hug, 2010). The women in our study give clear motives for sharing gifts and development: producing social capital is a rational strategy, as conceptualized by Granovetter (1985), and social networks are constructed through strategies because they generate benefits, as conceptualized by Bourdieu (1986).

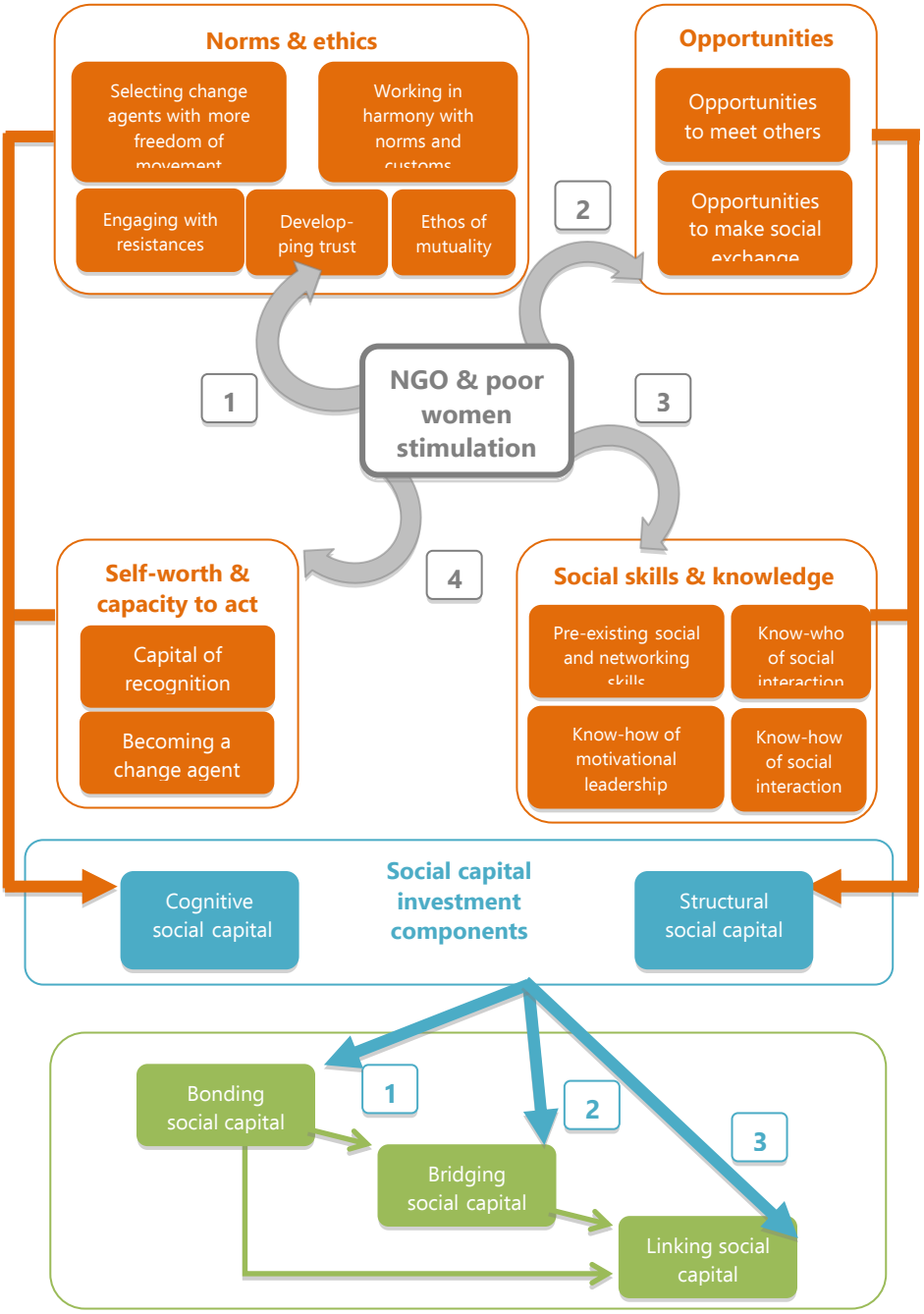

Figure 5.1: Strategies for strengthening social capital in community development.

In this study, social capital provides women with access to other forms of capital: strengthened human capital through access to knowledge and improved skills; material capital through resources, such as seeds; and symbolic capital through enhanced status. The women particularly emphasize the latter: they not only gain satisfaction from participating in the effective improvement of others, they also gain recognition. This is consistent with Bourdieu (1986), who emphasizes the conversion of social capital into symbolic capital, namely the capital of recognition.

Enhancing responsibility to help could be detrimental for women, reflecting an internalization of their subordinate status (Kabeer, 1999). Indeed, social capital can reinforce gender subordination as we noted in the introduction. PRIDE did not confront dominant norms and sought involvement from husbands, in-laws and powerholders. As social capital is, in part, built on shared norms, working in harmony with dominant customs ensured that women did not lose social capital. In addition, this strategy enabled PRIDE to secure allies for its programme while negotiating with actors who could restrict women's ability to participate and gain access to resources. This approach was coupled with an awareness of needing to mitigate potential downsides: PRIDE was concerned to pre-empt the elite capture of resources and to avoid reinforcing powers and norms deleterious to women. PRIDE worked towards enabling women to navigate resistance and to engage in IGAs, thereby contributing to a gradual changing of norms. Enhancing women's development and their bargaining power, the programme to some extent 'empowers' women. For example, some women reported being less dependent on their husband or enhanced decision-making within their household. As Fine (2001) pointed out, social capital cannot be analysed separately from issues of power. Our study shows how one NGO developed a deliberate strategy of addressing the issues of power in order to facilitate women's development.

5.6.4. Conclusions

The study highlights how NGOs can develop strategies to improve women's status within their communities, while stimulating know-how of social interaction and the know-how of development agency and social entrepreneurship. At the same time, it has provided new theoretical insights into the nature of social capital and how it relates to women's empowerment. These practical and theoretical insights may be particularly relevant to communities where women are subject to *purdah.* Further research is needed to see if this

framework can be used to leverage social capital in other communities that are characterised by unequal gender relations but not necessarily by *purdah*.

The study proposes a model of poverty alleviation through value creation, enhancing the mutuality of development. This represents a potential model of sustainable, endogenous development, built on women's increasing understanding of how they can become change agents

PART IV:

SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Chapter 6. Social entrepreneurial leadership: creating opportunities for autonomy

6.1. Introduction

'From partnership to ownership and beyond' was one of the inspiring foci of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) report 'Capacity Development: new solutions to old problems' (UNDP, 2002, p. 14) which emphasised that capacity development, transferring ownership to the poor, finding new solutions and creating new opportunities represent the way forward in the development of marginalised groups. Since the publication of this report in 2002, this emphasis on self-reliance has received increasing support with, for example, Moyo (2010) strongly advocating entrepreneurship as a way in which people can get out of their position of dependency. Many others argue that entrepreneurship could be an answer for the many problems in developing countries (Gries and Naudé, 2009). Entrepreneurship has been described as an engine of economic growth (Austin et al., 2006), and the most successful approach to overcoming poverty at the grassroots level (Dixon and Clifford, 2007; Kolawole and Torimiro, 2005). There are 'a growing number of initiatives all over the globe (that) seem to be

defying the obstacles that have prevented businesses from providing services to the poor' (Seelos and Mair, 2005a, p.242). These initiatives have collectively been dubbed 'social entrepreneurship' (ibid).

Social entrepreneurs connect social and economic aims sustainably in their activities (Basu, 2012; Zahra et al., 2009) and social entrepreneurship is considered to be especially relevant in developing countries with their intertwined socio-economic and environmental challenges (Babu and Pinstrup-Andersen, 2007). Although there is anecdotal evidence of how social entrepreneurs come into existence and how their actions connect to wider social change, more insights are needed (Gibbs, 2009). Several authors have raised issues that could add to our understanding, focusing on the way in which small-scale social entrepreneurs are able to stimulate environmentally oriented sustainable development (Hall et al., 2010) and the role and function of social entrepreneurs for development (Naudé, 2009). Underlying these issues is the question of how social entrepreneurship can be stimulated, given that the structures and resources that support traditional entrepreneurship are absent in developing countries (Seelos and Mair, 2005b).

Bangladesh is a suitable location for studying the potential of social entrepreneurship for development. It faces a number of challenges: an extremely high population density of 1100 people per square km, slow economic growth, and high unemployment (Mabud, 2008). About 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas, where poverty has a higher prevalence than in urban environments (USAID, 2012). Livelihoods of 77 percent of rural households depend heavily on natural resources, causing pressure on natural capital and biodiversity and potentially endangering household income. Like in many other developing countries, public efforts to generate sustainable livelihoods and to alleviate poverty often fail poor people because the services offered are inaccessible, of low quality or unaffordable (Mair and Marti, 2009; World Bank, 2003, p. 19). In addition, the programmes of many nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), which aim to alleviate poverty, fail to reach the poorest of the poor in Bangladesh (Abed and Matin, 2007; Mair and Marti, 2009).

Starting from the premise that social entrepreneurs have the potential to deliver sustainable relief to the poorest of the poor, also called the bottom of the pyramid (BoP) (Prahalad, 2004), our aim was to develop an approach to help some of the poorest Bangladeshi become social entrepreneurs, without

providing loans or other material inputs. We found a research setting with prospective social entrepreneurs and groups that would benefit from the social entrepreneurial activities in the working area of a small Bangladeshi NGO called PRIDE. Peoples' Resources in Development Enterprise – PRIDE – works on the sustainable improvement of living condition of the ultra-poor in the Khulna division.[11]

Adopting an action research methodology allowed us to incorporate the experiences of PRIDE, other organisations and literature to stimulate social entrepreneurship at the BoP. Starting with only the resources they have at hand, the social entrepreneurs engage in a process, best described as bricolage (Di Domenico et al., 2010), to create value. In this study, we describe the development of an approach to develop social entrepreneurship, assess its capacity for value creation and identify processes that seem most conducive to reaching results. To do so, we first provide a concise theoretical lens, presenting the social entrepreneur as bricoleur. Subsequently, the research setting, the methodology used and the approach itself are presented. An evaluative framework is described and used to assess the outcomes. Finally, the results of the preliminary evaluation are presented, and their validity and implications for theory are discussed.

6.2. Social entrepreneur as bricoleur

Social entrepreneurship has been defined in many different ways in diverse environments. Weerawardena and Mort (2006) provide a concise summary of 21 different definitions of social entrepreneurship from literature published from 1997 to 2003, while Zahra et al. (2009) provide a further overview of 20 definitions. Being a social entrepreneur seems equivalent to having social change as the primary focus (Seelos and Mair, 2005a; Weerawardena and Mort, 2006) and even to 'placing a social agenda before financial goals' (Thompson et al., 2011, p. 205).

Although attention for the social agenda is essential when studying *social* entrepreneurs, we think there should be an equally strong focus on income generation from the social *entrepreneurial* activities. This is particularly

[11] Khulna is one of the seven Divisions of Bangladesh, bordering India.

important for the poorest social entrepreneurs in developing countries, who need that income to survive another day. The focus on income makes it possible to distinguish two important differences between social entrepreneurs and two other value-creating activities that are sometimes included in social entrepreneurship, namely social service provision or charity, and social activism (Martin and Osberg, 2007). Social activism is concerned with indirect action like influencing governments or raising awareness: activities that do not provide income. Social service provision does not take the entrepreneurial risk of investing resources for opportunity exploitation with the aim of income generation (Venkataraman, 1997), but instead relies on gifts or public sector subsidies. As Boschee and McClurg (2003) emphatically explain, relying on subsidies is not a sustainable strategy. Social entrepreneurship has the potential to become sustainable as long as there is income generated that justifies its investments (see also Acs et al., 2011).

With a focus on income, it is important to distinguish between social entrepreneurs and commercial entrepreneurs. Seelos and Mair (2005b) focus on the entrepreneur's motivation to capture value to distinguish between the two types of entrepreneurship (Figure 6.1). Like other authors (Dorado, 2006; Santos, 2012; J. Thompson and Doherty, 2006), they recognise that there are many gradations in social entrepreneurship and present a gradient from profit motive to social motive. They connect these motives to the strategic concepts of value *creation* and value *capturing*. Value creation refers to the total added value created at an aggregate level (for example, new product creation, improved livelihoods), while value capturing refers to the appropriation of that value by the entrepreneur in the extraction of personal income (Mizik and Jacobson, 2003). In agreement with Santos (Santos, 2012), we consider that the commercial entrepreneur is focused on maximising value capture, while the social entrepreneur predominantly focuses on value creation. Combining this with the need for income, we consider the social entrepreneur to have predominantly social goals, in other words emphasising value *creation*, while *capturing* sufficient value to be able to continue creating it.

Creating value in resource-constrained environments sets our social entrepreneurs apart from entrepreneurs with access to subsidies, business networks and capital. Instead, they need to 'make do' with the resources at hand, using creative ideas and approaches to use available resources in a new manner: bricolage (Baker et al., 2005). First mentioned by Lévi-Strauss (1966), the emphasis on bricolage in recent approaches to social entrepreneurship is

inspired by Hayek's (1945) work on the idiosyncratic nature of the entrepreneurial process. Resources at hand are based in specific contexts, and local knowledge about these resources provides advantages (Gundry et al., 2011). Furthermore, this local knowledge is often tacit and therefore hard to transfer to distant actors, limiting outsiders' recognition of opportunities (Zahra et al., 2009). So the social entrepreneur, embedded in their environment, engages in a process of bricolage to create value.

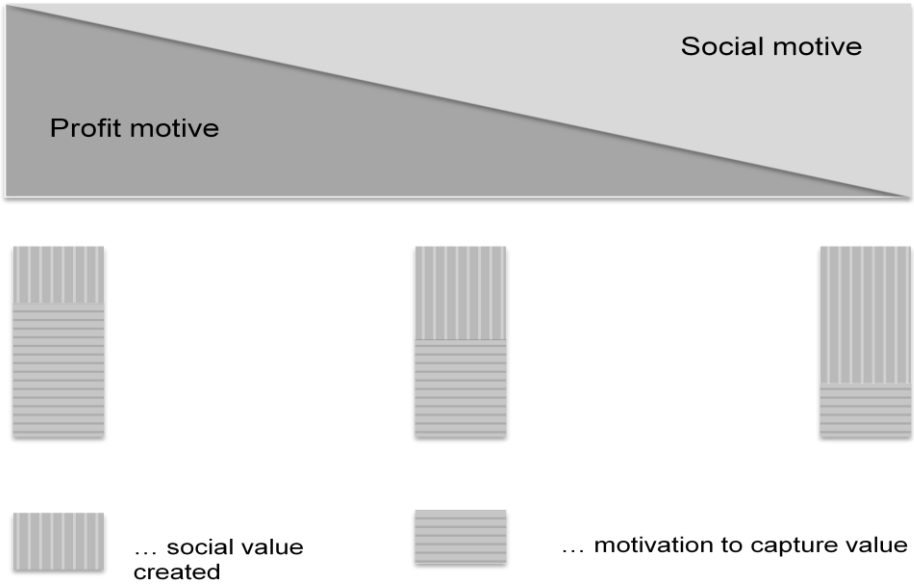

Figure 6.1: Social entrepreneurs have both a social and profit motive (source: Seelos and Mair, 2005b, p9).

Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey (2010) proposed an extended framework for social bricolage. Besides 'making do with resources at hand' (using untapped or underused sources to create a new service/product), they include 'refusal to be constrained by limitations' (trying out solutions to counteract or subvert limitations of the local environment) and 'improvisation' (improving through best-fit approaches, trial and error) (Di Domenico et al., 2010, p. 698). They argue that bricolage entails three further processes unique to *social* entrepreneurship: social value creation, stakeholder participation and persuasion of other actors to contribute to social value creation (Di Domenico et al., 2010, p.698). We used these constructs as guiding ideas in the design of an approach that could help the poor at the BoP engage in social entrepreneurial activities,

sustaining their own livelihoods and improving livelihoods of the people around them in a sustainable manner.

6.3. Methods

Action research has previously been successfully applied to entrepreneurship (for example, Leitch, 2007; Tasker et al., 2012). Action research has been found to be especially helpful in studying social entrepreneurship development because it facilitates interaction between researchers and practitioners, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurs and their environment than more positivistic scientific approaches (Tasker et al., 2010). It also facilitates study of the emergence of new processes that cannot be captured with pre-set research methods (ibid) and it 'does not regard either theory or practice as preeminent in the relationship between theory and practice; rather, it aims to articulate and develop each in relation to the other through critical reasoning about both theory and practice and their consequences' (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2008, p. 283). Action research also encourages the integration of different perspectives (Kemmis, 2006). With these characteristics, action research is ideally suited to study the development of social entrepreneurial bricolage. It helped us to develop and adapt our approach, based on theoretical insights and practical experiences from all participants involved. These participants and their initial roles are:

1. The social entrepreneurs, and their environments (family, friends, villages).
2. Staff from PRIDE, who implemented the approach.
3. The authors of this article, who initially developed the approach, trained PRIDE staff in implementation, and steered the monitoring, adaptation and evaluation of the approach.

We developed our action research along the lines of the Interactive Learning and Action method (ILA). Originally applied to enhance farmer-orientated innovation processes in developing countries (Broerse, 1998), the ILA has also been used to institutionalise interactive approaches to technological innovations in Bangladesh (Zweekhorst, 2004) and has proven its merits in various other fields, such as improving well-being and food security in South Africa (Swaans et al., 2009).

