

The role of social capital in modernizing a traditional entrepreneurial ecosystem: the case of the region of Sidi Bouzid - Tunisia

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ABSTRACT

The article is part of the research on the role of social capital in entrepreneurial development by questioning its contribution to the gradual shift from a traditional entrepreneurial ecosystem in a specific geographical context to a more dynamic and modern ecosystem. Using a unique multiactors case study, using phenomenological narrative as a method of data analysis, we observed how the deployment of this social capital, leading to new and constantly renewed ways of doing things, facilitated the emergence of an agricultural production system that has been transformed by external interventions and arrangements collectively constructed by entrepreneurial actors towards this new entrepreneurial ecosystem. Our work is in keeping with the need to clarify the intelligibility of the role of social capital in entrepreneurial development by focusing on the following issue: how social capital, fostering a system of collective engagement of entrepreneurial actors, has enabled the dynamic transformation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem? In other words, we want to explain how social capital has contributed to the transformation of a traditional entrepreneurial ecosystem in a specific geographic context towards an otherwise more dynamic and modern ecosystem. Empirically, we describe the formation and benefits of social capital in the development and maintenance of a particular productive configuration, despite the risk of opting for non-optimal behaviors that could be induced by the highly sedimented local relational fabric. In terms of managerial contribution, our results stop at issues, strategies and models to support entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship.

KEYWORDS: Social capital, Entrepreneurial Ecosystem, Regional Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Based on a collective vision of entrepreneurship, this article focuses on the transformation in a specific geographical context (Madon, Courpal et Baron, 2015), fostered by the gradual deployment of social capital at a time foreigners and natives but also the community with the help of hybrid institutions (Mindle, 2014). In the sense of creating individual and collective socio-economic values (Julien et Marchesnay, 2011), following the identification of opportunities (Sarasvathy, Dew, Ramakrishna Velamury et Venkataraman, 2003), entrepreneurship can contribute to the socio-economic transformation of a territory with fuzzy borders towards an entrepreneurial ecosystem, particularly dynamic and modern; that is, a community supported by the interaction of individuals and organizations inside and outside who could not have achieved this socio-economic transformation without this social capital (Miler et Nassar, 2015).

Although this idea of social capital as intermediation of the entrepreneurial process generally accepted (Beever, Anderson et Naack, 2016), which can lead to mutation of a territory where there are a large number of more or less isolated companies as well as disjointed practices towards a new more coordinated and productive state (Monandat et al., 2012), many related elements are resistant to analysis and require both explanatory and illustrative lighting (Beever, Park et Jack, 2009; et Guana, 2014). Indeed, if the social relations and the cultural context supported precisely by this social capital are often discussed in the emergence of entrepreneurial projects (Bomlkrom et Li., 2012, et Suddaby, 2015), their applications and the modalities for doing so are often

The subject of deficient and incomplete descriptions (Gedajlovic, Honig, Moore, Payen et Wright, 2013). An example to quote is that of the trend of researches to bring up homogeneously the trajectories and configurations correlations between social capital and the phenomenon of entrepreneurship without taking into account heterogeneity of contexts as well as environmental and institutional contingencies in which entrepreneurs operate (Stam, Arzalanian et Elfring, 2014).

Our research is part of the need for clarity as to the intelligibility of the role of capital in entrepreneurial development by focusing on the following problematic: **how social capital, fostering a system of collective embeddedness of entrepreneurial actors, enabled the dynamic transformation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem?** In other words, we want to explain how social capital contributed to the transformation of a traditional entrepreneurial ecosystem in a specific geographical context towards an ecosystem, more dynamic and modern. Therefore, we are in the research paradigm considering entrepreneurship as a social phenomenon endogenous and therefore contextualized (Korgaard et Andersen, 2011). It is entrenched in the idea that economic activities are embedded in social relations generally proactive referring to the concept of territory (Dejardin 2010, Beugelsdijk et Maseland 2010). This which implies that entrepreneurial activities depend both on the individuals who are committed than the social structures that support them (Lanciano-Morandat et al., 2009) and also close links that complement them (Bouba-Olga, Carricazeau, Coris et Ferru, 2015). In this perspective, the entrepreneurial phenomenon is appreciated in terms of the ecosystem situated, as clarify Dew, Grichnik, Mayer-Haug, Read, Brinckmann (2015), grouping certainly individual, but also interdependent and interconnected actions (Anderson, Dood et Jack, 2012), supplemented by community support, so that several actors can transform this context. Therefore, it is the interconnections, more precisely the interactions that stimulate evolution or entrepreneurial development (Marti, Courpasson et Barbosa, 2013), supplemented by social capital, i.e. the different physical or intangible resources available to better act and foster exchanges and innovation (Semrau et Hopp, 2016); this social capital ensuring consolidation and sedimentation companies on the territory while accelerating their coevolution (Gedajlovic et al., 2013).

Given this ontological positioning, our research focuses on a particular socio-economic context, taken as an analysis unit, in order to demonstrate that even in this case, a non-coastal region of the interior of Tunisia, it can be started by actors and subsequently capitalized to become a collective entrepreneurial opportunity, leading local entrepreneurs to self-organize and mobilize individual, collective and territorial social capital, transcending the individual interests of profit in the short term, assisted by other institutional actors and attracting outside entrepreneurs, ultimately generate this dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem. Our purpose is organized in five parts. In the first part, we discuss theoretical bases that found our reflections. Then, we present the operational framework of the research and the methodology used. As for the third part, it sets out and details the results. The fourth part is the subject of discussions. Finally, we conclude with a critical overview.

II. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Social capital: a stock of resources influencing entrepreneurship : We mobilize the notion of social capital that allows to account for the embedding economic activities in a particular social context (Namandat et al. 2010) and whose entrepreneurship is one of the areas of operationalization (Stam, Arzalanian et Elfring, 2014; McKeever, Andersen et Jack, 2014; Geindre et Dussuc, 2015). We mobilize conceptual development offered by the social capital rather than that of other conceptual approach, is justified by its explanatory strength of extent of the context (organizational, institutional, temporal) in entrepreneurship research, as supported by Gedajlovic et al. (2013).

Social capital: a multidimensional concept : Usually, social capital is described as all standards and networks multiplying the resources that facilitate collective action (Meick et Miles, 2005). Conceptually, Bourdieu (1980, p. 2-3) defines it as "all current or potential resources links to having a sustainable network of more or less institutionalized knowledge of interaction and interaction, [...], [explaining] belonging to a group as a set of agents that not only have common properties [...], [but] united by permanent and useful links ". On the same line, As Geindre et Dussuc (2015) explain, social capital consists of a potential stock of resources, that is, potential resources incorporated into the social structure that can be mobilized when needed. In this perspective, it constitutes "the investment of an individual in his relationships with others "(Lin, 1995). Indefectibly considered as a stock, social capital requires activation to dispose it (Barrère, Barthélémy, Nieddu et Vivien, 2005). In the context of the use practiced by an individual actor of his relations with others and the benefits that they bring him, social capital identifies itself as a private good (Bourdieu, 1980). In this conceptual vein, social

Capital is an individual asset that puts a person in a favorable position to negotiate by increasing his power and influence (Geindre et Dussuc, 2015). This capital enables an individual to facilitate the achievement of his

objectives by obtaining useful information and identifying opportunities. On the other hand, in a holistic sense, social capital is seen as a collective good, allowing possibility to develop and maintain relational resources that increase, for example, the productivity of members (Fukuyama, 1997). This collective social capital encompasses everything related to social organization facilitating coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit (Putnam, 1995). It is made up of social determinants, such as the rules of the game or an entrepreneurial spirit that is relatively shared in the community, and facilitates the action of individuals. It is productive in making possible the fulfillment of certain purposes that would not be possible in its absence (Coleman, 1988). In this vein, Sibony (2016) defines social capital as the resources inherent in social relations that facilitate collective action. From these different conceptualizations, we will accept two intrinsic characteristics of the social capital, ie 1) a set of informal rules to better orient otherwise coordinate socio-economic actions; and 2) various facilitating resources for stimulate these actions. As far as we are concerned, following Hindle (2010), we search the contextual dimensions of social capital on the phenomenon of entrepreneurship, which leads us to retain a definition of social capital, as a set of current resources or potential, tangible and intangible, ie informal norms and rules to better guide or coordinate the socio-economic actions, built-in in a territory and available through the network of relationships owned by the actors; access to these resources has generally positive consequences for entrepreneurial action (Plociniczak, 2003). The general idea of social capital is that relationships provide access to resources. However, this relationship is not mechanical. It is mainly a function of the capacity of the actors to transform contingent relations into useful relations. The social capital consists in an arrangement of human resources that can facilitate their action with the endeavor of improving future revenue flows (Lam et Ostrom, 2010). In this sense, social capital is beneficial for entrepreneurship if it promotes reciprocity. However, the perverse effect of social capital on entrepreneurship can be a truth if there is too much compliance in the relationships. Consequently, social capital is a catalyst for entrepreneurship only if promotes the fortitude of generation of value and income. If it only favors the fortitude of communitarianism, it can prove to be an inhibitor of entrepreneurship (Light et Dana, 2013).

The operability of social capital: three functions conjoined (bonding, linking, bridging): Social capital has three functions: to bond, link and bridge. First, the links that bond actors of the same status within a specific context (firms' competitors of the same level acting on a chain of values) are termed horizontal and form the "bonding" social capital. Second, vertical links between actors having different status or places within a specific territorial context (firms complementary or subcontractors) constitute the "linking" social capital. These two aspects (bonding and linking) embody the complex relationship of cooperation (Brandenburger et Nalebuff, 2011), combining cooperation and competition for the constitution of rents in a logic of interactions. Finally, the capacity of all parties' stakeholders to connect to anything that is outside or new to their territorial context is seen as "bridging" social capital. This third facet characterizes a particular dynamic or complementary learning, ie a dynamic understood as the ability of actors to change their behavior and to implement new solutions according to the transformations of their environment (Asselineau et Cromarias, 2011). We denote that our observation field is located in a non-coastal region of the interior of Tunisia, which makes it necessary to explain the social relations of this context concerning this role of social capital, what we will develop in more detail later. However, what we consider very relevant to our investigation is the notion of Ben-Am, a typically Bouzidian concept. This notion translates a form of social pact based on belonging to the region of Sidi Bouzid of Tunisia. We defines it as a set of special relationships established between inhabitants of a geographical area, leading them to assist each other as if they were relatives, even in both non-commercial and commercial relations. Concerning point of view, the mobilization of dimensions of this notion, and links from proximities (geographical and organized) form of social capital with its different dimensions, to which we will return further.

