



Exploring insight mechanisms of collective capacities. Evidence from the *Cinta Senese* valorisation initiative.

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Research questions

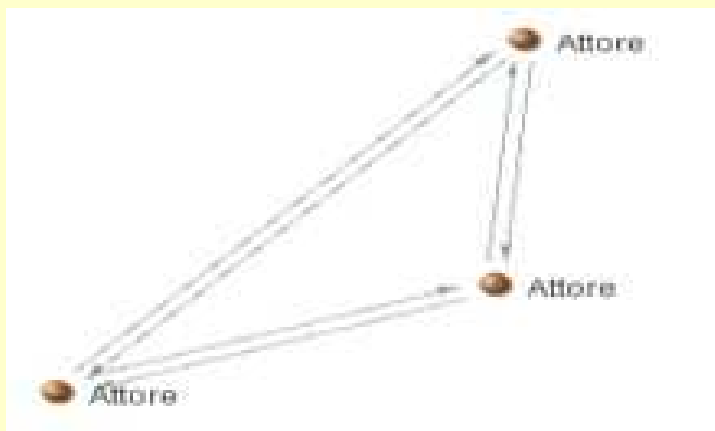
Focus on in the insight mechanisms of creation of collective capacities

- **Social capital** as a frame of reference
- How/What mechanisms of “social capital building” affect the growth of a collective initiative?
- How (micro-) social capital stocks affect other collective capital stocks?
- **Which kinds of design strategies “institutions” (or collective ...) have to mobilise in response to social capital assets,?**



Social capital: network closure vs “structural holes”

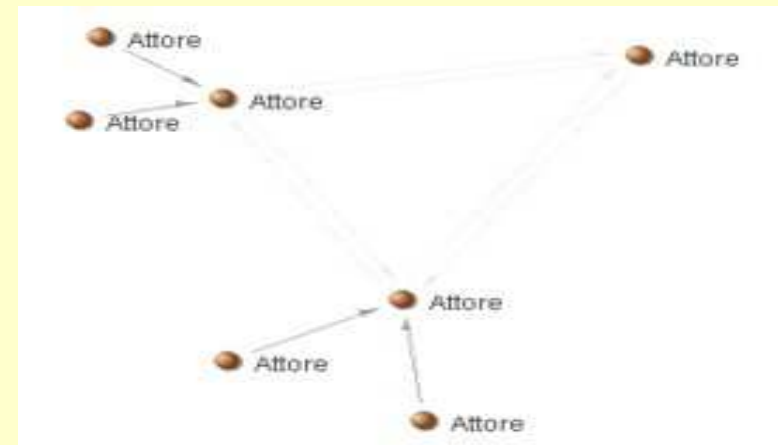
- “A kind of capital that can create for certain individuals a competitive advantage in pursuing their ends” (Burt, 2000)
- How do mechanisms of “social capital building” work?



Network closure:

Dense networks facilitate trust
and shared norms

“Territorial embeddedness”



Structural holes:

Weaker connections facilitate
information access

“Autonomy”