The ILA stresses the incorporation of idiosyncratic knowledge, trust building, mutual learning, and opportunity recognition, and development and drawing on the strength of networks. These are all key elements that coincide with entrepreneurship research as described by Venkataraman (1997) and with bricolage as outlined above. The ILA has five phases:

1. Initiation and preparation: a research team is established; preliminary, contextual information gathered; and objectives and roles are defined.
2. Collection, exchange and integration of information: perspectives, needs and interests of the different actors are identified and analysed.
3. Integration: knowledge, perspectives, and needs of the actors are mutually exchanged and integrated, resulting in a thorough understanding of the problems and possible solutions from the perspective of the stakeholders.
4. Priority setting and planning involving all stakeholders: conflicting issues are addressed and consensus is sought on priority issues, common goals and plans of action.
5. Project formulation, implementation, and adjustment: using the plan of action that resulted from the previous phase, programmes or projects are formulated and implemented (Swaans et al., 2009; Zweekhorst, 2004).

After the first three phases (the so-called 'reconnaissance'), a spiral of activities recurs continuously, analogous to Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) action research spiral (see Figure 6.2): revised planning, action, observation, reflection, re-planning. One cycle in this iterative process covers phases 4 and 5 of the ILA.

Our research started in 2006 and the first half of that year can be seen as the reconnaissance stage, covering the first three phases of the ILA. From June 2006 to June 2007, the first cycle started with two prospective entrepreneurs. From the start of the research in 2006, the authors visited Bangladesh at least three times per year (durations varied from one week to three months) and kept in contact with PRIDE staff members through e-mail and phone.

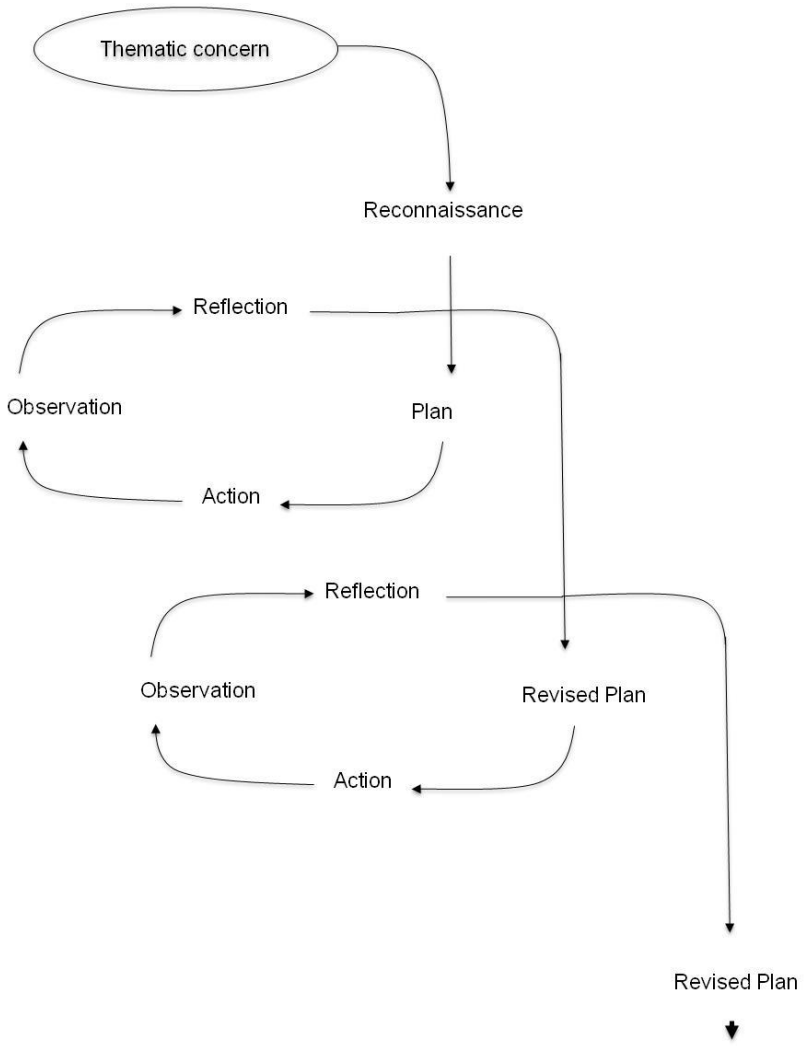

Figure 6.2: Action research spiral (source: Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988).

Continuous monitoring and evaluation was conducted by PRIDE, the authors and master's degree students from the VU University Amsterdam, and was coordinated by the authors. Active feedback was sought from the entrepreneurs, their families, the other people in the villages influenced by this programme, from PRIDE as the programme implementer, and from master's degree students as independent outsiders. Interviews, mapping (see later in this chapter), group interviews and field observations were employed. In addition, other NGOs, government organisations (GOs) and private organisations were

approached as sources of knowledge, and reflections were taken from the literature. A number of specialists (doctors, a psychologist and two business developers) were also consulted for specific elements of the development of the approach. During the monitoring and evaluation, two main aspects were analysed: 1) effective and optimal social and economical value creation; and 2) why some approaches worked in stimulating entrepreneurship and others did not. Data from all these different sources was continuously compared, triangulated with other sources and literature, and used to adjust the approach.

The monitoring process led to changes in design, of which one concerned the selection of programme participants. During the 2006–07 and 2007–08 cycles, both men and women were selected to take part in the programme. All the men dropped out because they found other work. The women usually stayed in the villages and close to their homes, and had more time to develop their entrepreneurial activities. For these practical reasons, only women were selected in the programme in the following cycles.

In mid 2009, we scaled up to 32 participants (from 20 in 2008). This was the first year in which we felt that we had found an approach that was effective in fostering social entrepreneurship. In 2010, the same approach was repeated by PRIDE alone, without any field visits or interviews by the authors, to check for artefacts that might have been involuntarily introduced. To check whether the approach was still having the desired effects, PRIDE staff wrote monthly monitoring reports that were sent to the authors and discussed during visits and over e-mail. In 2010, the approach was named the Social Entrepreneurial Leadership approach, and the participants Social Entrepreneurial Leaders (SELs) because they were organising social entrepreneurial networks in their villages and providing leadership in the creation of social and economical value.

6.3.1. Framework for evaluation

Where commercial entrepreneurship can be traditionally assessed on economic parameters like turnover or profit, assessing social entrepreneurship should involve additional parameters to do justice to its social goals (Korsgaard and Anderson, 2011). Zahra et al. (2009) suggested measuring the output in terms of total wealth, comprising both economic wealth (tangible outcomes like products and clients served) and social wealth (intangible outcomes like happiness and general well-being). However, they also point out that although the total wealth standard can be useful for scholars, it is imprecise (Zahra et al., 2009, p. 522).

Development practitioners and development literature have long faced the same problems in categorising specific outcomes of projects, but created an analysis framework called Sustainable Livelihoods Framework (ADB, 2008; Scoones, 1998). In this framework, different bodies of literature are combined to identify five different kinds of capital: human capital (such as skills and capabilities, knowledge, labour, good health), social capital (relations, networks, friendships, affiliations), financial capital (such as savings, debt and income), physical capital (shelter, production equipment, technology), and natural capital (land and produce, water and aquatic resources, trees and forest products) (ADB, 2008; ELDIS, 2012; Krantz, 2001; Scoones, 1998, 2009). The first four types of capital and their definitions are generally recognised in economic literature (Prayukvong, 2005; Sequeira and Ferreira-Lopes, 2013), and natural capital is, in addition, recognised by sociologists (Halpern, 2005), medical practitioners (Leah et al., 2013), and economists focusing on sustainable development (Hockerts and Wüstenhagen, 2010; Patzelt and Shepherd, 2011; Vemuri and Costanza, 2006).

However, these five kinds of capital do not include well-being and happiness, further components of 'social wealth' as defined by Zahra et al (2009). Tomer (2003) found that the five more generally accepted kinds of capital cannot explain "a large part of economic growth" (Tomer, 2003, p.453) and proposes the concept of *personal* capital to add explanatory power for the differences in individual productivity. He defines personal capital as emotional intelligence and emotional competencies, a concept that is consistent with the psychological conception of personality factors like extraversion, openness and locus of control on the other (Carson et al., 2004). Tomer further reasons that people's well-being increases with an increased emotional intelligence (2002, p. 37). As other practitioners have done before (see, for example, IFAD, 2012), we therefore include personal capital (people's internal motivations, their will to act and promote change, expressed in increased well-being) as the sixth capital in our evaluation framework.

Methodology used for evaluation

As indicated above, we used the experiences of the 2010 cohort for the evaluation of the approach. We triangulated different methods. One was a questionnaire (on income development, number and kind of income-generating activities, development of the number and intensity of relations and the Rosenberg self-esteem scale (Rosenberg, 1989). The baseline was done in 2010 and evaluations were conducted in 2011 and 2012. In addition, PRIDE collected

data in monthly reports from 2010 to 2012 on the development of the entrepreneurs, focusing on all six types of capital, problems encountered and solutions found. These reports were sent to the authors and discussed by telephone and e-mail, and during visits to Bangladesh. Several points came out of the monthly reporting and the questionnaires that provided input for the interviews done in 2012.

In situ, in-depth interviews were undertaken by the first author in 2012 with all 26 entrepreneurs, 10 husbands of entrepreneurs and 16 village leaders. Interviews focused on the effects of the SEL programme and on the most important changes SELs had experienced since becoming an entrepreneur. All interviews were translated from Bangla into English. We tried to record the interviews many times but the SELs and their families did not want the conversations to be recorded. On the few occasions that conversations could be recorded, the interviews were superficial and short. For this reason, notes were taken during the interviews by both the interviewer and the translator, and the interviews were reconstructed afterwards. Some *ad verbatim* quotes were written down during the interview and, where relevant, are used as illustrations here. Information obtained during the interviews was compared to data gathered through the evaluative questionnaires and the monitoring programme. Contradicting or otherwise deviating information was checked by repeated field visits and more interviews with SELs.

To make sure we captured the experiences that were most important to the SELs, we also conducted a photovoice evaluation[12] (Berg, 2004; Lemelin et al., 2013; Wang and Burris, 1997). Handing the camera to the entrepreneurs, we asked them to make photographs of the changes they had experienced. These photographs were discussed in four group interviews of three hours with five to seven women per group.

In addition, 89 people of the entrepreneurial networks set up by the SELs were interviewed in groups of three to five to understand what they had gained from

[12]Originally developed by Wang and Burris (1997), photovoice evaluation is a process wherein people are handed cameras and (in our study) the question to take pictures of the benefits they experienced since they became an SEL. Benefits of this approach are, amongst others, that the SELs have the opportunity to take pictures of what they personally perceive as benefit, without any interference from an interviewer or other people. As a consequence, the discussion based on these pictures is started from the viewpoint of the SELs.

their involvement. For this evaluation, these latter interviews were mainly used in triangulation of the interviews done with the SELs and to analyse the social value created by the SELs. We focused mainly on the entrepreneurs themselves because this is an evaluation of an approach to develop social entrepreneurs.

6.3.2. Social Entrepreneurial Leadership

Below we describe the SEL approach and explain why we introduced certain interventions and their effects, based on the insights we gained during our action research.

Reconnaissance

PRIDE works with the ultra-poor: people with low social status; no access to tailor-made technologies or information; irregular income and very limited financial resources, often being landless or using a maximum 40 m^2 of land for their household; poor education; spending 80 percent or more of their family income on food; and with houses of low-grade materials like timber, straw or clay tiles (for comparable definitions see Halder and Mosley, 2004; Mair and Marti, 2009; McIntyre et al., 2011). To find these people, the poorest Upazilas[13] in a 40 km radius from PRIDE's head office were first selected, based on information from government offices. During field visits to the selected Upazilas, people were interviewed and invited to take part in participatory mapping exercises.[14] Mapping exercises are a participatory manner of gathering data, inviting people to draw, for example, their village environment. Added advantages of these methods are that the participants can focus attention on issues that the researchers had not realised were important, and that they help in trust building (Chambers, 1994).

Integrating the data from these different sources with PRIDE staff proved valuable for two reasons. First, it provided useful information which complemented 'official information' from government offices which was hard to find, sometimes over 15 years old and occasionally fabricated. The second advantage was less obvious to start with, but searching for different sources of

[13] Layer of regional administration in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has seven Divisions that are subsequently subdivided in 66 Districts and 505 Upazilas. Each Upazila is in turn subdivided into Unions and each Union has a number of villages.

[14] These interview methods are extensively discussed in 'RRA Notes', titled 'PLA Notes' from 1995, published by IIED. See, for example, Mascarenhas and Kumar (1991).

information and integrating the data acquainted PRIDE staff with the process of selecting and recombining information to present the best achievable data, and draw conclusions themselves. This process helped them to improvise and find new entrepreneurial opportunities. Learning this process of improvisation, which is core to entrepreneurial opportunity creation, took a long time and many co-learning sessions (explained below). These sessions with PRIDE staff formed the basis of the training sessions that PRIDE undertook with the prospective SELs, which were adapted to the SELs' knowledge and skills.

This first reconnaissance resulted in a list of criteria,[15] based on which two poorest Upazilas were selected as the location for the programme. Using similar methods, we also created selection criteria to select the villages within the Upazila.[16] In this reconnaissance phase, a challenge with important implications for the programme was identified, namely the fact that the ultra-poor lack access to networks. PRIDE, as a local NGO, also experienced difficulties in forming networks because it was not well known in the local area and because PRIDE staff were perceived as being poorly educated. These challenges were countered by the authors, all affiliated with a Dutch university, who made connections with other organisations and accompanied PRIDE staff to meetings. In this way, PRIDE gained status from working with a foreign organisation. After a while, PRIDE became better known and became more ingenious in forming networks. Currently, they are well known throughout Khulna District and have an extensive network of GOs, NGOs, private organisations and knowledge brokers, such as universities. Again, the knowledge and the skills that PRIDE acquired in this process served as a basis for training later on in the programme.

This reconnaissance phase proved extremely valuable for understanding the SELs' environment, leading to selection tools for Upazila and village selections, and provided insights into both the problems endemic to this region and potential solutions. In addition, networks with other organisations and villagers were built, local knowledge gaps and skill gaps identified, and several first versions of training manuals were developed to address these. This phase also sensitised the NGO staff to local challenges and solutions. After this initial phase, the following steps are repeated on a yearly basis.

[15] See the Appendix for the list of Upazila selection criteria.
[16] See the Appendix for the full list of village selection criteria.

Getting acquainted within the village

When starting in a village, some mapping exercises are repeated because many of the poor's challenges and entrepreneurial opportunities are context bound (Zahra et al., 2009). The village leaders are first contacted, and are asked for their support and for information on local opportunities and challenges. They are also asked to help identify suitable SEL candidates. This first step takes about a month, and is important for obtaining local information and for winning over the local leaders. Final selection of the candidates is undertaken following selection criteria, which are based on the experiences from the years 2006 to 2008. The most important criteria are interpersonal behaviour, the ability to move about the village, and some organising skills.[17]

Once a shortlist of possible SEL candidates has been drawn up, PRIDE follows social norms by first consulting the candidate's family (specifically the husband or mother-in-law) before approaching the prospective SEL herself. It usually takes time for the SELs to trust PRIDE. Negative experiences with people impersonating NGO staff and stealing money and corrupt staff from otherwise legitimate NGOs make people cautious and distrustful. To gain trust, PRIDE frequently visits the villages, thereby showing their intention to work with the SELs. An office and a training location in the vicinity reassured the SELs that PRIDE was a real organisation. When the programme had been running for a few years, it became easier to gain trust because relatives in neighbouring villages could testify to PRIDE's trustworthiness. In addition, SELs who started in previous years were sometimes invited to share their experiences with prospective SELs. In the end, one SEL is selected per village.

6.3.3. Commencing social entrepreneurship development

Immediately after selection, two simultaneous processes are initiated and will continue for the remainder of the year: a series of trainings given by PRIDE and network development by the SELs. In parallel, the SELs start several entrepreneurial activities and are continuously coached by PRIDE.

Training

The SELs are trained in groups of between 13 and 16. In a bid to develop capacities to improvise, these training sessions differ from the top-down learning environment to which the Bangladeshi are accustomed. We started a

[17] See the Appendix for the full list of SEL selection criteria.

process of knowledge co-creation (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004; Scharmer and Käufer, 2000) where everybody learns together. PRIDE staff initiate the learning sessions and transfer knowledge, but also invite the participating SELs to stand up and share their knowledge and insight. This was a surprising approach for the women who reported being scared by the centre of attention. As the training sessions progressed, they learned to speak in front of a group, and gained self-confidence. Their knowledge was further recognised by interested questions from the other participants in the group, which made them feel acknowledged and valued. Training is organised in a cycle of five one-day sessions spread out over four months, each focused on one topic: vegetable and seed production; tree nursery management; poultry rearing and vaccination; handicrafts and tailoring; and a fifth training on a variety of topics, such as fish production, goat rearing and cow fattening. The sequence of the training sessions is important: the first one is the easiest. Cultivating vegetables on a very small scale in their homesteads builds on what the women already know, and the seed production extends their knowledge. In addition, the cycle of this activity is short: within weeks they have grown their own vegetables and seeds both for the next season and for sale. This enhances their trust in PRIDE and in their own entrepreneurial capabilities. After the fifth training session, the whole cycle is repeated once to enhance the SELs' knowledge and capabilities. The training sessions also function as a discussion group with peers where the SELs discuss difficulties and exchange new ideas and solutions with like-minded people. In addition, they act as role models for each other, strengthening each other's self-confidence: if one of them could overcome certain challenges, they felt they all could. When asked, the women explained that the group trainings were beneficial, not only because they can learn from each other, but also because 'it would have been boring if we only had to listen to one voice, it is better when more people speak'. These training sessions also are an opportunity to 'gossip', to talk about children, family and husbands, and to discuss typical female topics, all outside the interest of an official training program. In addition to the more technical training on entrepreneurial activities, SELs are also trained in conducting group meetings and in monitoring their activities to identify possibilities for improvement.

Network development

In our approach, we distinguish between vertical and horizontal network development. Where horizontal networking is necessary for the day- to-day entrepreneurial activities and creates horizontal links with peers (Szreter and Woolcock, 2004; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000), vertical network development is

about establishing vertical links (ibid) with more powerful non-peers (for example, to suppliers or markets). The SELS could not have established vertical links on their own because they 'were afraid to talk to them (non-peers)', did not know where to find relevant contacts or because they would not be listened to. PRIDE functions as an intermediary, bringing SELs in touch with suitable business contacts. PRIDE also brokers connections with the local imam, the *shalish*,[18] and other village leaders. Depending on her requirements, a SEL can also be connected to other NGOs delivering different services.