From social capital to the entrepreneurial ecosystem: interaction and context : We must now clarify what we mean as an entrepreneurial ecosystem (EE) for the reason that it is suffering from inaccuracies and its determinants are still not yet subject to an integrating common fund (Stam, 2015). At the same time, the conditions for the emergence of entrepreneurial ecosystems are still poorly defined (Acs, Audretsch, Lehmann et Lich, 2016). As a model of a local productive system, Moore (1993) approaches EE as an economic community supported by the interaction of individuals and organizations. In a broader sense, EE is conceived as A broader environment in which heterogeneous actors, with specific skills, are likely to intervene to a greater or lesser extent and in varying degrees in a process of collective value creation (Mira-Bonnardel, Géniaux et Serrafiero, 2012). For the outcome of this research, we refer to the definition advanced by Mason et Brown (2014), stating that EE is composed of: 1) entrepreneurial actors, 2) entrepreneurial organizations, and 3) institutions, which can coordinate formally and informally to facilitate bringing out and improving overall entrepreneurial performance within a specific local environment. The central issue of EE is organic interaction (Soto-Rodriguez, 2014), i.e. having relational essence, containing interpersonal relationships and

interorganizational strategies, and creating dynamics between individuals and organizations. It may be thus approached under an entangled double dimension, both ideal and material. Consecutively, it is a framework of collective actions identifying communities of interest and a geographical space where practices, representations, values and strategies actors, holders of entrepreneurial stakes, according to multiple temporalities and scales. It constitutes, for the researchers, a grid of reading of the articulation of the entrepreneurial and territorial dynamics. From this perspective, the EE approach favors as a unit of reasoning the Very Small Enterprises and the Small and Medium Enterprises in a regional environment. This approach is part of the line of research, on the geographical concentration of firms, facilitated by interactions of all kinds (Bouba-Olga, Ferru et Guimond, 2012). This development allows us to argue that a particular geographic context can be transformed into an entrepreneurial ecosystem, notably through the activation of social capital through multiple interactions. Finally, we have to clarify the next two dimensions: 1) interactions at the origin of capital social, and 2) context. In the first level, the term interaction, in its etymology, suggests the idea of reciprocity of action of several elements (Marc et Picard, 2003). The idea is to solve the paradox of unity in diversity or that of the one and the multiple (Park et Burgess, 1921). Interaction is understood as "the set of actions that, in a context, answer each other to create a situation or a reality to observe and analyze" (Marc et Picard, 2003, 191). In the second level, Mercier et Oiry (2010, p.29) define the context as "all the elements present in a situation". Garfinkel (1984) is more specific in explaining that it constitutes the environment locally and socially organized and therefore situated by concerted actions. The context is thus composed elements of very different nature. According to (Oiry et al., 2010, p.86), they may be: 1) physical element (environment, season, landscape, infrastructure); 2) social element (actors individual or collective and their actions); 3) cultural aspect (representations, values); 4) structural value (organizations and institutions, laws, rules, social). Finally, this research is based on a contextualité approach to entrepreneurship that supports the reflexive relationship linking action and the actor to the context. These three variables therefore act on each other. This leads to considering the context as a real actor of the social Systems to which entrepreneurs hip is anchored.

III. OPERATIVE FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Context of observation : The choice of the field of observation must be consistent with the epistemological position of research, which reflects the researchers' position towards the knowledge. Relative to this position, this research adopts a double epistemological approach, to realize the complex realities such as the entrepreneurial phenomenon (Koenig, 1993). This allows to cross constructivism and interpretativism for the building knowledge. Therefore, we try to understand representations of actors, to describe the action that takes place by proceeding by argumentation. Agree with this posture, we opted for a qualitative instrument that is appropriate to the exploratory nature of research as well as the research objective of understanding how and in what way social capital can induce the transformation of an entrepreneurial ecosystem (Pratt, 2009). In this mindset, we will extract meaning rather than establishing statistical percentages (Paillé et Mucchielli, 2013). The unique multiactors case study is appropriate for a research, whose unity analysis is a context in which are rooted entrepreneurs and various other actors (McKeever, Andersen et Jack, 2014). This approach offers the possibilities to examine the mechanisms and specificities of a phenomenon and thus to have a holistic perspective in reading the observed context (George et Bennet, 2009). The unique case study is allowed if the case presents a high search opportunity due to strong originality (Yin, 2009). Thus, this case can serve as an instrumental model for a new interpretation of the research object (Stake, 1994). This instrument allows the ability to make meaning of this case and justifies the relevance of answering the question asked and confirm that is interesting. Finally, let us specify that, through the triple function of social capital discussed above, we mobilize it for this research because of its explanatory relevance to understand the entrepreneurship approach (Geindre et Dussuc, 2015).

Also, as suggested by Marti, Courpasson et Barbosa (2013) and as we have retained it, social capital can serve as an integration of collective and individual level when studying the entrepreneurial learning process to support the transformation of the ecosystem. Without needing a study stay in the region of Sidi Bouzid, our territorial belonging to this region was a factor of support to carry out this study. This contextuality, as an originator of the region combined with our professional identity as a teacher of the entrepreneurial discipline at the Higher Institute of Technological Studies of Sidi Bouzid, has helped to focus on all angles of view of our holistic epistemological approach. The advantage we have in this study is that we do not need an immersion in the local culture. The first phase reserved for observation and was stretched over a two-month period, exactly from the beginning of February 2018 to the end of March 2018. It was used to better identify this context and valorize the most relevant elements, especially by working sessions with the regional authorities. This first phase was facilitated by our knowledge and our interaction with the actors of the regional context. In addition, this phase of observation was consolidated by informal meetings with key actors in the region.