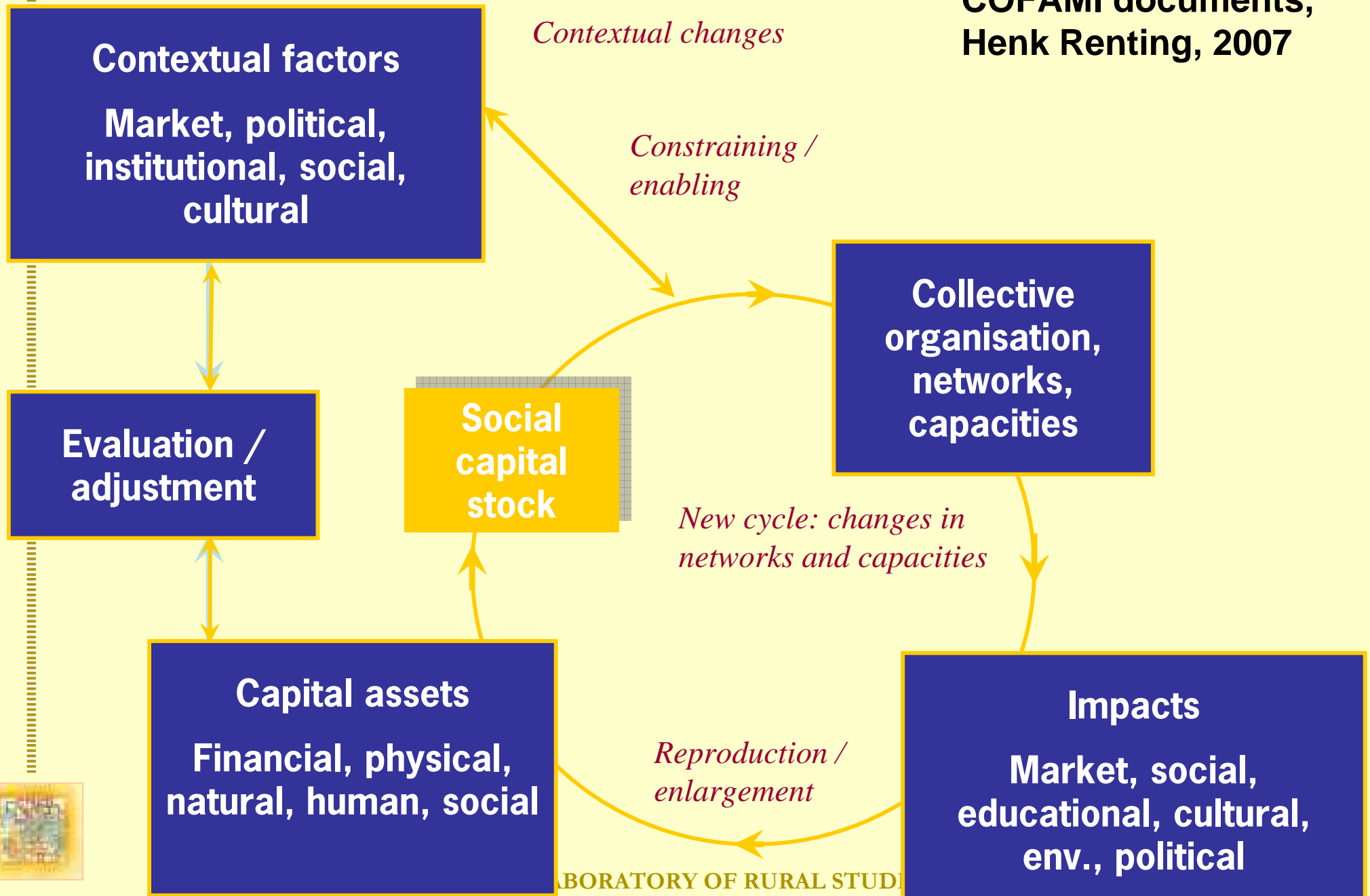
The Cinta senese case study





Dynamic analysis of case study analysis

COFAMI documents,
Henk Renting, 2007





The research: locating social capital





“From the risk of extinction....

- Starting from the sixties years, a massive substitution with intensive breeding systems
- Due to the slow growing up rate quicker growing up breeds were privileged (Large White breed)
- The number of cattle heads decreased from 5000 heads in '50 years up to only 15 heads in the '80s.
- **Promotion of research activities** (feed ratio, breeding management)
- **Consortium** of valorisation and promotion activities (PDO registration)
- Slow Food Presidium



..... to its valorisation





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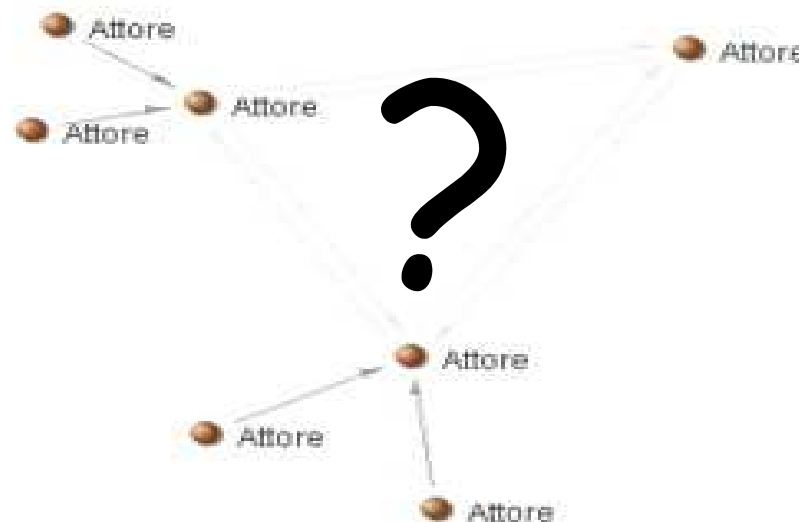


Contextual factors

Market: increasing attention on food quality: locality/environmentally sounds productions/artisanal processes

Political and institutional: critical public support (Regional institutions and Slow Food)

Cultural: increasing need of sustainability; opportunity to preserve biodiversity



Impacts (1)

Good market performance:
at the consumers level: 90 €/kg (other hams: 45-50 €/kg)
at the wholesalers level → 60 €/kg
prices to breeders → 2,5 €/kg (conventional breed: 1-1,5 €/kg)