Directly after the first training, the SELs start building their horizontal networks with two motives: the SELs create value in their communities by extending the knowledge and skills they acquired; and they need to earn an income from the networking activities as an incentive to continue. All entrepreneurial activities taught in the training sessions have this rationale. For example, the more people the SEL teaches how to cultivate vegetables, the more seeds she can sell. When the network members start producing seeds themselves, the SEL buys from them to sell on the market or to PRIDE. She also uses her network as a source of labour. In the case of commissioned embroidery work, the SEL pays her network members for their work and keeps a commission. The larger her network and the better she teaches the members, the more value she creates and the larger her potential earnings.

Although many of the SELs have some form of social network at the start, they still need to set up their *entrepreneurial* network from scratch. Initially, they do house visits, accompanied by PRIDE staff. Although PRIDE is an external organisation, their presence helps in validating the SEL's new role: they can answer questions people have about the programme. Despite support from PRIDE, the initial reaction of relatives is hesitant when they are approached by the SELs because the SELs are not trusted in their new entrepreneurial role. As one daughter-in-law explained: 'I trust my mother-in-law but this is something she never did before. How do I know she can do it? Why does she suddenly know how to produce vegetables?' These doubts are lessened when the SELs can show their homegrown vegetables after five to eight weeks.

[18] *Shalish* is a social system for mediation in petty disputes both civil and criminal, by local (rural) elites. These elites are usually people with a religious/ritual or political function, or are important for local economic activities.

When the SEL has extended her entrepreneurial network to 20 to 30 people, she invites the members to a meeting. During this first meeting, PRIDE staff explain the SEL approach and how it can benefit those who want to participate. PRIDE staff are also present during later meetings but gradually retreat into the background, leaving the coordination to the SEL. Gradually, the meetings change in tone. People increasingly discuss their progress, newly faced problems and opportunities, and also focus more on social challenges, such as rights and family planning. A distinctive characteristic of these meetings is the same learning process that PRIDE uses in the SEL trainings: the people in the group learn from each other, share solutions and identify possible joint opportunities. Given that the SEL is the person driving this process and also the liaison to other organisations, her social standing grows and it becomes easier to extend her network. The 2010 SEL cohort have each organised networks of about 60 women in the first year and up to 150 women after two years.

Finding profitable solutions to challenges, called 'improvisation' in terms of our framework of bricolage, was the most difficult process for the SELs. Challenges were identified but often perceived as an intrinsic, unalterable part of the environment. For example, some SELs recognised that abdominal pain was often the consequence of worm infestations and they knew of a medicine for relief. However, they just accepted that this medicine was not available in the village. They needed help from PRIDE to identify this as an opportunity, to obtain the anthelmintic medicine and to sell it in their village. In a similar way, compost creation was a profitable solution to both burning waste, which smelled and took time, and buying relatively expensive fertiliser. In the last months of the programme, the SELs started to come up with their own ideas for income-generating activities, such as producing baby food, snacks, and paper flowers.

As the SELs progressed in their entrepreneurial development, a number of them formed *somities* (a kind of rotating savings fund)[19] or established other group activities which entailed pooled investments, risks and profits, such as joint fish farming. PRIDE provides assistance in forming these groups, choosing a chairperson and treasurer, establishing group rules and opening a bank account when needed. They involve the SEL in all of these steps so she will be able to do this herself afterwards. In this way, SELs become increasingly self-reliant so that

[19] In a *somity*, the participants pool a certain amount of money each month and decide who can invest the sum and when it has to be refunded.

when the programme finishes after one year, assistance from PRIDE is reduced to a visit once every one or two months. The SELs still have the opportunity to contact PRIDE staff and ask questions, and PRIDE sometimes asks them to come to training sessions of new SELs to share their experiences in the SEL programme.

6.4. Outcome and effects of the social entrepreneurial leadership approach

As far as possible, the outcomes are divided among the six kinds of capital defined earlier. Some overlap as the different kinds of capital influence each other and can be converted into one another (Bourdieu, 1986).

6.4.1. Financial capital

Measuring results in terms of money earned turned out to be difficult. First, earnings of a single recent transaction were clearly remembered but calculating total earnings in a month was not accurate because of memory lapses. We also found that estimates often changed by 30 percent, either more or less, when the same question was asked the next day. Second, we also saw difference in monthly monitoring reports (lower averages) and the answers given during evaluation interviews (higher averages). This margin of inaccuracy has been consistent throughout the project, which made us decide to focus only on trends in monthly income development in terms of high, low, median and average. Third, the SELs' husbands quoted higher earnings than the SELs themselves because the husbands, in addition to the money made, also counted the money saved by, for example, home-based production of eggs and vegetables. In this chapter, we present the figures quoted by the SELs.

Table 6.1 provides an overview of the income development of SEL cohort 2010 in their first year, based on information the SELs provided during the monthly monitoring. The first part provides the median, low and average income. The second part shows only the trends and multiples of starting income. The trend of income development is clearly upwards with the median and average income increasing more than tenfold after one year in the programme. In both the group and individual evaluative interviews, women indicated that their incomes rose further in the second year. This was confirmed by the monitoring of monthly incomes, where monthly averages hovered between 630 and 805

taka,[20] with the lowest incomes stabilising between 370 and 450 taka. People in the SELs' networks reported incomes from 400 to 700 taka per month, which was higher than their income before they started working with the SELs.

Table 6.1: Overview monthly income development (in taka) 2010 cohort of 26 SELs.

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Averages	63	118	234	241	328	360	424	529	606	575	569	696
High	230	300	500	675	850	1025	1130	1250	2500	1735	2020	1950
Low	0	0	115	114	155	160	220	300	380	390	310	395
Median	60	100	205	206	295	3725	415	490	506	486	490	675
multiples :												
Averages	1	2	4	4	5	6	7	8	10	9	9	11
High	1	1	3	3	4	4	5	5	11	8	9	8
Low	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Median	1	2	3	3	5	6	7	8	8	8	8	11

The additional income and associated benefits are a major reason for the SELs to continue their entrepreneurial activities. Because of their earnings, all SELs claim to want to continue their activities when PRIDE leaves the area.[21] They also stated that they would be searching for new income-generating activities because they can see it helps them, their families and the network members.

6.4.2. Physical capital

Observations during the interviews, answers from SELs, and group interviews with network members indicate an increase in physical capital. This includes household assets like storage boxes and a tin roof, protecting the household from rain. The husband of one of the SELs showed the new house they had built with the money his wife had earned as an SEL over the past two years. The house was about three times as big as their previous house and they now had a solar-powered fan. Part of their old house had become a shed for their cow. He explained how his wife's earnings of 2500 taka per month (about 1300 taka according to the wife) was extra money that could be spent on building materials.

[20] Bangladeshi currency; exchange rates hovered between 80 and 110 taka per euro between 2009 and mid 2013.

[21] Although at the time of the interviews, the SELs had been working mainly on their own, they still had the possibility to interact with PRIDE staff once every one or two months, and they had the opportunity to visit their office whenever they wanted. We wanted to know what the SELs were planning to do when PRIDE would leave their area altogether.

Many people reported that their income enabled them to buy productive assets, such as the materials needed for embroidery. Two groups of SELs and members indicated they had bought a sewing machine together. A number of women had built up a stock of embroidered cloths, pillow covers and bed covers that could be sold, making them more independent of middlemen and consequently providing them with a higher profit. In some cases, a rickshaw was bought, either for the husband to earn an income that was more reliable than other forms of day labour or for weekly rent to another operator.

Finally, the SELs reported buying clothes for their children. Although the primary schools are accessible for free, a school uniform is compulsory. In addition to school uniform, the women bought notebooks and pencils for their children so that they could practise writing and take home the lessons they had learned in school.

6.4.3. Natural capital

During the evaluation interviews, some SELs reported that the money they earned helped in buying land. Generally though, it was not the ownership of natural capital that increased but, rather, access to it. Some SELs reported leasing land from rich men. Others had planted fruit trees near their homes or had created beds where they cultivated vegetables and produced seeds. Others ingeniously built bamboo pergolas in their homesteads, providing both space for the vegetables to grow and shade for people. Some planted their seeds on a waterfront and built supporting pergolas over the water. Tin roofs were also used as supporting structures for vegetables like bottle gourds. Vegetables were planted in the narrow strips of soil surrounding the SELs' homes.

For the ultra-poor who live hand to mouth, producing their own vegetables has a significant impact on their family life. Before becoming SELs, a number of women could only start cooking when their husband returned with food in the evening, which meant late dinner or no dinner if the husband had not been able to make any money that day. With her own vegetables, part of which she can sell or exchange for other food with neighbours, they do not have to wait for their husbands' return. Instead, she can prepare food for when he comes home and everybody has an early dinner. This has a direct effect on personal capital (it reduces stress within the family and improves family relationships) and on the development of the children's human capital: the children pay more attention at school because they are less sleepy and less hungry. In lean times, families' own

vegetable production means an extra meal a day for some of the network members. More network members and SELs reported that now they can sometimes eat fish or poultry, where before they only ate vegetables and rice.

The SELs who rear poultry reported selling eggs and birds, and said they reinvested the money earned in more poultry and in poultry vaccination. Poultry provides a solid income base as the vaccinated birds grow fast, and the market is profitable. With the income from poultry rearing, SELs further buy goats and cows that they fatten and sell again. A new opportunity, these fattening cycles take up to three months and can bring considerable profits.

6.4.4. Human capital

The SELs indicated that the detailed knowledge they gained in the training sessions with PRIDE and other SELs was essential in starting their entrepreneurial activities: 'We did rear poultry before but they died and we didn't know why. That's why we never had more than one or two because we didn't know if they would survive.' The same was true for vegetable cultivation: 'I've cultivated vegetables at home before, but sometimes they grew and sometimes they didn't. Sometimes we could eat them but I never spent much time on cultivating them. Now I spend time because I know how to make vegetable beds and I always have a good harvest.' The SELs teach their network members the same knowledge and skills they learned from PRIDE. They also help the network members in setting up their vegetable beds: 'When she (the SEL) made the bed for the vegetables at my home, I didn't need to persuade them (to be network members). They were persuaded by what they saw.' Knowledge and skills are strong assets in persuading people to join the network.

The skills to create a network were also often quoted as essential. In the beginning of the programme, SELs found it hard to start talking to others. In Bangladesh, people often do not dare to speak those perceived as having a higher status. If they do speak to those of higher status, they usually give very short affirmative answers because giving long answers would indicate a higher status. If the women are to talk to others, they need to overcome the feeling of not being allowed to take up the other's time. Following the same rationale, asking other's time to discuss your own issues is something you do with people in the vicinity but usually not with people of much higher status. The SELs and their network members ask questions of PRIDE and of other people of a socially higher status, but it is a habit that takes time to develop.

The SELs also had difficulties in identifying people who could connect them to markets or another customer base. Initially, PRIDE needed to identify and contact the middlemen and help the SELs and their networks find other possibilities for marketing their products. The results after two years were mixed: for some SELs, it remained difficult to find even one contact, while others had created networks extending outside the villages.

6.4.5. Personal capital

In both the interviews with SELs and the group interviews with members, we often heard phrases like 'I have less tension in my head' from the SELs and 'She looks happy now' when group members are talking to each other. An important reason for reduced stress and more happiness stems from the ability to produce more meals on time for the family. In addition to the personal benefit, entrepreneurial activities can also ease family stress. As one SEL remembered: 'Before I gave a bottle to my husband and said will you get oil? We need it for cooking. He went mad and threw it back at me and said "Are you stupid? You know I don't have money!" That changed now that I earn money. I can buy oil myself now and my husband respects me.'

All SELs (in the photovoice sessions) and a number of their husbands (in interviews) mention changes in their relationships. When a husband sees that his wife's activities benefit the household, he allows her to be more involved in household decisions and respects her because she brings in money. This is supported by the results of the questionnaire, indicating that women are increasingly being consulted in household decisions, including in more important decisions like the use of land.

In the interviews and photovoice sessions, all SELs reported improved self-esteem. They felt they had more value as a person, they felt good that they could do more for their families, and felt they were better able to talk to people and that their world had become bigger: 'Now I can walk to Jessore (a nearby city). Before I did not know how I could do that, and I was frightened by the idea to go there. But now I know other people, I learned to talk to other people and I know that I can go there.' Husbands also recognised that the SELs were better able to phrase their words and to talk to other people, indicating a higher self-esteem. The SELs and their network members indicate that the SEL is 'more honoured' now: women greet her and ask her for her opinion on matters that are important to them, ranging from their entrepreneurial activities to family

issues. Sometimes even husbands of network members greet her. These forms of respect enhance her self-confidence and emphasise the importance of her activities.

Interestingly, these findings from interviews, observations and group interviews could not be verified by the Rosenberg self-esteem scale. Although the scale has been used before in an Indian context (Pradhan et al., 2003), used to compare self esteem in Bangladesh to other nations (Schmitt and Allik, 2005) and had been tested with PRIDE staff, no difference in scores could be measured when comparing evaluations to baselines.[22] When studying the causes for the differences, we found that the concept of a scale of, for example, 1 to 4 in relation to personal value was difficult for the people interviewed to imagine. Given this difficulty with the scale and because the stories of the SELs and the beneficiaries, as well as the observations from PRIDE, are so similar, we base our findings on the in-depth interviews.

6.4.6. Social capital

The evaluation interviews showed that the entrepreneurial networks continued to increase in size even after the programme had finished. The largest networks comprised about 150 people, divided into subgroups of 30. The SELs no longer needed to invest effort in making these groups grow. Instead, people came to them or to other people in the networks, asking to be allowed to take part. There were also three cases where members of networks started their own entrepreneurial groups, without having had contact with PRIDE. These people felt they had learned something valuable which they wanted to spread among their neighbours. This type of motivation, 'wanting to spread good things', was also given by many SELs. As one of them explained: 'We are social beings, we cannot keep these teachings (training sessions) to ourselves. It was my social responsibility (to form groups). If I didn't teach others, teachings would start to decompose in myself. It's also a religious duty to help others.' According to PRIDE and other NGOs, helping each other is generally perceived to be part of the Bangladeshi culture.

[22] Reasons for the difficulties in interpreting scales might be attributed to the different interpretation of negatively worded items in different cultures (Schmitt and Allik, 2005), or to differences in educational background: the Indian case is from comparatively better-educated Mumbai and PRIDE staff, who did understand the scales, having a higher education level than the SELs.

In the entrepreneurial networks, vertical linking to business partners proved more difficult than horizontal linking. Most of the SELs did set up some sort of connection to a business partner. However, many of these businesses were short-lived for a variety of reasons: the business partner died, the supplier went out of stock, or family problems took people elsewhere. When these businesses folded, it was often difficult for the SEL to find new contacts. However, some SELs were very successful in setting up and expanding their vertical networks. One SEL doing embroidery work and tailoring even reported that the city businessman who supplies her materials and work orders told her that he would help her if she faced any problems in her village. She had not yet made use of his help but telling this story in her village and feeling the power of connections 'from the city' has made her more confident. In two cases, SELs were invited to become part of the *shalish* because of their extended horizontal network of poor people. Two SELs were even approached to join political parties. Finally, when strangers or other NGOs come to the village, the SELs are mentioned as points of contact because of their extended networks among the poorest in the village.

The network members indicated that group formation also influenced individual activities. There are several embroidery groups that also come together to perform their individual household tasks. They find it is cosier and they stimulate each other to work: 'Five people can produce for seven in a group.' Even in networks where entrepreneurial activities had not strongly developed or diversified, this group cohesion existed. When asked, all network members said they wanted to continue group meetings even without the SEL because the meetings were beneficial for the exchange of information, catching up on village news and seeking advice: 'Now many people gather, we get acquainted and share feelings and problems and discuss. Together, we find solutions.'

6.5. Discussion

The SEL approach is successful in stimulating social entrepreneurship and sustainable social value creation at the BoP. All of the types of capital in our evaluative framework showed an increase that can be attributed to the effects of the SEL approach. There was a strong link to the six constructs of bricolage that were used as a theoretical lens to develop the approach: making do with resources at hand, refusal to be constrained by limitations, improvisation, social

value creation, stakeholder participation and persuasion of other actors to contribute to social value creation.

'Making do with resources at hand' was our basic philosophy when developing the SEL approach because sustainable solutions have to rely on internal resources. Consistent with this philosophy, the SELs received only training and coaching. This proved to be sufficient for them to develop entrepreneurial activities, based on the resources that were already present in their environments and in the networks they developed. They refused to be constrained by limitations of local norms, engaging with their families in new ways and exploring new social borders. They were able to overcome their own preconceptions that 'women are not supposed to earn income' and took a new role in their villages as a successful woman with newly acquired status. Creating groups of social entrepreneurs proved conducive in overcoming limitations as the women were stimulated by each other's successes and actively supported each other in their activities. Improvisation was the most difficult part for the SELs to learn. They could quickly replicate the activities they learned in the training sessions but it took them a long time to start new activities and some did not start those at all. Improvisation partly explains the differences in success between the SELs, as the SELs with the largest networks and the highest income deployed the highest variety of income-generating activities.

Turning to the next three elements of bricolage, which are specific for *social* entrepreneurship, our evaluation showed that social value was created in many different ways at many different levels. What is remarkable is that some forms of this social value can be *captured* by many network members at the same time: we found an increase in human capital for all network members who, instigated by the SEL, started their own activities; all the members were socialising during the meetings and subgroups benefited from joint money-making activities. Stakeholder participation was an essential condition for the creation of this social value and sometimes merely being a network member proved a sufficient condition to benefit. For example, the poorest in the villages can now rely on the networks to intervene on their behalf when local police treats them unjustly. They thus benefit from increased safety without the need to actively contribute to the networks or SEL activities. Persuasion of other actors was not exactly done as Di Domenico et al. (2010) described it. Instead of persuading actors to add to social value creation, the network members, businessmen and other connections were persuaded by the appeal of *personal* value creation *and capture*. This might explain why it became easier for the SEL to persuade people

to join her networks after she could present proof that working with her would bring benefits. In the process, of course, every single network member contributed to social value creation as well.