These elements of support for the conduct of our study allowed producing the first elements of answers to the problematic research (Hlady-Rispal, 2002).

Data collection : The following two data collection phases have been planned over two periods of six months away. The second phase was spread over two months. This phase was devoted to collecting new data from 1) informal interviews and 2) a focus group interview. In the first case which has spread from the beginning of May 2018 to the end of Jun 2018, we interviewed six teachers and educators who had worked in the region, two researchers in social geography in the region, one of whom completed his PHD and the other a few steps from completion, twelve employees (past and present) from different institutions, and twelve entrepreneurs outside the dairy sector. This was done from a grid to deepen the dairy history evoked during the first observation of contextualization. In the second case, fourteen entrepreneurial actors and members of entrepreneurial organizations, identified in the first contextualization phase, were part of this group. The meeting aimed to paint a portrait of the regional entrepreneurship phenomenon and the more specific one of dairy entrepreneurship. As a result of these various interviews, we were able to identify two key informants (as defined by Miles et Huberman, 2003), to play the role of validation and authentication throughout the search. These interviews also provided a detailed description of the context, including the main revealing elements of the three levels of social capital in the region (individual, collective, territorial). Using the revealed information during these interviews (informal and focus group), we have constituted the research sample according to the procedure of useful sample with which "Particular environments, people or events are deliberately chosen in order to provide important information that cannot be as well obtained in following other choices "(Maxwell, 1999, p. 128). The process for collecting data in the first two phases allowed us to proceed to a third stage of data collection, which was took place during two months (from January to February 2019). In this stage, new semi-directed interviews were conducted face-to-face with fifteen entrepreneurial actors , in the dairy sector, using a grid , with registration accepted beforehand by each interlocutor. The questions were asked heuristically and emerging for the purposes of ex-ante reconstruction of social capital. In all of these three periods, this multi-actors case study was conducted over a period of discontinuous six-month via non-participant observation using a corpus of 47 individual interviews and one of group. During the month of April of 2019, a fourth return was made in the field to ask people who live the phenomenon their opinion on the understanding and accuracy of the construct about this phenomenon with stories that we explain later (Yilmaz, 2013). Primary data has been supplemented by secondary sources such as archives, old documents, regional reports and scientific publications, which allowed a triangulation to complete the elements allowing defining and operationalizing social capital, ie facilitators, typologies and induced results by this social capital.

Data analysis : Our constructivist-interpretivist posture is an approach based on phenomenology, originating in philosophical works by Husserl and Heidegger cited by Smith (2011). The purpose of phenomenology is to describe the meaning accorded to a phenomenon, in order to understand its acceptations (Smith, 2011). There are two tools for analysis from phenomenology: phenomenological interpretive analysis and phenomenological story. The first tool consists of a thematic analysis while the second consists of a set of simple stories, built and organized (Cook, Cook et Landrum, 2013). From our point of view, the dynamic aspect that is essential in a perspective phenomenology is more difficult to explore with thematic analysis. Therefore, we opted for the cycle of analysis of phenomenological stories, involving the narrative style that allows showing the ideographic and hermeneutical progression of our research. We then adapted the method of analysis initiated by Giorgi (1975) and quoted by Ntebutse et Croyere (2016) comprising four subsequent steps: 1) the descriptive protocol (full text transcription); 2) the identification of the units of signification (identify the determinants of the context of the phenomenon); 3) the development of the content of the meanings (writing of stories); 4) the synthesis (writing an overall story). With this method of data analysis, we narrated each of the nineteen semi-directive interviews related to the entrepreneurial actors in the dairy sector. The story of each dairy entrepreneur was sent to him for validation. Subsequently, the realization of an overall story was achieved by combining four sets of data: 1) the story of each interview among the nineteen entrepreneurial actors in the dairy sector, 2) the speeches of the informal interviews and the focus group, 3) empirical observations, 4) archives and old documents. This overall story was shared with both informants keys identified during the second phase (May and June 2018), to check if the observation really represented the facts that should be reported (Antoine et Smith, 2016).

IV. RESULTS

- **Social capital, catalyst of entrepreneurship and marking a specific geographical context**
- **A geographic context activated as an entrepreneurial opportunity**

This exceptional ecological condition allowed the introduction of dairy farming since the first years of independence of Tunisia. This type of farming, described as intensive because of its finality in market value (milk), is the opposite of traditional forms, contemplative and extensive rearing techniques to which the local population was accustomed to that era in only self-subsistence goal. Thus, this new form of farming made the transition from breeders more or less isolated to the status of modern entrepreneurs within a collective system with the objective of creating added value based on entrepreneurship mindset. This transition led them to take risks by submitting to various obligations like building a barn covered and paved, reserve arable surfaces for forage crops, and submit to the manual activity of twice-daily milking. Assessed to 4000 breeders, these actors provide now a daily production of 600 000 liters of milk.