Impacts (2)

Natural assets
safeguarding biodiversity
extensive breeding systems
valorisation of marginal areas (woods and marginal pastures) turning into the image of the product (a pork “born to be free”)



Impacts (3)

Human capital

From the erosion of traditional manufacturing know-how to a gradual increased of skills and commitment



Impacts (4)

Territorial marketing strategy

Tourist and new comers attraction



“Social capital” stock/mechanisms (1)

Through the establishment of the Consortium of valorisation:
(mechanism of) **network closure**

Network closure has been built through:

- **identification of the territorial boundaries**
- **mobilisation of the symbolic capital generated around the name “Cinta senese”**
- **communication and coordination provided by:**
 - **Code of practices (not strict quality standards)**
 - **sanctions (referring to improper uses of the breed name)**



Hierarchy more than density





“Social capital” stock (2)

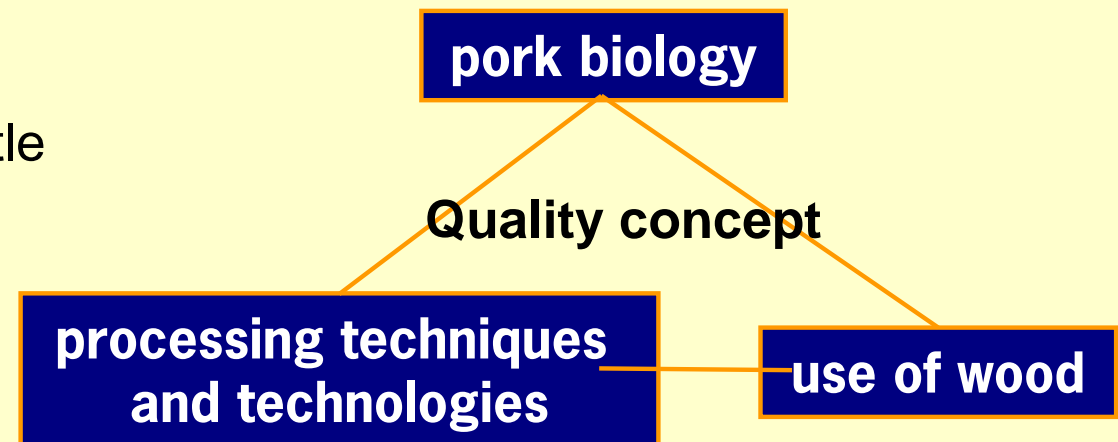
Within the network “**structural holes**” have been detected:

Diverse perspectives, skills, resources:

groups have access to different information sources/systems of values/other forms of capital (financial, human...)

Different communities of interpretations:

- Feeding regime
- growing period (weight of cattle slaughtering)
- wood exploitation (as the primary feed resource or combined with pastures)
- processing techniques and technologies (how to combine tradition and innovation)





Emerging “conflicting community of interests”

- Increasing powerful producers influence:
 - access to long chains:
 - connections with retailers chain
 - exports channels
 - high communications skills
 - strong ability to mobilise network relations:
 - access to processing know how (study groups to improve quality)
- Local-oriented producers:
 - shared empathetic values among them: organic methods, safeguarding biodiversity)
 - direct marketing (i.e farmers’ markets)
 - on-farm processing (traditional, low mechanization investments)





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Cinta senese at the turning point

Fragile network closure:

- Lack of efforts in increasing coordination/alignment on quality criteria (the Slow Food Presidium has been recently revoked!!!)
 - Increased sanctions towards non members breeders
 - Increasing distrust among farmers/members (according most of farmers, the consortium is mainly interested in supporting powerful producers)
- Where such a network cohesion is lacking, opportunistic actors can and do exploit access to information to build up a powerful base





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Cinta senese at the turning point

Lack of network cohesion could lead to change/erode collective capital assets:

- **Symbolical capital:** lack of a common language to express quality meanings (Supermarkets vs local circuits)
- **Financial capital:** income disparities due to the strong differences on final prices (60 €/kg at the retailer chains, 95 €/kg at the farmers' markets)
- **Natural capital:** environmental impacts of the Cinta senese breeding system
- Risk to loose reputation and to give an incoherent image of the product to consumers





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- Brokerage across structural holes are the opportunity to add value which is associated with performance:
 - access to different information sources/systems of values/other forms of capital (financial....); connections with public institutions
- But the closure can be critical to realizing the value buried in the structural holes:
 - Building shared value and communities of interpretations
 - Reducing disparities in income
 - Enabling farmers to have a sense to be engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges

We have pointed to the importance of a policy agenda that looks into how to coordinate brokerages and cohesiveness (quality of institutions to sustained growth)





Thank you for your attention!