Next to this adaptation of the framework of bricolage, we found trust to play a paramount role in the SEL approach. PRIDE needed to earn it, as did the SELs, their families and also the network members. In the low-trust environment (Fukuyama, 1995) in which the SELs operate, proving trustworthiness seems essential. Without taking the time to build trust, bricolage would have been impossible in our study environment. This finding is hardly surprising in light of the attention given to trust in the entrepreneurship literature (Smallbone and Lyon, 2002; Welter, 2012). Given the predominance of trust in our findings, we propose the addition of trust as a seventh construct in the concept of bricolage or, at the very minimum, recognition of trust as an enabling factor.

The role of the NGO as an external agent to stimulate social entrepreneurship was widely recognised in the interviews. Most importantly, PRIDE had provided the SELs with the knowledge and skills they needed to become successful entrepreneurs. PRIDE also played a key role by providing continuous support to help the SELs overcome challenges they encountered as they developed their entrepreneurial capacities and networks, and they were crucial in initiating relations with businessmen. Consistent with the findings of Lee and Phan (2008), we conclude that NGOs are a key intermediary for developing social entrepreneurship in developing countries. Relating to the concept of bricolage, the NGO played particularly important roles in stimulating improvisation and experimentation, and the refusal to be constrained by the contextual limitations. The SELs were constrained by their poverty and extant socio-cultural norms; PRIDE was needed to show them new ways of dealing with the very same environment.

6.6. Theoretical and methodological implications

Mainstream thought on stimulating entrepreneurship considers that entrepreneurs need access to financial capital and assets (for example, Austin et al., 2006; Lingelbach et al., 2005; Mendoza and Thelen, 2008). Although capital and assets undeniably help to speed up business development, we think this is a limited perspective that ignores both the resourcefulness and the real needs of entrepreneurs. Instead, the concept of bricolage seems to offer superior

explanatory power for understanding the emergence of sustainable social entrepreneurship at the bottom of the pyramid. By improving human capital and stimulating network development, PRIDE stimulated SELs to start their activities. It allowed the SELs to grow slowly, organically, into larger activities. Our conclusion is that when the NGO as external actor is able to provide the non-material inputs of knowledge and coaching, the ultra-poor can help themselves to create and capture value, using a process of bricolage.

The SELs' success in network development adds to extant literature in three ways. First, studies argue that a lack of assets, a lack of access to markets and a lack of rights are three important factors inhibiting group formation among the poorest (Kirchgeorg and Winn, 2006; Thorp et al., 2005). The SELs helped by PRIDE were able to create a network without any of these resources, were able to create markets and groups in their networks, and were able to stand up for their rights in a group. In addition, Thorp et al. (2005) argue that many successful group ventures among the poor depend on an external intervention. Our findings are consistent with this, even in the initial absence of markets: in the SEL approach, the external intervention is a *sufficient* condition for successful entrepreneurial network development.

Thorp et al. (2005) further argue that group formation tends to exclude the ultra-poor, marginalising them further. This exclusion mechanism is mentioned in the literature on networks and social capital (Portes, 1998), and also in the context of developing countries (see, for example, Cleaver, 2005; Dowla, 2006; Mayoux, 2001). However, despite our search for exclusion mechanisms, we did not find any. As Zahra et al. (2009) indicate, it might be because the social bricoleurs' small-scale operation and limited resource needs makes her immune to issues like market control. Further reasons might be found in the local social-cultural environment, where helping others improves one's own status. However, these reasons would also be true for the microcredit groups that Dowla (2006) describes in Bangladesh, and these groups were found to actively *exclude* the poorest. As the setting of Dowla's study is comparable to ours, we that the reason for the presence or absence of exclusion mechanisms must be sought in the programme design. We that the open SEL networks, where everybody can join or leave at will, differ from closed microcredit networks with joint responsibility to pay back the loans. A better understanding of differences between these networks and the way they function might help to better understand how social entrepreneurship can be stimulated.

The SEL networks also provide an interesting case when we reflect back on the concepts of value *creation* and value *capture* (Santos, 2012; Seelos and Mair, 2005b). In Figure 6.1, these concepts were presented as zero-sum: at one extreme, the entrepreneur captures all value created, while at the other extreme the entrepreneur creates value without the wish to capture it. While this presentation is helpful in explaining the differences, the underlying zero-sum assumption is challenged by our findings. The SEL's goals of wealth creation and capture positively influence each other: a larger network means that more people are trained and included in value-creating activities by the SEL *and* more customers and opportunities to make money for the SEL. The more value the SEL wants to capture, the more social value she has to create. In other words: capturing value in our study is a driver of both sustainability and social value creation.

When we tried to identify a framework for evaluation, we found that measuring social value is often regarded as being notoriously difficult (Krishna and Shrader, 1999; Westlund and Bolton, 2003; Zahra et al., 2009). We experienced the same problems in our experimental phase, when SELs and their network members indicated that they perceived all kinds of benefits that were, at best, marginally captured by measuring increases in financial capital. In the same way as the concept of bricolage offers explanatory power beyond merely financial aspects of entrepreneurship, the evaluation framework with six capitals captures intangible outcomes of entrepreneurial activities. We want to call special attention to the concept of personal capital. Without this capital in our evaluation framework, we would have missed the increased happiness and improved family relationships. Following Tomer (2003), we also consider that personal capital explains at least part of the variance in effectiveness of the SELs. The most successful SELs were more outgoing, took more advantage of opportunities and felt more in control than the less successful SELs. This assumption finds further support in more psychological literature on entrepreneurial development, where 'personal capital' is defined as 'entrepreneurial orientation', comprising amongst other learning orientation, innovative orientation and personal initiative (Frese et al., 2002; Krauss et al., 2005; Okhomina, 2010).

The SEL approach shows that by investment of time and training, social entrepreneurship can be stimulated at the BoP. The idiosyncratic nature of both social entrepreneurship and the particular challenges faced by the poor limit the direct transferability of the approach. However, it can provide guiding principles

like engaging in reconnaissance with stakeholders, paying specific attention to local socio-economic structures, training and coaching entrepreneurs, and finding opportunities for bricolage. We hope our research inspires further application of the SEL and like-minded approaches because we think it holds a promise to stimulate entrepreneurship where it is much needed.

Appendix

Upazila Selection Criteria

1. Highest population density
2. Low average day-labour wage
3. Lowest education rates
4. Lowest access to electricity
5. Lowest access to transportation
6. Poorest people
7. Low variation in crops produced
8. High number of landless people
9. Worst sanitation conditions

Village Selection Criteria

1. Population density of the village will be high and more than 650 people/ square metre area
2. 50% of the houses are be made of mud, bamboo, straw, tin plates for roof,
3. 70% of the population lives from daily wages (for example, day labour, van and rickshaw puller)
4. 5% of the village women get some form of income
5. 40% homestead area suitable for vegetable cultivation
6. 25% finished second grade
7. Path and roads of the villages are in poor conditions: .70% of the roads mud roads
8. Distance of villages from the branch office will be maximum 10 km
9. Few to no NGOs working in the village
10. 8–10% landless people live in the village and there may have some government's khas land, rich farmer's fellow land
11. Day-labour opportunities are limited (no work besides the harvesting and planting seasons, leading to 3–4 months without any source of income)
12. 30% sanitation coverage
13. 10% of the people in the village have a (government) job contract
14. Terrorism-free villages.
15. 5% of the villagers get (food) support from the government
16. Majority of the villagers depend on quack doctors
17. Villages are not connected to the main roads, meaning that no bus services are available
18. No Hat/Bazar/market inside the villages
19. Day-labour wage rate is low (average 80 taka a day) in the village

20. The practice of dowry is held up by the majority of the village
21. Child marriages in the village
22. Cases of female repression in the villages
23. 20% of the village has access to electricity
24. Village social justice systems are flawed.

SEL Selection Criteria

1. Female and married or divorced
2. Must have an education level between class five and class ten (they need to be able to write, but they should not be too well educated because they will find other jobs)
3. Minimum age of 25 (to avoid criticism in the village, will have had children and will have been married for a longer time, all allowing her to spend time on her entrepreneurial activities)
4. Good networking skills
5. Eagerness to learn and do new activities
6. Good interpersonal behaviour and social skills (be open to other people and must have reacted positively to a neighbours request for help in the past)
7. Communicative: they must be able to talk to other people in a polite way
8. Must not be focused on one group (for example, Muslims or Hindus) only, but must be willing to work with many people
9. Organising skills (clean household, maybe some activities in their households already)
10. They should be allowed by their families to move around in the village
11. They must be from the group of poorest people in the village
12. May have some working experience with other organisations
13. Must show some problem-solving capacity (judged by staff during interview)
14. They must be fit (many poor are sick and often unable to work) and active (judged by their neighbours)
15. If they have children, they should be over five years of age (otherwise they will be too preoccupied with the children)

Chapter 7. Bridging the disconnect: how network creation facilitates female Bangladeshi entrepreneurship

Abstract

Networking has been suggested as a tool to address the challenges of social entrepreneurs in severely resource constrained environments. Especially in countries where women do not usually take part in economic activities, like in Bangladesh, stimulating networking and entrepreneurship among women could have a high impact. We use longitudinal data gathered over two years, to study how entrepreneurial networks are developed and used by female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh, and how a third party can stimulate network development. We followed 26 women from the start of their entrepreneurial development. Adopting a social capital perspective on network formation and development, we identified four essential strategies in building entrepreneurial networks: modifying and building on existing bonding networks, transferring linking ties,

teaching how to build bridging networks, and the creation of a network of entrepreneurial peers. We found that a third party can successfully stimulate network development for the poorest in Bangladesh. We also found that the patterns of network development in this severely resource-constraint environment are remarkably different from those found in corporate studies. Our findings can contribute to developing new pathways to stimulate entrepreneurship in developing countries.

7.1. Introduction

Entrepreneurship has often been suggested as a way to address the challenges of the ultra poor in developing countries, and as a way to overcome poverty (Dixon and Clifford 2007; Gries and Naudé 2009). Embedded in their environments, entrepreneurs possess idiosyncratic knowledge that helps them exploit opportunities specific to their local context (Smith and Stevens 2010; Zahra et al. 2009). The ultra-poor in developing countries face problems in entrepreneurship because there are no structures and resources to facilitate traditional entrepreneurship (Seelos and Mair 2005c). Rural Bangladesh is a context in which it is particularly challenging for the ultra-poor to develop entrepreneurial activities. Bangladesh is one of the poorest and most densely populated countries in the world, and characterized by intense competition for resources, such as agricultural land. Given that 70 % of its population resides in rural areas (United Nations 2012), its society is highly dependent on land exploitation as a means of income. Local elites are extending their control over private and public land (Mair and Marti 2009), leaving little for the ultra-poor. Traditional network structures like patron-client relationships are breaking down (Rozario 2002b), further reducing the poor's access to formal institutions and networks (Thornton 2002).

In this context, Mair and Marti (2007, 2009) argue that the development of new networks, stimulated by external actors, can help the ultra-poor to develop entrepreneurial activities. Their argument is supported by numerous studies which demonstrate the positive effect of networks, providing access to sources of information, contacts and resources, on entrepreneurial outcome and growth (Granovetter 1985; Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Slotte-Kock and Coviello 2010; Woolcock 1998). Current research on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial networks is increasingly focusing on the role of social capital, emphasising the way in which individuals profit from their personal affiliations and joint network

strategies (Kwon and Arenius 2010), also in developing countries (Casey 2012; Poon et al. 2012).

Although the relation between networks and entrepreneurial success has long been a topic of interest there are many calls for more empirical, longitudinal research (Jack 2010; Smith and Lohrke 2008) to understand the dynamics and change processes inherent in networks (Davidsson and Honig 2003). In this article we respond to those calls, building on longitudinal data gathered on the Social Entrepreneurial Leadership (SEL) programme of PRIDE, a Bangladeshi NGO. In this programme, Social Entrepreneurial Leaders (SELs) are trained to build their own entrepreneurial networks, starting from scratch. Given that these SELs do not receive financial gifts or loans, they present an opportunity to study the effects of network development on entrepreneurial activities in relative isolation from other factors that influence entrepreneurship. Adopting a social capital perspective on entrepreneurial network development, we aim to gain insights into the mechanisms that help to build networks for ultra-poor entrepreneurs, and how those networks influence entrepreneurial outcome.

7.1.1. Research setting

From 2006 to mid-2009, the authors of this article worked with PRIDE, designing the SEL approach and continuously monitoring the development in this experimental phase. In every yearly cycle, adaptations were made until 2009, when the approach reached its current form.

In the SEL programme, PRIDE trains rural women to become social entrepreneurs (the SELs), emphasizing social value creation while, at the same time, making it possible for them to earn enough to sustain their activities.[23] In order to assist the SELs in their endeavours, PRIDE continuously develops its own network, searching for new organisations that can be helpful for the SELs, and continually searches for new entrepreneurial opportunities that the SELs could exploit.

Each year, PRIDE selects up to 32 villages to take part in the programme. In each of these villages, one SEL is sought in consultation with the village leaders. During the experimental phase, PRIDE identified criteria for the selection of

[23] We provide a rationale for this definition in the elaborate description of the SEL approach, in Chapter 6.

SELs. These criteria were chosen to include the poorest and to minimize dropouts. Initially, PRIDE worked with both men and women but the men dropped out for a variety of reasons, like other jobs, or a lack of time. Therefore, only women are selected for the SEL programme. Following local mores, the family of the prospective SEL is first asked for permission, after which the woman herself is asked whether she wants to participate.

After selection, the SELs receive their first group training on an income generating activity: vegetable and vegetable seed production. Experience has shown that this activity is relatively easy to master and to reproduce and can be a source of income. In the subsequent four months, four more training sessions are held on other income generating activities (IGA's). This sequence of five training sessions is repeated once, to rehearse the newly learned skills and knowledge, and to add more detail. In addition to the topics of the training sessions, the SELs are taught to recognise opportunities and act on them.

The social entrepreneurial goal of the programme is reflected in the SEL's task to organise a network of women in their village. Within these networks, the SELs are required to disseminate part of the skill-set and knowledge they learned during the PRIDE training sessions, allowing other women to deploy IGA's as well. The experimental phase has shown that an effective way to organize these networks is in groups of 30 women, with a committee of five that helps the SEL in organizing meetings and functions as a smaller discussion group.

7.1.2. Networks and social ties

The popularity of social capital in different bodies of literature has led to a variety of interpretations (see Adler and Kwon (2002) for an overview). As we study the entrepreneur embedded in her network, Bourdieu and Wacquant's definition of social capital provides the most appropriate focus: 'Social capital is the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition' (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992 p. 119). In other words, the value of social capital is in the potential and actual benefits delivered by a person's social connections. This definition allows studying both the relational aspects (relationships to individuals) and the structural aspects (networks and their embedded resources) that entrepreneurs need for their activities.

Nahapiet and Ghoshal (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998) incorporate an additional 'cognitive' aspect into social capital, namely the 'shared representations, interpretations, and systems of meaning among parties' (Nahapiet and Ghoshal 1998, p. 244). Female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh are naturally subject to such shared systems of meaning and cultural norms. But these systems exist independently of both the entrepreneurs and their emerging networks, and are part of the larger Bangladeshi culture (Naser et al. 2009; Rozario 2002b) and the larger social environment in which the entrepreneurs are embedded (Jack 2002; Smith and Stevens 2010). Bourdieu captures these norms in his concept of 'habitus': 'the way society becomes deposited in persons in the form of lasting dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel, and act in determinate ways, which then guide them in their creative responses to the constraints and solicitations of their extant milieu' (Wacquant cited in Navarro 2006 p. 16).

Numerous benefits are ascribed to social capital, also in the context of resource-constrained environments. Specific for entrepreneurship, social capital is thought to facilitate exchanges, lower transaction costs, reduce the cost of information and ease its flow, and permit trade in the absence of contracts (Haase Svendsen et al. 2010; Shaw 2006).

Social capital can also be restraining as Mayoux (2001) describes in a study of micro-finance groups in Cameroon. She indicates that concentrating on the horizontal expansion of existing networks can exacerbate inequalities and severely reduce the effect of entrepreneurial activities. Portes (1998) classified the possible constraining effects in four categories: first, the exclusion of outsiders, creating a closed group or an elite. Second, excessive claims from communities on entrepreneurs could prevent business from growing because they are forced to subsidise less successful individuals (Portes 1998). A third restraining effect can be the development of 'group think' and conformity, restricting individual freedom. Finally, Portes identifies 'downward levelling norms' that can force individuals to comply with a group's low standard. Gargiulo and Benassi (1999) consider that strong solidarity in groups may reduce the influx of new ideas and lead to inertia.

For entrepreneurship and innovation, these restraining effects are reportedly more prevalent when network ties between actors are stronger (Eklinder-Frick et al. 2011; Molina-Morales and Martínez-Fernández 2009). Granovetter, in his seminal article on the differences between stronger and weaker ties (1973),

states that "the strength of a tie is a (probably linear) combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie" (Granovetter 1973 p. 1361). To illustrate this, weak ties are formed when making new acquaintances or when meeting new tennis partners, and strong ties are found among closenit groups like families and old friends. For entrepreneurs, weak ties are often associated with heterogeneous connections, diversity and facilitating the flow of new information, while strong ties are often associated with homogeneity and economic reliability (Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Jack 2005).