To become an entrepreneur, it took individual learning at the level of practices, either: 1) farm management; 2) milking conditions; 3) animal nutrition; and 4) the selection of breeds. The whole in turn of a collective know-how of dairy farmer with a strong geographical anchorage, which has since become part of the social capital backed by region. All this was possible thanks to the introduction of the Holstein dairy breed by the first Tunisian agricultural school. An agricultural guide of this school lists some exciting experiences of these social learning relationships: "*These are the sixties former students who were the first to take risks by agreeing to practice intensive breeding [...]. Then the peasants observed and imitated [...]. It was necessary to inculcate everything, to show everything. The fodder crop was difficult; people told us: we do not have time for that. Gradually, they changed their minds when they saw the amount of milk produced by the cows of our former students [...]. Several conditions have been set for their cows to benefit from the fertility of the Holstein breed. They started the forage crop, then they suspended. When we warned them that we would visit the stables, everything was clean with thatched roof. Then, little by little, that thatch was removed to feed their cows; the stable was no longer covered [...]. So we had to start over ...*"

Collective learning is the result of intense relationships with return trips and adoption by breeders. What has forged lasting links that materialized the capital in the region. The agricultural guide school continues, "*And that was until we have tamed ourselves. We could not do systematic visits. We were limited by our means of transport and by the limited number of employees [...]. But people have finally accepted. We were at 30 000 liters a day at the time, and we went to 600 000 liters at the moment [...]. These collective learning led to collective breakdowns in representations, which is reflected in the adoption of the breeding producing rent and thereby aim to generate market value. In sum, the objective of each breeder is to generate individual financial resources, which becomes possible through the adoption by the whole community of new breeding practices. A farmer explains : "... I invested in dairy breeding because I knew it was beneficial compared to other traditional activities, such as potat, vegetables ... With milk, money is seen, we touch it ...*"

As the evolution of intensive dairy farming evolves, a second category of entrepreneurs appeared with artisanal cheese makers. These cheese makers are peasants who have been able to take advantage of the availability of milk, while partially solving the question of keeping milk, and thus providing additional income. In concrete terms, these artisanal cheeses developed by imitation from a Maltese resident who came to the region of sidi Bouzid in the 1980s by the will of destiny and lived in the region for more than twenty years. At first, four employees, having worked nearby the latter, have disseminated the manufacture of cheese that does not require refrigeration for preservation. One of these four artisan-cheese-makers tells us: "*... I worked for two years with the Maltese resident. He taught me on the job ... When I wanted to leave, it did not cause any problems ... I made traditional cheese and butter at home... Some neighbors came to see me, and imitated what I was doing. For me too, this did not pose a problem. Now, I make 1200 people live outside*" (both in upstream than downstream). Concerning the marketing, artisanal cheeses are conveyed in all Tunisia.

The third consequence of the increase in milk production was the arrival of DELICE-DANONE international agro-industrial subsidiary in the 2010s. This company produces all products derived from regional milk. The quality of the region's milk has helped to improve the share of the cheese market in Tunisia which is produced according to the most developed technological processes. The bipolarization of cheese making (artisanal and industrial) has been an opportunity for the emergence of a third type of entrepreneur they are semi-industrial cheese makers. They have small dairies and make specialty cheeses. These cheese makers occupy a new segment on the local and national market, the high-end market. This successive succession of the emergence of three categories of dairy entrepreneurs with diversified entrepreneurial ambitions make appear an entrepreneurial ecosystem, articulated around small businesses, SMEs, as well as the international company. Moreover, as soon as breeding has intensified, the pure Community rules have been exceeded. Since then, relations have taken on the appearance of collective entrepreneurial actions in the service of producing a market resource, rather than face-to-face. The relational configuration becomes a transmission and a setting

implementation of standards of a market situation. In summary, we can see how the deployment of social capital, through the introduction of collective learning and new practices, finally produces new ways of doing constantly renewed and in sequences of complementary activities (artisanal cheese factory, generic cheese factory, specialty cheese factory). This complete package of activities facilitates the emergence of a dairy production system following the logic of vertical integration. Afterwards, noting the positive impact in terms of individual profits, entrepreneurial actors were encouraged to continue to renew these collective ways of doing things (grouping in a cooperative, professionalization of the milk trade), generating through these practices supported by social capital, the transformation of a value chain towards an entrepreneurial ecosystem that highlights the interactions that interact with entrepreneurial phenomenon.

The interactions :

Links favoring breeding: interaction between intra-breeders and inter-breeders and technicians

The rise of dairy farming has also resulted from interactions between breeding-entrepreneurs, as well as daily facilitations given by the technical supervisors of the farming school of Sidi Bouzid. Two elements of social capital have helped this transformation. In the first place, the entry of DELICE-DANONE led the entrepreneurs to group together into five complementary and inclusive cooperatives for various reasons, whose need to collectively manage market relations within the ecosystem entrepreneurial and to regulate various tensions arising from the plurality of logics of actions and different rationalities (Bloodgood et Chae, 2010). One of the pioneer founders of a radiant cooperative called TWILA explained: "*We regrouped because there were late payments from DELICE-DANONE [...]. We did not receive any help [...]* [This reaction was paid off, so that] *we have been cited by the Minister of agriculture as an example of the time. Breeders, state representatives the responsible of DELICE-DANONE, the collectors, respected the leaders of the cooperative. We are considered a key actor in milk. [...] We are born from a problem. It is in the problem that we must strengthen ourselves. When there is no crisis, people are not creative.* "