In addition to classifications based on differences in strength, ties can also be divided in different types, referring more to the structural characteristics of a network. Building on the findings of Gittell and Vidal (1998), two kinds of ties are often distinguished (e.g. Davidsson and Honig 2003; Lin 2008). Bonding ties refer to networks of people who see each other as similar, as having some shared identity, for example families. Bridging ties refer to the horizontal ties with people who are at some level dissimilar, but at the same hierarchical level, like ties between geographically dispersed communities. Woolcock (2001), later added linking ties, referring to relations between heterogeneous actors with dissimilar power and resources (Halpern 2005; Szreter and Woolcock 2004).

Another distinction in types of ties reflects the value ascribed to them by the people involved. In affect-based ties, with whom the ties are formed is more important than the potential benefit the tie can bring. In contrast, calculative ties emphasize the purpose and function of the ties (Hite and Hesterly 2001; Jack et al. 2010). Although the classifications in weak-strong, bonding-bridging-linking and calculative-affective partially overlap, each of these has a different explanatory focus for network development.

There seems to be an emerging consensus on how entrepreneurial networks evolve over time. At the start of a new venture, strong, affective, bonding ties, like family members stimulating people to start their activities, are thought to be important (Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Jack et al. 2008; Slotte-Kock and Coviello 2010). Later on, weaker calculative bridging ties provide more heterogeneous information, more opportunity for innovative ideas, and more access to entrepreneurial opportunities (ibid). The latter stage is consistent with recent insights that regard entrepreneurial action as idiosyncratic and embedded in a network. Within such a network, entrepreneurial opportunities are actively created and exploited (Wood and McKinley 2010).

Despite the general understanding of the link between entrepreneurship and networks, there is still little empirical evidence of how entrepreneurs in marginalised communities build their entrepreneurial networks. Some studies have argued that third parties can help in building these (e.g. Pronyk et al. 2008). In his study on micro-credit in Bangladesh, Dowla (2006) hints that third parties might be needed as enforcers of rules in networks, and need to provide knowledge and skills. Lee and Phan hypothesize that external actors use 'social ties and interactions' (2008 p. 10) to connect entrepreneurs with sources of input and markets, reminiscent of Burt's (2000, 2001) concept of 'brokering structural holes': connecting people with each other.

Taking into account our research setting and these insights from the literature, we study the changes in the tie development within the SELs' network, and the way in which they use these networks in their entrepreneurial endeavours. We also focus on the role of external parties in building the entrepreneurial networks of female entrepreneurs in Bangladesh.

7.2. Methodology

For a period of two years, we collected longitudinal data from 26 SELs who started in 2010. To ensure internal validity of our research, we deployed several methods of data collection. We designed a longitudinal monitoring programme, running from selection of the SELs in 2010 to 2012. This monitoring programme comprised monthly reporting by PRIDE on the progress of the SELs' network development and use. These reports were discussed in meetings, interviews and focus groups with PRIDE staff, during site visits, over telephone and via email. We also discussed with PRIDE staff how they developed relationships with other organisations and with people in the villages, and how they helped the SELs to develop their networks. Findings from this monitoring programme were checked with the SELs during the in-depth interviews in 2012 (see below).

The 2010 SEL cohort was deliberately not interviewed or contacted by the non-Bangladeshi authors in order to minimize the risk of introducing research artefacts. Only after two years, in October 2012, the SELs were interviewed: four group interviews were held with 5–7 SELs each, totalling 23 participants, and 20 individual in-depth interviews were undertaken with the same SELs. A further 18 group interviews with 3–7 members from the entrepreneurial networks of the SELs were conducted. Interviews were also held with 7 husbands of SELs and 10

village leaders. All interviews focused on how the SELs had built their networks, what difficulties they encountered, what helped them, how they used the networks, and the role of PRIDE in network formation. The first author conducted the interviews in English; a Bangladeshi interpreter translated. Voice recording of the interviews was not feasible: the SELs or their husbands feared that the recordings might be used against them. Therefore, notes were taken during the interviews by both the interviewer and the translator, including ad verbatim quotes, and the interviews were reconstructed afterwards.

In addition, as part of a larger questionnaire, the SELs were asked questions on the size of their networks immediately after they were selected but before they had started their activities (2010), and after one (2011) and two years (2012). Finally, to ensure that we did not overlook certain issues or, involuntarily, impose our own ideas, we used a photo voice methodology (Berg 2004). The SELs were asked to photograph changes in their lives since taking part in the SEL programme. Subsequently, their photographs were discussed in groups.

7.3. Results

7.3.1. PRIDE develops network ties

At the beginning of the SEL programme, PRIDE starts building networks in the selected villages and first establishes relations with the village leaders. About a third of the village leaders said they trusted PRIDE after having met its representatives two or three times. Investing time in involving the richer people and village leaders in the initial consultation process was beneficial; village leaders said that as they knew what the programme was about, they would also be able to help by giving the SELs advice and introducing them to others. Furthermore, consultation of the richer people prevents jealousy.Of the 2209 officially registered NGOs in Bangladesh,[24] a proportion provides the poorest with materials free of charge (latrines, schooling, complete fish farms and even housing). In these cases, especially people who differ marginally from the NGO-defined target population might feel jealous. Two village leaders confirmed that if the stakes are high enough, richer people sometimes use their relative power to hijack programmes (see also Mair and Marti 2009).

[24] Situation on 28 February 2013; see http://www.ngoab.gov.bd/Files/NGO_LIST.pdf for the latest number.

The repeated explanation of the programme in the village and a social stigma on poverty, 'If I work with (PRIDE), people may think I'm also poor and not talk to me', further helped PRIDE separating the richer people from their target group.

In rural Bangladeshi villages, the husband and his mother have a strong say in a woman's whereabouts. Respecting this local habitus, PRIDE first engages with the families of the potential SEL candidates and only afterwards asks the woman whether she wants to participate. Even with the approval of their families, the women first want to know more personal details about the PRIDE staff and need to be convinced about PRIDE's good intentions before they decide to join.

In summary, PRIDE creates a village network of redundant weak, linking ties, ensuring both approval from the village leaders and their help in finding a SEL, obtaining consent to focus on the poorest. The ties with the poorest and their families are primarily affect-based.

7.3.2. Joint creation of entrepreneurial networks

The SELs had different starting positions in terms of networks. Of the 24 SELs included in our evaluation, eighteen had taken loans from an NGO before. Three of these eighteen had had a job (all less than one year) with an NGO. With one exception, the SELs' starting networks at the beginning of the SEL programme did not extend beyond their family, friends and neighbours, and consisted exclusively of affect-based ties. Regardless the size of their affective networks, all SELs had to become acquainted with new people because PRIDE required them to have organised at least 30 people by the end of the SEL programme, i.e. after one year.

Recognising the need for knowledge and skills in order to develop ties (Felício, Couto and Caiado 2012), the first training session, with 13–16 entrepreneurs from adjacent villages, is organised at the beginning of the programme. In these sessions, PRIDE transfers knowledge and invites the SELs to share their knowledge, to discuss with the other women present, and to share ideas and insights. All SELs remembered the nervousness they felt when speaking during the first training session. As two daughters of a SEL noted: 'Mother never dared to speak to other people than the direct neighbours and the family. She didn't know how to walk to the other village. Now, she is brave and can talk to others.'

Networking is new to all SELs. For some, it was even a new experience to venture out of their own neighbourhood. They went door to door in their neighbourhood, convincing people to join their networks. The SELs found it comparatively less difficult to engage with people within their small network of strong ties (friends and families) but they still found it hard to convince them of their newly acquired knowledge and skills. To support them, PRIDE joined them during such visits in the first months.

As indicated, the SELs are required to organise meetings with network members. These are held in the same manner as the entrepreneurial training sessions, stimulating everybody to speak up and participate. In the first meetings, the SEL programme is explained. To support the SELs' confidence in holding such meetings and talking in front of an audience of peers, PRIDE staff generally chair the first meeting. For the villagers, the meetings are an accessible way to get acquainted with the SEL programme. For the SELs, they are a platform for feedback from fellow-villagers. The meetings also proved to be highly conducive for developing new ties and for extending the fame and credibility of the entrepreneurs.

On a more personal note, many SELs faced challenges in their private spheres. Initially, the family networks of strong, affective, bonding ties were generally strongly discouraging – despite their approval of the SEL taking part in the programme. In addition, the SEL's neighbours also thought the SEL had 'gone mad', told her that she should not trust PRIDE and that she would not succeed.

The SELs were supported in their entrepreneurial tasks by their newly formed weak ties with PRIDE during visits and training sessions. The relations they built with other SELs in these training sessions also stimulating them to go on, and they became role models (Bosma et al. 2012) to each other.

7.3.3. Milestone: first entrepreneurial success

Within two months, the SEL they have their first vegetable harvest, which is significantly higher than that of their neighbours. Shortly after, they have their first seeds to sell. This is an important transition point. From now on, they can present personally produced proof of their ability to save household money, and even earn some. Once the network members see the produce, they want to have the same results. The SELs' first success also won the support from their

family. As long as the SELs' household activities like cooking did not suffer, their husbands became supportive and some even started helping them in their endeavours. Married SELs reported that now that they bring in money, they get involved in household decisions and their family is happier. Interviews with husbands confirmed this: their respect for their wives increased with their contribution to the family income.

Teaching her network how to produce vegetable seeds reduces the SEL's market for these seeds, but it provides her with a market of trusting customers for other products. For example, after her training on poultry vaccination, the SEL is able to vaccinate the poultry of the network members. As the SEL gets more known and develops more activities and more ties, the structure of her network changes. In the beginning, the SEL has a central role and the network members are mainly connected to her for entrepreneurial exchanges (Fig. 7a).

This slowly changes as the networks expand and more network meetings are held and more redundant ties, where people are not just connected to the SEL but also to each other, are formed (Fig. 7b). These redundant ties, combined with confidence in personal capacities, open up opportunities for joint entrepreneurial activities. A number of sub-groups come into existence, focusing on IGA's like fish production, and in some cases rotating savings funds were created. These more capital-intensive activities require joint skills and pooled efforts and, thus, create interdependency.

Besides providing support in creating horizontal, bridging networks, PRIDE helps the SEL to establish vertical linking ties with commercial parties to, for example, obtain work orders for embroidery. PRIDE's intervention helps both parties trust the other and to agree on the first work order. These work orders are too large to be completed by a single person so the SEL now uses her network in a different way: as a source of labour. For the SEL, this entails trusting her network members more than before, as she now becomes dependent on their efforts. PRIDE also helped the SEL to contact and negotiate with rich people owning fallow land. A number of smaller groups within the SEL network leased such land to jointly produce cash crops.

We established that when the SELs start building their bridging networks, the ties are initially affect-based. This affect-based component decreases as the word spreads that the SEL is able to help ultra-poor people deal with their challenges. People come to the entrepreneur to discuss personal issues and

inquire how they can make money. Helping these others increases the social standing and reputation of the entrepreneurs and is, in turn, highly conducive to network growth. Some SELs told that women they had not met before came to their houses to ask whether they could participate in entrepreneurial activities. The networks not only served an entrepreneurial purpose, but also brought interwoven social gains in addition to improvements to the social status of the SELs. Two SELs found their networks to be the ideal instruments to gain votes in local elections.

We found that linking ties were the hardest for the SELs to maintain. In two cases, the provider of work orders died; in one case the person went bankrupt. In the five most remote villages, the SELs did not have any vertical linking ties. SELs indicated that there horizontal networks kept on expanding after the programme ended, which is supported by data from the questionnaire on the number of friends people have (in 2010: 10; in 2011: 11; in 2012: 20) and the number of neighbours they talk to (2010: 51; 2011: 56; 2012: 97). These numbers suggest that especially in the second year, the SELs' entrepreneurial networks expand beyond the circle of acquaintances they had before the SEL programme started.

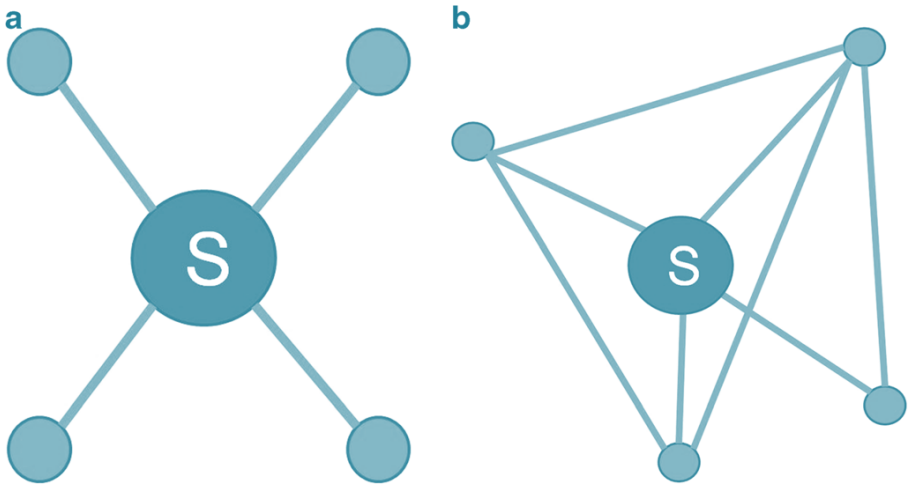

Figure 7.1: a SEL centrality. b Formation of redundant ties.

7.4. Discussion and conclusions

The answers to our first two research questions prove to be closely related, given that the use and development of the entrepreneurial networks evolve together. At the start of the SEL programme, strong, bonding, affective ties (friends and networks) discourage the SELs in their development, while the weak, bridging ties stimulate them and provide them with the human capital to develop both their networks and entrepreneurial activities. This is in contrast to findings from more regulated environments (Davidsson and Honig 2003; Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Jack et al. 2008, 2010; Slotte-Kock and Coviello 2010), where strong, bonding ties are reported to stimulate entrepreneurs in the start-up phase.

When the SEL's credibility is established by the first entrepreneurial success, it becomes much easier to extend her bridging network and she receives support from her bonding network. This might suggest that the SEL approach might be more effective by first focussing on reaching that first entrepreneurial success, and start network development afterwards. The suddenness of this turning point was what we found most surprising, because the extant norms in rural Bangladesh still consider that women should not work outside the homestead. This was confirmed in the interviews and is described in the literature (Mair and Marti 2009; Rozario 2002b). Theoretically, these societal rules or habitus are difficult and slow to change, both at individual and structural level (Bourdieu 1989; Willott and Griffin 2004). Part of the rapid change might be attributable to the same reasons underlying the U-curve in female labour participation which is higher in both the lowest and highest socio-economic groups (Gibson et al, 2004): the poorest women need to work to supplement the household income. However, that alone would not account for the rapid change in habitus in the households. Further study of this process might provide more clarity on how to stimulate female entrepreneurship in developing countries.

Early in her entrepreneurial development, the SEL has a central role in her network, mainly using her network as a market to sell her products in and, in line with literature (Hoang and Antoncic 2003), as a source of information. As the SELs' networks expand, ties become stronger through more frequent interactions. In addition, an increasing number of redundant ties are generated. These stronger and redundant ties allow for an easier flow of information and access to labour, knowledge and other pooled resources. In our study, these ties are a prerequisite for joint income generating activities. For the horizontal SEL

networks, this finding is at odds with the many corporate studies which indicate that weak ties and an abundance of structural holes increase the entrepreneurial value of social capital (Burt 2001; Hite and Hesterly 2001). However, the entrepreneurial value of vertical linking ties between the SEL and businessmen is in line with the findings of corporate studies: these ties are only valuable when a single SEL secures work orders and receives a commission. This suggests that when studying the value of network ties, it is important to distinguish between linking ties and bridging ties.

We saw that most entrepreneurial activities were based on resources acquired through the strong, horizontal bridging ties: labour, money, knowledge, safety, ideas, food and other materials. Given that PRIDE did not provide resources other than training, knowledge and skills, we conclude that the other resources were present even before the SEL programme started. This implies that networking can be a strategy to stimulate entrepreneurship in resource-constrained environments. It also supports the proposition that entrepreneurial opportunities are embedded and created -not merely found- (Sarason et al. 2006; Wood and McKinley 2010) within entrepreneurial networks.

Furthermore, we conclude that all ties in the SEL's network are primarily affect-based. The first network members either know the SEL personally or first need to be convinced of the SEL's benign personality. This is contrary to corporate entrepreneurial network studies, where initial weak ties are usually mainly calculative and instrumental, and only later become affect-based (Hoang and Antoncic 2003; Jack et al. 2008, 2010) but it is similar to the situation in e.g. Hawaii, USA, where social and business life are much intertwined (Klyver and Foley 2012). We hypothesize that the low-trust environment in which the SELs operate requires close, personal contact before business transactions can be initiated. Only after these ties become stronger, can people rely on the other person's competences and benevolence. When the network grows bigger and the SELs create vertical linking ties, the affective component becomes comparatively less important but it never disappears.

We did not see any constraining effects of social capital in the SEL networks, besides the possible indirect effect of unintentionally marginalising others more when the SEL networks further develop. We offer two arguments for this. First, the SELs have open networks; people can join and leave as they like. There are no restrictions imposed by either hierarchy or redundancy (cf. Burt et al.2013). An interesting subject for future research would be the smaller subgroups

engaging in joint entrepreneurial activities, because they might become closed networks. Second, there is an incentive to join the network because entrepreneurial activities are created and money is made within the network. All network participants intended to keep and strengthen these bonds, something that Anderson and Jack eloquently captured: 'If a bridge is to be built quickly it is required to be built from each side of the gap. This captures the essence of mutuality in social capital.' (Anderson and Jack 2002, p208).

We found that the external actor played an indispensable role in helping the SELs build their entrepreneurial networks. PRIDE provided human capital for the exploitation of entrepreneurial opportunities throughout the process and supported the SELs when, at the start of the programme, they went against the extant habitus and faced severe scepticism in their direct environment. PRIDE also facilitated tie formation both in the horizontal bridging networks and the linking networks. The vertical linking ties prove the hardest for the SELs to maintain, strengthening the idea that a broker is essential here, much in the sense Lee and Phan (2008) described the role of intermediaries. Literature in both developing and developed countries (North and Smallbone 2006; Santarelli and Tran 2012) indicate that social and human capital development are intertwined. Combining that with our findings, we hypothesize that only by offering the combination of training, on the job coaching and brokering structural holes will an external actor be able to facilitate entrepreneurial network development. To provide this package, the external facilitator will have to invest time in building their own network and in understanding the local context.