These five cooperatives of dairy breeding which are voluntarist and deliberate are still in activity, because of the entrepreneurial ambitions that are at their origin. In Tunisia, as in most developing countries, cooperatives, in a rural context, resist rarely because of the lack of willingness to undertake together. In fact, cooperative groupings are most often imposed on farmers by development organisms to obtain benefit funds. These cooperatives are often born following a grant opportunity, but not necessarily following an entrepreneurial opportunity according (Barry, 2013) which causes them to die. On this point, TLILI, a breeder of great renown, specifies: "[...] I became a member of TWILA to benefit from the common use of agricultural equipment like the tractor." At the origin of these cooperatives are five experienced local entrepreneurs, leaders, playing the role of inspiration and engines (Oiry et al., 2010), to facilitate the deployment of social capital, the foundation of interactions between the entrepreneurs-breeders. Secondly, with the multiplication of the number of breeders, an autonomous organism of popularization, in 1990 has been institutionalized in the region which named CHAMS, given the importance of anchoring of the Holstein race in the region. This organism has facilitated the development of dairy breeding, with actions related to: 1) the herd (feeding, reproduction, health, monitoring); and 2) on milk (hygiene, yield and quality). Thus, learning activities and monitoring of dairy breeding have promoted the regularity and intensity of links between breeder and each technical supervisor. We then observe an active collaboration which helps the entrepreneurs-breeders to improve the technical performance of their farm. The breeder TLILI explains: "[...] without TWILA, the milk would be abandoned for a long time [...]".

Links facilitating collection: interactions between breeders and collectors : Because of the physical distance separating the breeders settled in the remote rural areas and transformers located in the urban areas of the region of Sidi Bouzid, a collection chain was set up, revealing a new type of entrepreneurs: Entrepreneurs-collectors. These new entrepreneurs are of three types. First, there are regulatory collectors, facilitating links for all actors established on their dairy route (dairies, breeders, artisanal processors, local authorities). Secondly, there are speculative collectors who practice collecting during the season with high production (March-August). This type of intermediary does not serve the local transformation, but rather provides fresh milk supply to other regions of Tunisia. Third, cyclists-milkers complete the configuration, participating in some cases milking, contributing to the long-term survival of the chain by essentially accessing isolated areas. A cyclist-milker talks about his role: "I live in a village on the valleys far from the road through which the collector passes with his car, I recover each day the milk of twelve farmers who live in the same village and that of five others who live in another near village. They cannot transport the milk because they must do other farming activities; so I'm useful to them. I do not make a profit on milk, but they reward me for the service I give them. I am not a breeder, it's not my job, but we're all blood relatives, we help each other. I do every day about 15 km round trip bike carrying the cans of milk. I have to do this even though it's raining. The bike belongs to me and it's me who must repair it when there are problems [...]. What I do is necessary for the farmers allowing them to sell the daily milk ". The

collection device is necessary for the proper functioning of the mechanics of entrepreneurial ecosystem. It is a situated coordination involving vertical links with three actors of entrepreneurship: 1) breeders, 2) collectors, 3) transformers. Collection relationships are stable and sustainable. This duration is significant of its usefulness as a mechanism that ignores the barrier of metric distance between two actors away from of the entrepreneurial ecosystem. As an illustration, we characterize a linking network relationship between a collector, a milkman and a group of breeders located on his collection route, according to the four-attribute grid of Granovetter (1973): 1) the quantity time required for transactions; 2) emotional intensity; 3) mutual trust; and 4) reciprocal services. Thus, the milkman carries out the activity of collecting milk since 2000, enjoying a reputation as a benefactor nearby breeders. This slag evokes the actors in paternalistic terms: "[...] My breeders, my people [...] ". On his initiative, he carries out only sporadic quality control breeders while the totality collected is systematically tested on final delivery with transformers: "[...] There is a relationship of trust between me and the breeders; when we gain the trust of people, they easily accept the imposed conditions. I practiced this profession for nineteen years, we got to know each other durably [...] ". a small breeder, which lives in a hamlet, appreciates this service: "[...] I do not have to move to the city [...] ". The milkman is warned by the breeders about facts likely to harm him: "[...] My people have advised me that dishonest people have inquired about the day of payment to sabotage me [...]. " Links for the benefit of transformation: interactions between breeders and transformers : Although the artisanal transformation activity is seasonal, we have seen the regular presence of artisan cheeses on the market. The artisanal cheese makers get their supplies in milk from the farmers of their village. We understand that each cheese maker has his recognized breeder-supplier that he pays only after a certain delay, in the absence of any written contract.