This study focuses on entrepreneurship within a specific niche, which limits its applicability to other contexts. SELs operate in subsistence markets (Viswanathan et al. 2010) and deploy different methods than entrepreneurs in developed economies (London and Hart 2004). Our findings cannot directly be applied to more regulated, high-trust environments, where more calculative networks are the norm. Despite differing from the situation in developed countries, there is no doubt that SELs are working towards entrepreneurial goals and need to exploit opportunities and develop their customer base. Our findings do underline the embeddedness of entrepreneurship and highlight key requirements for entrepreneurial network development at the bottom of the pyramid. If our findings are applicable to other situations where the ultra-poor are struggling to make a living, they offer pointers for developing entrepreneurship where it is very much needed.

PART V:

REFLECTIONS

Chapter 8. Conclusions and Discussion

This chapter summarizes the main findings of our research, which was guided by the following research question:

> *How can social capital be strengthened to stimulate social entrepreneurship for poverty alleviation of poor women in rural Bangladesh?*

We first present a summary of findings and conclusions as they relate to the study questions in three sections: social capital and poverty alleviation; strengthening social capital; and social entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation. We then reflect on the main research question. Next, we assess the broader implications of our findings for theory, policy and practice. Subsequently, we reflect on the internal and external validity of our findings. Finally, the chapter concludes with mapping the future research agenda.

8.1. Summary of findings and conclusions

In their respective chapters the sub-research questions have been answered in detail, so here we present a short summary of the key findings and conclusions.

> *Research question 1: How does social capital play a role in poverty alleviation projects?*

The literature review showed that social capital can contribute to the alleviation of poverty at the micro-level in various development initiatives (Chapter 2). Productive social capital is described and linked to initiatives such as micro-credit (Larance, 1998), agricultural production and marketing (Sultana and Thompson, 2004; Kaganzi et al., 2009; Islam et al., 2011; Elder et al., 2012), environmental protection (Kerr, 2002; Adger, 2003; Kruijssen, 2009) and knowledge networking (Gupta et al., 2003; Classen et al., 2008; Humphries et al., 2012). The review shows that social capital outcomes are dependent on cultural practice, gender and power relations (Foley and Edwards, 1999; Krishna and Uphoff, 1999; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Mayoux, 2001; Silvey and Elmhirst 2003; Cleaver, 2005; Bebbington 2007). Moreover, it highlights that development initiatives can strengthen social capital at the micro-level and identifies four mechanisms at work for this to occur: structural opportunity to meet, 'know-how' of social interaction, sense of belonging and an ethos of mutuality, thus showing opportunities for development projects to produce strategies for the production of social capital.

The analysis of the first learning phases of the action–research project (as described in Chapter 3) established that women's social capital attributes contributed to their poverty. Women's lack of access to social networks was a barrier to accessing resources, such as material resources, knowledge and information, and hence constrained women's ability to achieve a sustainable livelihood. Moreover, women's ties embedded in *purdah* also limits their capacities to engage in income-generating activities (IGAs). Social capital appeared, however, to play paradoxical roles for women: both constraining their development but also being a source of support, for example because it provided them with access to knowledge. The crucial role attributed to social capital in efforts to reach a sustainable livelihood was supported by the interviews with participants and other poor women. Hence the action–research project developed the aim to strengthen women's social capital to enable

development, in particular women's empowerment, contributing to alleviating their poverty.

Research question 2: How can social capital be strengthened to contribute to poverty alleviation?

While critical studies of NGOs' capacity to develop social capital in Bangladesh have sometimes shown their lack of ability to contribute to channels through which social ties are associated with benefits (for example, Islam and Morgan, 2012), our study shows how the strengthening of social capital is achieved and valued (Chapters 4, 5). The women in our study give clear motives for sharing gifts and development: producing social capital is a rational strategy (Granovetter, 1985), and social networks are constructed through strategies because benefits arise from them (Bourdieu, 1986). Social capital provides primary gains for the women in terms of their wellbeing as indeed a perception of relationships of quality has been shown to have an impact on happiness levels, as demonstrated in another context (Caciopo et al., 2008).

In the literature, social capital was confirmed to play an important role in the creation and exchange of knowledge (Coleman, 1988; Lin 1999 and Burt 1992), although some researchers have considered knowledge asymmetries as a result of social capital in Bangladesh (Bakshi et al., 2015). Based on a framework developed to examine knowledge creation and exchange in a business environment which focuses on structural, cognitive and relational dimensions of social capital (Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1998), we amended this framework to analyse the process of knowledge creation and exchange at the grassroots (Chapter 4). Despite having been developed for a very different hypothesized group of people, we established that the Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) framework was applicable to the grassroots and the context under study. We have added to the model in order to enhance our understanding of how development interventions stimulate social capital for knowledge creation and exchange. In addition, bonding, bridging and linking social capital are different functional subtypes of social capital with different functions in terms of their use along development paths. In our study context, characterized not only by poverty but also by limited access to social networks due to *purdah*, bonding social capital represents the first type of social capital to which the programme participants have access, followed later by bridging and linking capital. Hence, we have further developed the structural dimensions of the framework, dividing it into the three functional subtypes of social capital (bonding, bridging and

linking) in order to distinguish between three distinct paths in which social capital contributes to the creation and exchange of knowledge. We added to the model by identifying the capabilities and know-how that have been co-created. We found, however, that knowledge is of huge importance for development at the grassroots but that leveraging knowledge and social capital is not a simple process: it requires concerted effort and dedication from people at the grassroots and from NGOs who are helping them. Moreover, another study investigated how the learning process, and hence human capital, develop to stimulate social entrepreneurship (Maas et al., 2014b). As our study points out that social capital stimulates knowledge co-creation and hence human capital, human capital appears to be key in mediating the relation between social capital and social entrepreneurship.

In the literature review (Chapter 2), we identified various mechanisms for generating productive social capital such as structural opportunities to meet; 'know-how' of social interactions; a sense of belonging with norms shared and a sense of community; and an ethos of mutuality. We also identified a number of activities that had been shown to strengthen social capital, including micro-credit, agricultural production and marketing, environmental protection and knowledge networking. The action–research project under study developed strategies to strengthen women's social capital (Chapter 5). Some of these strategies were developed by PRIDE, others were developed by the women themselves, such as working in harmony with norms and customs and becoming change agents. The four categories identified are closely related to mechanisms of social capital production previously identified by Cilliers and Wepener (2007), but we have also identified a number of new strategies. First, PRIDE worked within norms, selecting women who already had more freedom of movement because of age or lack of familial relationships through widowhood, navigating obstacles and negotiating with resistances to change, and reinforcing the value of altruism, already valued in local society. As shown in a knowledge network in India (Gupta et al., 2003), this project also fostered 'ethical capital'. Second, corresponding to the material level of structural opportunities, our study shows how PRIDE provided opportunities for women to meet other women. The programme provided women with the opportunity to make 'social exchanges' (Wels, 2000), including gift exchanges, barter and financial exchanges. Creating opportunities for women to meet and exchange is a pre-condition for strengthening social capital and improved livelihoods for women living in circumstances of *purdah*. Third, developing know-how but also the know-who of social interaction are important mechanisms for strengthening social capital,

building on the identification of pre-existing social and networking skills. A study of a Ugandan farmers' association similarly shows how developing the know-how of social interaction was achieved by 'learning by doing' (Kaganzi et al., 2009). Fourth, improved feelings of self-worth and increasing the recognition capital led to women themselves becoming change agents, able to develop themselves and their communities. This becomes a virtuous cycle in which these new capacities are then increasingly valued from the norm of altruism, taking us back to the first category in the framework.

> *Research question 3: How can strengthening of social capital results in social entrepreneurship stimulation?*

Our action–research project was found to stimulate social entrepreneurship and strengthen entrepreneurs' different capitals: human, personal, economic, natural, physical and social (Chapter 6). To do this, they developed strategies to 'make do with what is at hand' according to the *bricolage* principle of entrepreneurs (Di Domenico, Haugh and Tracey, 2010). Mainstream thought on entrepreneurship put forward how entrepreneurs need access to financial capital and assets (for example, Austin et al., 2006; Lingelbach et al., 2005; Mendoza and Thelen, 2008). Although capital and assets undeniably necessary for development, we find this a limited perspective that ignores both the resourcefulness and the real needs of entrepreneurs. Instead, by improving human capital and stimulating social capital development, PRIDE stimulated entrepreneurs to start up their activities. We conclude that when the NGO as a third party is able to provide the non-material inputs of knowledge and coaching, the poor can help themselves to create and capture value, using a process of *bricolage*. Hence we show how a development initiative is able to alleviate poverty through stimulating women's social entrepreneurship in a resource-constrained environment.

By using longitudinal data, gathered over two years, we studied how entrepreneurial networks are developed and used by female entrepreneurs in rural Bangladesh (Chapter 7). Our study found that a third party, an NGO, is able to strengthen social capital of social entrepreneurs. The NGO stimulates strengthening of entrepreneurial networks across four dimensions: modifying and building on existing bonding networks; transferring linking ties; teaching how to build bridging networks; and the creation of a network of entrepreneurial peers. Research on entrepreneurship is increasingly focusing on the role of social capital, (Kwon and Arenius, 2010), also in developing countries

(Casey, 2012; Poon et al., 2012), however there are many calls for more research, in particular empirical (Jack, 2010; Smith and Lohrke, 2008) to provide insights into networks' dynamics (Davidsson and Honig, 2003).

The entrepreneurs' success in network development adds to the literature. Relying on available resources to facilitate sustainable solutions, the entrepreneurs developed activities based on their existing resources, including the social fabric. At first, strong bonding ties can discourage entrepreneurial activities while weaker bridging ties can stimulate them and provide them with human capital to develop their social capital and activities. When the entrepreneurs' credibility is established, they are able to extend their bridging networks through support from bonding networks. Strong bridging ties enable access to many resources, from food to ideas. We showed that poor women primarily had access to bonding and bridging social capital and, with limitations, to linking social capital. As the literature shows different combinations of elements of social capital have different impacts on welfare (Granovetter, 1973), different sets of combinations provide optimal usefulness along development paths. Poor entrepreneurs initially draw support from intra-community ties, which are later replaced by extra-community networks as their businesses grow (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000) in processes of disinvestment (Woolcock and Narayan, 2000) or creative destruction (Bezemer et al., 2004). This provides a method for working with community and make use of all actors the local poor (in our case women) have to 'deal with', and the norms which dominate, hereby engaging with the daily realities of the rural poor Bangladeshi women and building on local assets and on their strengths. We show here that poor women decided to engage in strategies to produce social capital which did not confront dominant norms or customs, but rather engaged with the power structure: extending their network also vertically and learning to negotiate with the power-holders, and within constraining elements of social capital.

8.2. Overall conclusions

In the previous section we have answered the sub-questions that contribute to answer the main question of this thesis. In this section, we respond to the main research question. To reiterate, the main research question is:

> *How can social capital be strengthened to stimulate social entrepreneurship to alleviate poverty of poor women in rural Bangladesh?*

We answer this question by first considering how social capital stimulates social entrepreneurship and then how social entrepreneurship stimulates social capital. Following this, we develop a new framework showing mechanisms of social capital production for social entrepreneurship.

8.2.1. Social capital stimulates social entrepreneurship

In earlier chapters, we have shown how social capital could be strengthened by a development project that stimulated social entrepreneurship. We add to the literature that demonstrates that social capital is crucial for development (Woolcock 1998; Portes and Landolt 2000; Grootaert, 2001; Fukuyama, 2001; Bebbington, 2004; Bebbington, 2007) but also that social capital greatly stimulates entrepreneurship, particularly social entrepreneurship (Birley, 1985; Granovetter, 1985; Aldrich and Zimmer, 1986; Woolcock, 1998; Johannisson, 2000; Elfring and Hulsink, 2003; Hoang and Antoncic, 2003; Hite, 2005; Slotte-Kock and Coviello, 2010; Anderson, Dodd and Jack, 2010).

Gift exchange: material goods and services
In the business literature, there is evidence that social capital is created through gift exchanges and that this is particularly important in environments of uncertainty, characterized by the situation of the rural women in Bangladesh:

> *Frequent gift or favour exchanges lead to positive emotions and reduces uncertainty, generating cohesion, and commitment*. (Lawler et al., 2000, cited in Dolfsma, van der Eijk and Jolink, 2009: 32)

Our research shows that social capital can be strengthened by facilitating social exchanges between women. Bridging social capital appeared to be strengthened largely through exchanges described as gifts. Material goods, such as seeds or vegetables, but also non-material services in form of counselling or hands-on help, were the general currency of these social exchanges. In our research, women often framed these as 'gifts', denying expectations of return. According to Bourdieu (1986) social relationships are built and maintained through exchanges that are characterized by a lack of clarity in comparison to market exchanges. In addition, the recipient can also perceive resources that are acquired through social capital as gifts (Portes, 1998). Moreover, the exchanges described in this thesis occur in reciprocity, which mostly corresponds to Sahlin's (1972) 'balanced reciprocity': exchanges of gifts and services are often reciprocated and many women expect a return but

generally deny that they calculate any gains. Following Godbout's (1992) terminology, this represents an 'open form of reciprocity' in a chainlike form of transmission. As was found in the business literature, these gift exchanges are able to strengthen social capital between women by enhancing the quality of relationships.

These findings are consistent with Mauss' (1923) description of gift exchanges that contribute to social relationships. Mauss (1923) showed that gift exchanges 'embody' the giver and result in ties that are characterized by their mutuality and continuity in time. Not only is there a 'duty to give', but there is also a 'duty to receive' and a 'duty to reciprocate' to preserve the alliance and maintain honour respectively (Mauss, 1923). Hence gifts appear to constitute an investment in the social fabric as being able to strengthen one's social capital. In this study, gifts were reported as conditional upon prior development, both material and psychological: many women explained giving material goods only when they have sufficient assets to share with others, or women voiced that they could start teaching others only after having acquired skills and knowledge which proved efficient (enacted into visible development), and thereby having gained the confidence to do so. Through this investment, this 'paying-it-forward' mechanism, many women are able to strengthen their social capital. And gradually exchanges can be intensified, leading participants to create value (or gain profit) hence showing the first steps of a model of social entrepreneurship.

The 'social' matters

Social entrepreneurship and social capital are both concepts that highlight pro-social values. Being embedded within the social fabric brings about wellbeing (Diener and Seligman, 2002; Caciopo et al., 2008). In the Asian cultural context, interconnectedness is particularly associated with wellbeing (Suh and Koo, 2008). In Bangladesh, for example, a research programme showed that happiness is strongly linked to the social domain in which relationships play a major role, linked to 'a sense of identity (often a common identity) and a sense of position within the relationship' (Camfield, Choudhury and Devine, 2007: 82). Camfield et al. (2007) demonstrate that women place greatest value on relationships within their family, while men were also concerned with their relationships with their community. They describe relationships in terms of their inherent emotional component and their material instrumental perspective: the instrumental perspective comprises material benefits, including information, and

symbolic benefits such as good reputation, status, respect, influence, authority, and recognition for competencies (ibid).

This thesis highlights several local poor women engaging in mutual development – through social entrepreneurship – and investing in their social fabric – by strengthening productive social capital – not only providing instrumental benefits but also enhancing their wellbeing. Our study also sheds light on the fact that a strengthened social fabric whereby mutuality and inter-dependency are stimulated can foster empowerment. Indeed, Kabeer's (2001) analysis of the link between micro-credit and women's empowerment shows that different outcomes are linked to different understandings of power relations within the household. She argues that women are in relations of unequal inter-dependence with their husband but that they do not seek independence but rather greater equality (Kabeer, 2001). Moreover, in Bangladesh, people have been found to value both autonomy and dependency as 'autonomy can coexist with substantial relationships of dependence': autonomy is not necessarily conceived as excluding dependency but rather as 'multiple situated autonomies' (Devine, Camfield and Gough, 2008: 108), achieved through inter-dependency. Our work can also be read through the concept of care as theorized by Gilligan (1977), who showed that autonomy can follow and not precede the establishment of caring links. And as Fine and Glendinning (2005) argue, if concepts of autonomy and independence are accepted as universal goals, the concepts of dependency and care are more problematic. They argue for a novel understanding of care and dependence as these carry opportunities. Both enact mutuality: care can be reciprocal, both the recipient and the provider of care enact their agency (ibid). Indeed, our work might be read as one which, by using concepts of social capital and social entrepreneurship, highlights women who engaged on development paths that seemed to build on both greater autonomy and greater embeddedness within the social fabric.

Seeking balance between economic and social motives

Many initiatives aim to act outside the market economy in a so-called 'social economy', such as barter systems, fair trade products and local services (Frere, 2013). The Bottom of the Pyramid (BOP) framework, developed by Prahalad (2005), argues that poverty can be alleviated by making use of the untapped market among the poorest (Prahalad and Hammond, 2002; Prahalad, 2005). People at the BOP can benefit from such businesses because they are not generally integrated into the global market economy, depriving them of access

to basic services such as banking, communication, water and sanitation (London and Hart, 2004). Companies can make profits by engaging with the large untapped market at the BOP while integrating segments of the BOP population into the global market economy. One approach that acts at the BOP is social entrepreneurship (Fowler, 2000).