With few exceptions, this system works to the extent that both categories of entrepreneurs (breeders and transformers) aim for a common goal: generating a stable additional income. As for the semi-industrial transformers producing specialty cheeses, they are all of external origin, they came from coastal areas of Tunisia. Their for-profit processing activities also serve as a kind of investment in places, investment that turns out through direct actions on the environment to improve it (Emilianoff, 2008). A Sfaxian agronomist, from the region of sfax, is very eloquent on this point: "we are not from Sidi Bouzid. We bought this land allotment after our return from Germany. We moved here because there was milk in the region. We could then create our own company. Our goal was to work with farmers for development rural. We were young, we had this utopia. A master-cheese maker describes more this investment in places: "How did I come here? [...]. There was a dairy pole, very important [...].I could see the context. That is, there was a big demand for quality products. [...]. There was not a lot of diversity in the cheeses while the peasants are very good at breeding. So I stayed. I positioned myself in a market high-end local [...] ". These semi-industrial transformers have been able to position themselves on the market by taking advantage of the quantity and quality offered by the milk of the region of Sidi Bouzid. At the same time, their installation has been facilitated by the ability to open up to the local population. What contributed to the acceptance of "Foreigners" (Marti, Courpasson et Barbosa, 2013) and especially the high-value added capture, brought by specialty cheese makers. Here, territorial social capital contributes the renewal and sophistication of dairy know-how attributed to the region. So, following the deployment of social capital in Sidi Bouzid, a dynamic ecosystem is revealed.

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The entrepreneurial ecosystem that we have described is a collective of actors forming a dialogic complex favoring their interactions, as we have previously explained as it was stipulated by Mason et Brown (2014). Essentially, we conclude that the breeding and dairy transformers entrepreneurs embody these interactions whose connection is realized by the collectors' entrepreneurs and the overall are supported by a considerable number of government stakeholders. This ecosystem consists largely of very small enterprises whose territory of establishment represents the environment of learning (Moati, 2002). Our analysis has allowed us to observe that entrepreneurial ambitions did not prevent the various entrepreneurs from exceeding the profitability objective in the short term, thanks to the support of the various declensions of social capital, instrumenting an interactive productive configuration within this ecosystem, and most importantly to maintain it and increase its potential market. Absorption of new practices (breeding and transforming), acceptance of changes in representations (create value from another type of breeding) and adoption of new behaviors (identification of entrepreneurial opportunity and the principle of cooptation) could be accepted individually by the entrepreneurial actors, because they met their interests particularly by allowing them to earn additional income stable. In parallel, they developed a collective action profitable to the whole stakeholders? This collective construction could be realized because the local actors have been able to resolve the tensions by finding income for most if not for all (Järvenpää et Wernick, 2011). As a comparison, such a situation could not occur in two dairy Mexican ecosystems: Tizayuca and Tlaxco. Indeed, Studies of these cases have shown that local actors have tried in vain to resolve their conflicts by limiting interactions and increasing control mechanisms which have only intensified

tensions (Poméon, Boucher, Cervantès et Fournier, 2008). These findings were corroborated by the study of Mundler, Guermonprez, Jauneau et Pluvillage (2010) about six dairy contrasted regions in France that showed success or failure (four successful regions among the six studied) dairy restructuring dynamics is a function of the local interaction breeders parameters which can be revealed via various forms (diverse groupings, values, rules, conventions, shared norms) expressing appropriation of proposed institutional innovations to revitalize each milk local sector. These perspectives teach us that a dairy region is not envisaged as an entrepreneurial context as long as it does not take the interorganizational form based on interpersonal relationships, based on complementary and related practices (Marti, Courpasson et Barbosa, 2013). In addition, the facts observed in the region of Sidi Bouzid revealed different dimensions of social capital. Thus, strong links of the sticker type (intra-breeders), based on social affinities and complicity induced by the concept of WELDINA, allowed the activation of collective learning, the adhesion to new relations of co-competition and the common change of representations.

While vertical linking whose links are of the binder type between different actors of the entrepreneurial ecosystem fostered inter-actors exchanges and strengthened new reciprocity agreements in market relations to which peasants were not used to it before. Finally, the lubricant type links, characterized by openness to external opportunities, facilitated the adoption of the Holstein race, the installation of transformers (agro-industry and semi-industrial) and the dynamisation of the production system by the sophistication of the final products (artisan cheeses, generic cheeses, specialty cheeses). Finally, the articulation of the three links: sticker (cohesion), binding (reciprocity), lubricant (openness), based on social capital in the region, facilitated the activation by multiple actors in entanglements actions and conventions that have made possible transforming an emerging dairy breeding system in the 1960s in a new modern entrepreneurial ecosystem. Therefore, this social capital has been maintained so as not to crumble, because it is generally the use which devotes its value (Sirven, 2000).

This maintenance can be assessed in terms of rules which have materialized through interdependencies (at the level of the organizations) and interpersonal relationships (between individuals). This is observable with the sequence and situated succession of the transforming activities without recourse to the public authorities interventions. In our opinion, this "conforming" process means the internalization of the norms, i.e. the rules of the game to enterprise in the region. We can also note that in this region, transactions have been organized in frames without contractual formalization. We find only a few volatile and falsifiable manuscripts serving as proof in the milk collection operations. Moreover, in order to preserve the specificity in terms of taste of their products, Semi-industrial dairies regularly supply selected breeders and, again, without written formalization. On the one hand, the breeders respected the commitment verbal; on the other, the other semi-industrial dairies did not stock up among these selected breeders. Table 1 summarizes everything related to the links within of the ecosystem.