In social entrepreneurship, there is a tension between welfare aims, used for redistribution and employing subsidies and charities, and commercial aims where for-profit businesses act according to market rules. Social entrepreneurs seek a balance between commercial and welfare aims. Our work looks at how some (poor) women wanted to share knowledge and skills, and to help others, and how this enabled these women to derive higher social status, a sense of achievement and enlarged networks. The concept of social capital makes it possible to analyse the types of exchanges these women made to become social entrepreneurs. As proposed by Coleman (1998), in our research social capital offers in essence an alternative to the collectivism versus individualism dichotomy, namely the over-socialized depiction of actors governed by social rules and devoid of agency, versus the depiction of self-interested actors acting only to maximize their profit. Indeed, our research adds to Coleman (1988) as we describe an NGO that stimulates social entrepreneurs who are able gradually to earn more profit while they can be facilitating the development of others' profit, using and strengthening their own social capital in the process. Social capital is strengthened for many women by stimulating exchanges that have the character of gift exchanges. We, therefore, conclude that strengthening social capital stimulates one type of economic behaviour – namely reciprocal exchanges – that stimulate one type of development trajectory – social entrepreneurship. Not only do we show as others have previously done that social capital is one of the conditions for entrepreneurship of very poor women (Mair and Marti, 2009), but we go one step further, arguing that stimulating social capital may be an effective, low-cost way to strengthen social entrepreneurship, representing an extremely important development result.

8.2.2. Social entrepreneurship stimulates productive social capital

One most interesting finding of this study is that social entrepreneurship is also capable of strengthening social capital. This required the external intervention of an NGO, representing a limited intervention in terms of financial assistance but a substantial investment in terms of time and the timeframe of intervention.

By developing IGAs and stimulating social entrepreneurship, many women's social capital increased.

Stimulating productive social capital

Social capital attracts considerable academic attention because it can have a positive impact on society. As shown previously (Chapter 3), there is considerable evidence that development projects, such as micro-credit, agricultural production and marketing, environmental protection and knowledge networking, can strengthen social capital, but research does not focus on how social capital can be strengthened as a development strategy. To fill this gap, our research shows that strategies to produce social capital can be devised by projects to promote social entrepreneurship.

Consistent with the literature, our study found that social entrepreneurship was able to contribute to women's economic gains by providing most of them with additional income. But, as predicted, social entrepreneurship also contributed to welfare gains. Indeed, most entrepreneurs facilitated the development of other poor women in their community. In this way, social entrepreneurship was able to contribute to poverty alleviation. In our study, social entrepreneurship was also able to play a transformational role in that it was demonstrated it could change women's position in society, making it possible for many women to engage in IGAs and making it easier for them to meet other women. This transformational role was predicted by Huysentruyt (2014). Other scholars have shown that women's entrepreneurship in Bangladesh can contribute to their empowerment (Morshed and Haque, 2015). We have shown how several women developed social entrepeneurship know-how and knowledge, which they can apply to strengthen their social capital. For example, by developing the know-how of recognizing opportunities and improvisation some women are then able to apply these to identify opportunities within their networks to meet others or make social exchanges and hence are strengthening their social capital; or by developing know-how in stakeholder participation and persuasion women can acquire social skills which they can effectively apply to strengthen their social capital. Hence our work illustrates that there is a two-way relationship between social capital and social entrepreneurship, as others have previously suggested (Madhooshi and Samimi, 2015). We go further, however, in providing insights into some of the causal mechanisms of such relations, and in particular how such ties can be leveraged to alleviate poverty. Our research analysed the way in which social entrepreneurship can generate productive social capital (Figure 8.1): at the level of structural social capital (providing

opportunities and strategies to strengthen social skills and knowledge) and at the level of cognitive social capital (strengthening self-worth and capacity to act, and strategies acting at the level of norms and ethics).

Navigating within constraints

Some authors question whether social capital is a capital in its own right and comparable to other types of capital (Fine, 2001; Robison et al., 2002). Social capital appears to follow different dynamics compared to other capitals, such as financial capital, because use leads to increase (Coleman, 1988). We indeed argue that the concept of social capital makes it possible to analyse models of economic behaviour that are different from traditional productivist patterns. Another aspect of social capital which sets it apart from other capitals is that is can have positive, productive outcomes but also negative, perverse outcomes.

In Bangladesh, women's access to productive social capital can be limited by gender roles, by social norms, in particular *purdah,* and by power structures. Earlier chapters in this thesis have shown that cultural practices, gender and power relations can all affect the types of outcomes associated with social capital, in particular the negative effects of social capital that constrained women's efforts to overcome poverty, consistent with the findings of other studies (Portes and Landolt, 1996; Collier, 1998; Narayan, 1999; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Mayoux 2001; Cleaver, 2005; Silvey and Elmhirst, 2003; Andrist 2008). In order to facilitate women's development, the social entrepreneurship programme navigated within the constraining elements of social capital and developed strategies for strengthening social capital by addressing its negative aspects (Figure 8.1).

Women were stimulated to build relations with people important for their development: this could enable the strengthening of their family ties but might also stimulate the development of vertical relations with power-holders. In addition, the NGO itself engaged with power-holders: building trust with members of the local elite and the community at large, then able to facilitate some ties between poor and rich and between men and women, while explicitly avoiding elite capture of resources. The NGO staff managed to leverage support from members of the community and from many women's families, thereby fostering an environment favourable for women to develop IGAs and hence their livelihoods. In this way, the NGO worked within the existing social structure to facilitate women's empowerment. As highlighted by Fine (2001), strengthening social capital needs to involve issues of power.

Groups with strong social capital can be harmful to other groups or to society as a whole (Portes and Landolt, 1996; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000; Mayoux, 2001), such as the Mafia and other criminal networks (Servadio, 1976; Hagan and McCarthy, 1997). In our study context, strong ties between members of the same socio-economic stratum can indeed lead to such negative externalities: for example some rich farmers might use their ties with each other to the detriment of the poor in the *Shalish*. By engaging with some power-holders and enabling some women's empowerment, the NGO was able to address this negative externality of social capital. As a consequence, some women social entrepreneurs were even able to participate in political life by running for local election or taking part in *Shalish* meetings.

One potentially negative aspect of social capital is that some individuals and families can face community pressure not to act outside dominant norms for risk of being marginalised (Mayoux, 2001). Moreover, the negative effects of social capital may be stronger in situations where *purdah* (women's seclusion) is a dominant norm (Andrist, 2008; Narayan, 1999). Our study has shown that when this is the case, other community members tend to reproduce it by enforcing women seclusion, limiting women's mobility and constraining their ability to engage in IGAs. For example, many husbands reproduce the norm of *purdah* to protect their own social capital. In this way, social capital can keep actors within a set of shared norms, preventing change. In particular, gender inequalities in our study context are (in part) woven into women's social relationships. This represents a barrier to many women's empowerment because their social relationships are important to their lives but also constrain them. As Kabeer argues '(h)ow then is it possible for women to recognize and deal with the injustices embedded in the social relationships that define their identities and give meaning to their lives without at the same time negating or undermining these relationships?' (2011: 503). To deal with this dilemma, the action–research project did not confront traditional norms during the programme – for example, the project stimulated the development of diverse home-based IGAs because these were in harmony with prevailing customs. In this way, most of the social entrepreneurs made do with the traditional norms, navigating within constraints to engage in entrepreneurial activities.

Alleviating women's poverty

Women in developing countries are considered to bear an 'unequal share of the burden of poverty' and have been estimated as representing between 60% and 70% of the poor (Marcoux, 1998: 131). This is particularly evident in countries

with a high gender-inequality index, such as Bangladesh (UNDP, 2015). In such circumstances, women's poverty is embedded in the social fabric in particular because of *purdah* (Narayan and Petesch, 2002). For example, women-headed households are constrained by social norms and gender roles that prevent them from working outside the home (McIntyre, Rondeau, Kirkpatrick et al., 2011), as are young women (Narayan and Petesch, 2002). Early marriage, with one third of girls being married by the age of 15 despite an official permitted marriageable age 18 years (World Bank, 2013), is combined with patriarchy (Feldman, 2001) and a patrilineal inheritance system (from father to son), further limiting women's access to and ownership of resources (Larance, 1998). Moreover, the practice of patrilocality, in which women move to their husband's village after marriage, severs women from their social network, further exacerbating women's vulnerability (Larance, 1998). Moreover, women are key actors in development processes. For example, it has been argued that using women's skills and talents fully would increase productivity by 25% (Cuberes and Teignier-Baqué, 2011) while equal access to land and fertilizers could raise agricultural output by 2.5% to 4 % (FAO, 2011). With women's poverty embedded in the constraints of the social fabric, this thesis analysed a development approach particularly suited to such a poverty context: an approach demonstrated that it was capable of stimulating the social fabric by strengthening some women's productive social capital.

In Bangladesh, the original 'civil society empowerment' focus has been replaced by a focus on 'service delivery', representing an evolving emphasis on the sustainability of development (Rahman, 2006). While 'service delivery' has become a mainstream development approach in Bangladesh, it may have drawbacks, constraining the ability of NGOs to promote good governance and accountability through social mobilization and collective action (Rahman, 2006). Instead of merely focusing on service delivery, the approach studied in this thesis showed the potential to strengthen the civil society and social capital, proposing paths to navigate within norms and customs. Our research has shown that women's empowerment and reduced gender inequality go hand in hand with the gradual evolution of norms. Our research also shows that the social entrepreneurial approach can even reproduce itself: most entrepreneurs train their neighbours, some of whom themselves become entrepreneurs and train other women. Mirroring the original 'trickle-down' of innovations, we envision 'trickle-across' effects that disseminate innovations through a fertile social fabric in which social entrepreneurs play a central role as change agents. As Dees (2001) also argues, social entrepreneurs are products of their environments but

are also changing them, as conceptualized in the structuration theory (Giddens, 1984; Sarason, Dean and Dillard, 2006).

In a study undertaken by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), it was found that 'evidence suggests that the gender gap in social entrepreneurship is generally smaller than the gender gap in traditional, commercial entrepreneurship' (Huysentruyt, 2014: 6). Data from two international data sets, namely the Global Enterprise Monitor 2009 and the 2010 Social Enterprises in Europe (SELUSI) survey, demonstrate considerable variation in social entrepreneurial activity across countries. In general, although men are more likely than women to start a social enterprise, women are more represented in social enterprises than in traditional entrepreneurial activity, probably because women are 'more altruistic and socially minded than men' and because women are more competition-averse than men (Huysentruyt, 2014: 6). The OECD study considers that promotion of social entrepreneurship can act as a powerful lever for promoting women's entrepreneurship and women's participation in the labour market more generally, concluding that 'this link between female entrepreneurship, in particular female social entrepreneurship on the one hand and transformative change that fosters more inclusive, green and smart growth, on the other has so far been widely underappreciated' (Huysentruyt, 2014: 20).

8.2.3. A novel framework for social capital production

This thesis represents a first attempt to develop a framework for strengthening social capital, building on theory, empirical studies conducted by others, and our own empirical data from the action–research project (see Figure 8.1). In this framework, we show how processes to stimulate social capital can work at the level of norms and ethics, opportunities, self-worth and capacity to act, and social skills and knowledge, and can strengthen components of social capital investment, namely structural and cognitive social capital. These are then able to strengthen social capital functional subtypes: bonding, bridging, and (in a lesser extent in our study) linking social capital. Such modification of 'what is' social capital's effect 'what does' social capital. Some negative outcomes are diminished – social exclusion and gender subordination – while some productive outcomes are triggered, such as women's empowerment and knowledge co-creation. And such outcomes are able to stimulate social entrepreneurial leadership, which in turn might strengthen the development of social capital.

8.3. Reflection on internal and external validity

8.3.1. Internal validity

To reduce researcher and respondent bias, this thesis employed a number of strategies. To reduce researcher bias data was collected by different researchers. To be able to carry out the research with respondents, researchers relied on the respondents' trust in PRIDE, based on frequent interactions over a long period of time. As result, respondents were seen to trust the researchers when PRIDE first introduced them.[25] Moreover, the level of trust appeared to depend on the translator accompanying the researcher: we have managed to have more in-depth interviews addressing the most sensitive subjects when interviews were conducted with female translators, and in particular with one with whom the researcher worked for longer periods. This resulted in the photo-voice data, which was probably the most exploratory and which has formed the basis of reflection within this thesis. This was checked and confirmed by data collected with other translators or by other researchers.

Respondent bias was also addressed, particularly as the concepts investigated in this thesis are sensitive to such bias. For example, respondents might have been inclined to portray themselves through the pro-social values ascribed to social capital or social entrepreneurship, such as reinforcing the presence of cooperative norms. Or they could also be inclined to portray themselves as successful entrepreneurs, reinforcing the symbolic capital gained from their status. To reduce such sources of bias, information was checked between respondents. For example, information collected from one woman was checked within her social network, such as family, social leaders in her village and neighbours. In addition, the considerable time spent with respondents and in the villages facilitated observation but also participation in community life, allowing for further checking (this thesis' author spent near to a year in total in Bangladesh, working in a team where experience was even longer). Furthermore, data collected was always compared with information gathered by other researchers and PRIDE.

[25] In these learning phases PRIDE had managed to secure trust, however in the pre-reconnaissance phase the NGO built on the prestige associated with researchers from a foreign university to start developing a network.

Triangulation was achieved by using at least three data-collection instruments. For example, data from the photo-voice on domains of change was checked with in-depth interviews which addressed the same themes in depth, and were run in parallel and with other respondents. Data was also checked with questionnaires developed following the analysis of the photo-voice data. As a result, we received member checks of constructs derived from the data.

8.3.2. External validity

The exploratory analysis of the development programme considered here seemed to show that it might have potential for up-scaling. As we saw, a 'trickle-across' effect is possible in which social entrepreneurs train their neighbours who themselves can become social entrepreneurs and train other women. For such change to take place in another setting, there would be the need for the intervention of an NGO like PRIDE, and NGO staff would need to be trained in the approaches taken by PRIDE. PRIDE staff were able to stimulate social entrepreneurship because they had a thorough understanding of the specific context, based upon years of work with the target population and having developed some tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1966), namely knowledge embodied in people and embedded in processes, which it is difficult to communicate (Nonaka, 1994).

The action–research project studied in this thesis considered social entrepreneurship as an embedded process, which represents both the strengths and the weakness of the project. On the one hand, it enabled the design of a social entrepreneurship project appropriate to the realities of the context, making do with what was at hand and navigating within constraining elements. On the other hand, this might limit applicability in other settings, particularly as social capital outcomes are dependent on cultural practices, gender and power relations. The approach cannot necessarily be replicated in another context. Rather, it would have to make a contextual analysis, taking into consideration the constraining elements of the specific setting. This means that the strategies developed here cannot be simply reproduced in another setting, but the method to develop the strategies could nevertheless be employed.

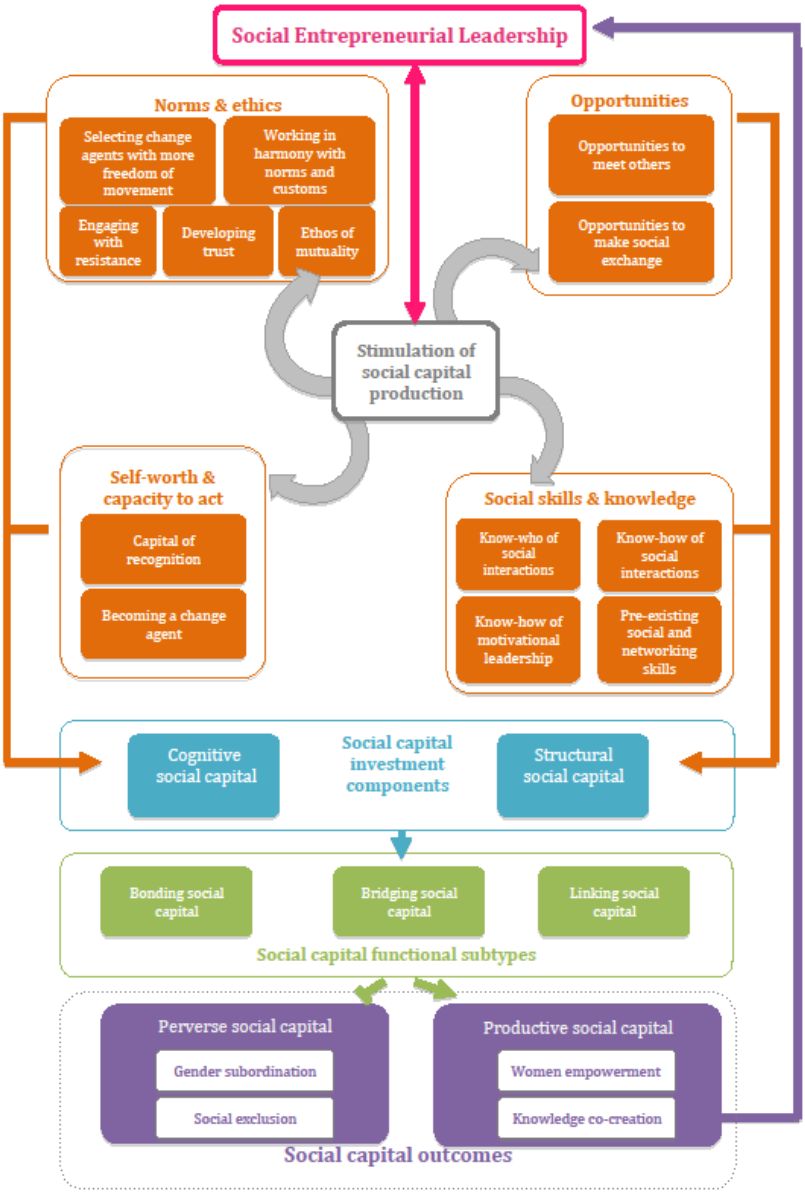

Figure 8.1: Social capital for social entrepreneurship, a dynamic framework engaging with the local context of poor women in rural Bangladesh.

8.4. Mapping the future research agenda

A logical follow-up to this research would be to quantify the impact of the approach against control villages and in the longer term. It would, in particular, be of great interest to evaluate the 'trickle-across' effect in more detail and to analyse how it could be promoted. This would, however, raise the question of the need for novel approaches to the evaluation of impact, such as evaluation frameworks that do not measure 'how much more is produced' or 'how much more is earned' but rather focus on total wealth production and the impact of new capabilities. Such evaluation frameworks could lead to new models which value social entrepreneurship at the micro level and focus more on balance rather than on quantity.