Actors	Horizontal links (same status)	Vertical links (different status)	Expression of links
Breeders entrepreneurs	High degree of link uniting	Functional and social Interaction with collectors entrepreneurs	Functional and socially constructed relationship Inter-breeders and with collectors entrepreneurs
Collectors entrepreneurs	Weakness of the link uniting	Functional and social Interaction with breeders entrepreneurs	Functional relationship Inter-collectors
Transformers entrepreneurs	Uniting link having a negative effect	Loose links with other groups of actors	Functional relationship inter-transformers
Collective of actors	Collective social capital	High degree of lubricant link	Strong connection to outside the geographical context

Source: authors. However, it should be noted that this social capital may have negative impacts on entrepreneurial development as we emphasized at the beginning. For example, we can think that this strong community logic among breeders could lead to exclusions (Light et Dana, 2013). That's what happened with the development of a strong sense of belonging to the community (particularly with the supervisors of the farming school of Sidi Bouzid), which has created a logic of social proximity facilitating the transmission of new techniques and the coordination of dairy development actions. In return, this caused the rejection in 2015 of the adoption of a new Scottish breed, considered even more efficient, because of the non-involvement of the framing school. This is therefore a negative consequence of a strong social capital tending to discriminate against new arrivals or ideas considered too new and thus risky.

In others words, when actors are engorged in a very sedimented local relational tissue, there is risk of choice for strategies or non-optimal behaviors (Doors et Landolt, 1996). Moreover, the transformation activity may have led to other perverse effects of the capital social. Firstly, taking advantage of this strong community spirit, indelicate artisanal cheese makers settled in the dairy villages to simulate social proximity and are provided in milk from local breeders by paying cash. Once trust acquired, they started to negotiate deferred payments nearby the breeders. After a certain time, these cheese makers have disappeared leaving behind unpaid thus confusing the market relationship with the non-market inherent to WELDNA and explaining that people should not quarrel over money matters. In addition, we have noted that the propensity for joint (uniting) actions is not observed between collectors entrepreneurs. The infertile initiative of a gathering informs about this situation. This experience without fulfillment invite to plan strengthening a position of influence with municipal authorities to request the filtering of seasonal collectors during peak periods so as to have negotiating power with transformers for setting the price of milk and the conditions for collection. From our point of view, the exacerbation of individualistic postures and especially the absence in this case of entrepreneurs with leadership, like the four entrepreneurs breeders at the source of breeders' cooperatives, explains this lack of cooptation. This fact has limited the relationship in its only market dimension.

This situation reinforces the need for activation and facilitation to trigger the beneficial effect of social capital. Lastly, it should be noted that artisanal cheese makers have very loose ties. This limits the flow of information between them and reduces their capacity for collective action. However, the collective learning of this new profession was possible in the 1990s thanks to the facilitation of the Maltese resident. with the return to his country, no actor managed to take over to activate the social capital. Because of this absence, artisanal transformers have not been able to exploit the opportunity of typical taste of artisanal cheeses based on the original dairy basin of Sidi Bouzid. Somehow, artisan cheese makers have not been able to create new value from an available resource. In conclusion, this study has highlighted that a less favored region than the coastal regions of Tunisia can be capitalized into an entrepreneurial opportunity, creating an innovative context by inducing local entrepreneurs to self-organize to mobilize multi-scale social capital. This overall context allowed transcending individual short-term profit interests to generate collective entrepreneurship focused on the preservation of a scarce resource (a flagship production with regard to other agricultural products, i.e. milk, cheese and other derivatives) benefiting ongoing ideas and learning across the entire entrepreneurial chain. This context favored too some activation both at the level of individuals and organizations. The facts observed at this agricultural region provide information on the actors and diachronic methods construction of an entrepreneurial ecosystem allowing us to bring several elements of answers to our research question.

Thus, the presence of social capital has fostered cooperation and strengthened the assimilation of a particular distinction of the region. Subsequently, our analysis showed how the actors have operationalized this social capital by expanding the original production towards cheeses and other derivatives of milk. We could then argue how this social capital, especially by its ability to gradually transforming actors into a new way of doing things, contributed to transforming an underdeveloped context into a dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem and particularly profitable compared to the old economic situation. This analysis explained that this disadvantaged region present a contextualized development relative to a particular territory in a developing country. In the same way, this contextualization was accentuated by a particular recourse of actors to specific social capital and consolidated specialization in the dairy industry region. Finally, it showed that social capital crystallizes individualized entrepreneurial acts towards an entrepreneurial development and not necessarily incentives for start-ups (Brière, Tremblay et Daoust, 2015). On the theoretical side, the major contribution of this study was to demonstrate the types, the practices and the functioning of social capital in the mechanics of an entrepreneurial process on the scale of a specific territory allowing it to accentuate its differences and therefore its contextualization. In this, the reported facts help to really grasp the scope of social capital acting on entrepreneurship. Specifically, we have empirically described the formation and benefits of the social capital by observing how local entrepreneurs have managed to build arrangements for establishing, developing and

maintaining thereafter a productive configuration and share the profit between them while developing a shared learning and building rules generally accepted by all. Practically, at the decision-maker level, our results affect issues, strategies and models to support entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. This constitutes the managerial contribution of the research. More specifically, the contribution of research is to bring to the attention of the scientific community facts encountered in a context other than developed economies given that the observations from emerging and developing countries also deserve to be revealed (Stam, Arzalanian et Elfring, 2014). Recognizing that any qualitative research is subject to a subjective interpretation that may exacerbate the spectrum of a holistic illusion that gives facts or events more convergence and coherence than they are actually (Gilovich, 1991). In assuming this limit, the suggested future research avenue is to enrich the initiated proposals by the analysis of new concrete cases in another environment and in another development context while expanding pertinently the elements of social capital.

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