This thesis has analysed an initiative that aims to reduce poverty by stimulating social entrepreneurship and strengthening social capital, with both stimulating each other, in a resource-constrained environment. Another possible follow-up would be to adopt the approach in other settings to see how it might work and whether the mechanisms would be different. This would contribute to providing a portfolio of strategies for development practitioners to stimulate social entrepreneurship and strengthen social capital. This could include experimenting with whether this approach would be applicable to men or to women in other cultural settings. For example, it might be applicable to people living in poverty in developed countries.

Another area for research concerns investigating the future roles to be played by development initiatives. Some commentators argue that social entrepreneurs represent an alternative to NGOs (for example Fowler, 2000) and that this can also take the form of NGOs shifting to a social enterprise model. NGOs would thus be able to become social enterprises by either combining activities designed to generate positive societal outcomes and economic spillovers or through a 'supplementary approach' in which some activities are designed for commercial benefits and used for development projects with cross-subsidies (Fowler, 2000). Here, we have touched upon a hybrid model in which NGOs promote social entrepreneurship at the micro-level.

8.5. Epilogue: A positive story

Since its independence in 1971, Bangladesh has seen an abundance of calamities, such as Rana Plaza's collapse in 2013, which shed light on the inhumane working conditions of the textile industry. Indeed, one of the first words one learn in Bangladesh is *chomocha* (problem) as there seems to be a never-ending list of interlocking problems, blocking hopes for a better and brighter future.

Bangladesh has been a particularly fertile ground for development initiatives since the 1980s. However, the 'test case for development' is now becoming the 'Bangladesh conundrum' (Asadullah, Savoia and Mahmud, 2014). Bangladesh made progress towards the Millennium Development Goals[26] (MDGs), reaching a higher level of social development than countries with similar per capita income (Asadullah, Savoia and Mahmud, 2014). In addition, the proportion of people living in poverty declined from 49% to 31.5% of the population between 2000 and 2010 (World Bank, 2013). Bangladesh has experienced a number of projects and programmes that aimed to alleviate poverty (ibid). A study of the 14 MDGs showed that Bangladesh made very good progress in terms of the proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption; net enrolment in primary school; ratio of girls to boys in primary education; under-five mortality rate; infant mortality rate; proportion of one-year-old children immunised against measles; maternal mortality rate; and HIV prevalence among people aged 15–24 years (Bhattacharya et al., 2013). Four of the MDG targets still remain out of reach, namely the proportion of population living below the poverty line; the literacy rate of 15–24-year-olds; the proportion of population using an improved source of drinking water; and the proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility. Bangladesh is also off track on two further MDG indicators, namely the rate of employment among the economically active population, and the proportion of land area covered by forest (Bhattacharya et al., 2013).

Against this background of positive but mixed progress, positive approaches remain scarce. Indeed, as Appadurai's (2004) aspiration theory showed, the 'capacity to aspire', which is unequally distributed, but 'formed in interaction

[26] In replacement of the millennium development goals (MDG), the sustainable development goals (SDG), have been agreed by the UN member states in 2015, and have set the international development agenda for the 2016-2030 period.

and in the thick of social life' (Appadurai, 2004: 67). The approach taken by the programme described in this thesis represents an opportunity to promote development: indeed, Bangladesh is full of strengths, initiatives and opportunities that open up new pathways to development. The NGO PRIDE, refusing to be constrained by local norms and customs and seeing strengths in the poor people it is seeking to help, opened new pathways for poor women, and inspired them. This thesis, which has adopted the appreciative inquiry standpoint, intends to support such positive initiatives.

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SUMMARY

Introduction

Recognizing that development cannot rely only on charities but also that businesses need to become socially minded, social entrepreneurship represents one promising economic arrangement that could be a sustainable was to stimulate development. In particular, social entrepreneurs who play the role of change agents in resource-constrained settings represent one micro-level solution in overcoming poverty. In addition, academics and development practitioners have given increasing value to the social fabric with the concept of social capital. The World Bank has even described social capital as the 'missing link' in development. Indeed, social capital is associated with a plethora of benefits: improved well-being and health (even lower mortality rates), enhanced access to human capital and economic capital (it even reduces the likelihood of living in poverty). Social capital has also been shown to stimulate social entrepreneurship, in particular in development contexts. Moreover, social capital describes mutually beneficial relations and actions, and social entrepreneurship is about win-win dynamics, as it combines social contributions with economic benefits: hence social capital might be the best concept to reveal how social entrepreneurs function.

Bangladesh is a particularly resource-constrained country. With 47 million people still living in poverty (nearly a third of its population), poverty remains a priority problem. And, as it is often the case, the burden of poverty is not shared evenly between women and men: the situation of women in Bangladesh is particularly difficult. Given that when gender discrimination intersects with economic deprivation, women are not only poorer than men but also have fewer opportunities to overcome poverty, and creating paths for women's development is constrained by the social fabric. Indeed, Bangladeshi society is patriarchal, based on male domination, patrilineality (inheritance passing from father to son), and patrilocality, which means that on marriage women move to their husband's village, which severs them from their own social network. In

addition, with a predominantly Muslim population, religion can act as a barrier for women, in particular through the norm of the *purdah*, or female seclusion. These social structures both worsen women's poverty, and also constrain their capacities for development.

This thesis seeks to acquire insights into the relationship between social capital, social entrepreneurship and development among poor women in rural Bangladesh. This led to the following main research question:

> *How can social capital be strengthened to stimulate social entrepreneurship to alleviate poverty of poor women in rural Bangladesh?*

Conceptual framework and study questions

Social entrepreneurs use social *bricolage* (unrestricted strategies, refusal to be constrained, improvisation, creation of social value, stakeholder participation, persuasion) to obtain access to resources. Research has identified that tapping resources, such as social or human capital, helps to strengthen social entrepreneurship. However, if social capital is associated with productive benefits it may also have perverse effects: it can exclude the poorest, foster closed groups that are harmful to others or constrain individuals' growth because of community pressure. This is particularly detrimental for women, whose social capital (or their husband's social capital) can have negative externalities (for example, young girls in India are prevented from attending school). Moreover, how social capital can be strengthened and leveraged through development interventions remains underdeveloped. The alleviation of poverty can be stimulated through social capital according to three subtypes (bonding, bridging and linking). At the micro level bonding refers to family ties, bridging to neighbouring ties with peers, and linking to vertical ties with power-holders. Moreover, it is possible to invest in two components (structural and cognitive) for strengthening social capital. Focusing on the micro level we therefore sought to understand how social capital stimulated social entrepreneurship to contribute to development initiatives aimed at alleviating poverty. This led to the following research questions:

> *1. How does social capital play a role in poverty-alleviation projects?*

2. How can social capital be strengthened to contribute to poverty alleviation?

3.How can the strengthening of social capital result in stimulating social entrepreneurship?

Methodology

This thesis analyses how one long-term action–research project developed a road- map for alleviating women's poverty in Bangladesh through building on the social fabric to stimulate social entrepreneurship. In this research project, we applied the Interactive Learning and Action approach (ILA). The first three phases of this approach are referred to as reconnaissance, after which a spiral of activities recurs continuously (phases 4 and 5). This is similar to the action–research spiral: every cycle consists of revised planning, action, observation and reflection after which a new cycle starts. Action–research was applied to investigate how development could be triggered in the specific context of Bangladesh. This action–research project was undertaken with a local NGO called PRIDE. This thesis focuses on the Route to Sustainable Development (RSD) project, which later became the Social Entrepreneurial Leadership (SEL) project, the aim of which is to alleviate poverty. The project trains poor women in starting up and managing Income-Generating Activities (IGAs) as a means to enhance their own livelihoods, while also facilitating the development of other poor women in their village. The action–research project enabled us to develop, implement and evaluate an approach to stimulate the emergence of social entrepreneurship among local people living in poverty. The reconnaissance phase began in 2004 and the first learning cycle started from 2006. All activities were continuously monitored and evaluated. This thesis focuses on the ILA learning cycles applied in the RSD/SEL project. We present data from 2006 to 2012. In the various learning cycles we can identify three phases: (1) experimentation, (2) implementation and (3) scaling-up.

Since the action–research project spanned over six years it comprises a rich data set that enables detailed reflections. A mixed-methods approach was used to collect data, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), visual ethnography (photo-voice methodology), questionnaires and participant observation. The research team comprised researchers, NGO staff,

entrepreneurs and beneficiaries who participated in the project, and a range of community members. Research methods also included a literature review.

Results

The results are presented in three parts, which correspond to the three research questions. **Part 2** corresponds to the first research question and analyses how social capital contributes to development initiatives to alleviate poverty. **Chapter 2** analyses theoretical perspectives and empirical studies of social capital. The review showed that social capital can contribute to the alleviation of poverty at the micro level in various development initiatives such as micro-credit, agricultural production and marketing, environmental protection and knowledge networking. The review shows that social capital outcomes are dependent on cultural practices, gender and power relations. Moreover, it demonstrates that development initiatives can effectively stimulate social capital to contribute to poverty alleviation at the micro level and identifies four mechanisms for this to occur: structural opportunity to meet, 'know-how' of social interaction, sense of belonging and an ethos of mutuality, thus showing opportunities for development projects to create strategies for the production of social capital. It highlights, however, that little is known about the mechanisms through which social capital can be strengthened in practice. In order to devise development strategies that are based on creating social capital, the chapter illustrates that there needs to be a deeper understanding of mechanisms that strengthen social capital.

Chapter 3 explores how the action–research methodology applied in this thesis made it possible to articulate development paths for poor women in rural Bangladesh. The ILA methodology facilitated a process in which stakeholders were able to articulate a development approach that was embedded in the local context. Women's lack of access to social networks was a barrier to accessing resources, such as material resources, knowledge and information, and hence constrained women's ability to achieve a sustainable livelihood. Moreover, being embedded in *purdah* also limits women's capacities to engage in income-generating activities (IGAs). Social capital appeared, however, to play paradoxical roles for women: both constraining their development but also being a source of support, for example by providing them with access to knowledge. The crucial role attributed to social capital in efforts to reach a sustainable livelihood was supported by the interviews with participants and other poor women. Indeed, it is women's challenges and goals along the

learning cycles that made it possible to develop an approach to leveraging social capital which they used for their own empowerment and for engaging in social entrepreneurship.

Given the evidence that social capital contributes to poverty alleviation, **part 3** focuses on how an NGO can apply strategies to strengthen social capital to stimulate development. The literature confirms that social capital plays an important role in the creation and exchange of knowledge. **Chapter 4** explores how structural, cognitive and relational social capital contributed to knowledge co-creation of social entrepreneurship. Social capital enables the combination and exchange of intellectual capital, which stimulates the creation of new intellectual capital (new know-how and knowing capabilities) but also novel structural opportunities to meet – all of which represent mechanisms for creating and thus strengthening social capital. As our study points out, human capital appears to be key in mediating the relation between social capital and social entrepreneurship.

Chapter 5 analyses the mechanisms through which NGO strategies strengthened poor women's social capital. This study shows that bonding, bridging and linking poor women's social capital was strengthened by the project. A novel framework analysing mechanisms of creating social capital showed that the NGO and the women used different strategies for achieving this: some acting at the level of cognitive social capital (norms and ethics, self-worth and capacity to act) and some at the level of structural social capital (at the level of opportunities as well as of social skills and knowledge). First, PRIDE worked within norms, selecting women who already had more freedom of movement because of their age or lack of immediate family relationships through widowhood, navigating obstacles and negotiating with resistances to change, and reinforcing the value of altruism, already valued in local society, thereby fostering 'ethical capital'. Second, corresponding to the material level of structural opportunities, our study shows how PRIDE provided opportunities for women to meet other women. The programme gave women the opportunity to make social exchanges, including gift exchanges, barter and financial exchanges. Such opportunities for women to meet and exchange is a precondition for strengthening social capital and improving the livelihoods of women living in *purdah* (such as the women of our study). Third, developing the know-how but also the know-who of social interaction were found to be important mechanisms for strengthening social capital, building on the identification of pre-existing social and networking skills. Fourth, improved feelings of self-worth

and increasing the recognition capital led to women themselves becoming change agents, able to develop themselves and their communities. This in turn became a virtuous cycle in which these new capacities are increasingly valued from the norm of altruism, taking us back to the first category in the framework.

A considerable body of research shows that social entrepreneurship and social capital are tied to each other: in particular, both are concerned with win-win dynamics of development. Empirical evidence on the causal relationship between these concepts is lacking, however. Part 4 focuses on how strengthening social capital results in stimulating social entrepreneurship. **Chapter 6** describes the development of the social entrepreneurial leadership (SEL) approach and evaluates its effectiveness as a strategy to stimulate social entrepreneurship for poverty alleviation. Social entrepreneurs developed strategies to 'make do with what is at hand' according to the *bricolage* principle of entrepreneurs. Our study shows that six forms of capital of the entrepreneurs are strengthened through the approach: human, personal, economic, natural, physical and social.

Chapter 7 studies how a third party stimulated the social capital of social entrepreneurs. It uses longitudinal data, gathered over two years, to examine how women entrepreneurs develop and use entrepreneurial networks in rural Bangladesh. Our study found that a third party, an NGO, is able to strengthen the social capital of social entrepreneurs. The NGO stimulates strengthening of entrepreneurial networks across four dimensions: modifying and building on existing bonding networks; transferring linking ties; teaching how to build bridging networks; and the creation of a network of entrepreneurial peers. The entrepreneurs' success in network development adds to the literature. Relying on available resources to facilitate sustainable solutions, the entrepreneurs developed activities based on their existing resources, including the social fabric. At first, strong bonding ties can discourage entrepreneurial activities while weaker bridging ties can stimulate them and provide them with human capital to develop their social capital and activities. Once the entrepreneurs' credibility is established, they are able to extend their bridging networks through support from bonding networks. Strong bridging ties enable access to many resources, from food to ideas. We showed that poor women primarily had access to bonding and bridging social capital and, to a lesser extent, to linking social capital. This provides a method for working with a community and making use of all actors the local poor (in our case women) have to 'deal with', and the

prevailing norms, thus engaging with the daily realities of the poor rural Bangladeshi women and building on local assets and on their strengths.

Discussion and conclusions

By shedding light on women who developed social entrepreneurship know-how and knowledge, which they applied to strengthen their social capital, our work illustrates that there is a two-way relationship between social capital and social entrepreneurship.

Our project shows how a development intervention is able to strengthen social capital to stimulate social entrepreneurship. We show that strengthening social capital stimulates one type of economic behaviour – namely reciprocal exchanges – that stimulate one type of development trajectory – social entrepreneurship. We have shown that social capital can be stimulated by facilitating exchanges, described as gifts, which consist of some sort of paying-it forward mechanism: women invest in their social fabric for their development. What the project participants showed us is that the social matters. Our work might be read as one which, by using concepts of social capital and social entrepreneurship, highlights the experience of women who embarked on development paths that seemed to build on both greater autonomy and greater embeddedness within the social fabric. Indeed, people seek balance economic and social motives: this is the social entrepreneurship approach that the local poor decided to engage in through this research-action project.

Moreover, in order to facilitate women's development, the social entrepreneurship programme navigated within the constraining elements of social capital and developed strategies for strengthening social capital by addressing its negative aspects: social entrepreneurs 'making do' with the traditional norms and women's social fabric. Since women's poverty is embedded in the constraints of the social fabric, this thesis analysed a development approach particularly suited to such a poverty context: an approach that demonstrated that it was capable of stimulating the social fabric by strengthening some women's productive social capital.

Rather than merely focusing on service delivery, the approach studied in this thesis showed the potential to strengthen civil society and social capital, proposing paths to navigate within norms and customs. Our research has shown

that women's empowerment and reduced gender inequality go hand in hand with the gradual evolution of norms. It also shows that the social entrepreneurial approach can reproduce itself: most entrepreneurs train their neighbours, some of whom themselves become entrepreneurs and train other women. Mirroring the original 'trickle down' of innovations, we envision 'trickle-across' effects that disseminate innovations through a fertile social fabric in which social entrepreneurs play a central role as change agents.

This doctoral dissertation conceptualized how productive social capital can be generated. We showed how processes to stimulate social capital can work at the level of norms and ethics, opportunities, self-worth and capacity to act, and social skills and knowledge, and can strengthen components of social capital investment, namely structural and cognitive social capital. These are then able to strengthen social capital functional subtypes: bonding, bridging, and (to a lesser extent in our study) linking social capital. This modifies 'what is' social capital's effect to 'what does' social capital. Some negative outcomes are diminished – social exclusion and gender subordination – while some productive outcomes are triggered, such as women's empowerment and knowledge co-creation. Such outcomes can then stimulate social entrepreneurial leadership, which in turn might strengthen the development of social capital.

Although there is a need for more research on evaluating the depth of the impact of such approach, replicating such projects in different contexts or investigating future roles NGO will be able to play, the approach taken by the programme described in this thesis represents an opportunity to promote development through building on strengths: the NGO PRIDE, refusing to be constrained by local norms and customs and seeing strengths in the poor people it is seeking to help, opened new pathways for poor women, and inspired them.

Bedankt ধন্যবাদ Thank You
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Pinarello, 1st of September 2016

About the author

Anastasia, originally from Greece and France, was born in the United Kingdom. She started with research in fundamental biology and holds an MSc from the University of Marseille, France, and an MPhil from Cambridge University, United Kingdom. Aiming to apply scientific knowledge to societies' complex problems, she followed the MSc in Management, Policy Analysis and Entrepreneurship from the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Her work has focused on understanding how interventions can use social systems to successfully promote development. She worked on food network for food security with the council for scientific and industrial research (CSIR) in Ghana, a women empowerment organization (the Joyoti Society) and a rural development NGO (PRIDE) in Bangladesh. Not only passionate about stimulating development through participatory research, Anastasia has also been aiming at transmitting science capacities to contribute to society current issues through teaching from middle school to university levels.