BUILDING SOCIAL CAPITAL IN A TRAUMATIZED COMMUNITY WITH SMALL GROUP ART PRACTICE

by

MICHELLE A. WEINBAUM

B.S., United States Military Academy, 2006

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Landscape Architecture/ Regional and Community Planning
College of Architecture, Planning, and Design

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

2012

Approved by:

Major Professor
Stephanie Rolley

Copyright

MICHELLE A. WEINBAUM

2012

Abstract

Small group creative practice has the potential to set the conditions necessary to develop or strengthen community networks, as a form of social capital, in a disempowered, traumatized community. Traumatized communities require the process of building social capital to begin at an earlier point than in other communities and by addressing the background of trauma first.

Case studies of three programs present the opportunity to inform the design of future development work with disempowered, traumatized communities like those of many women in countries engaged in armed conflict. The case studies examined are a government founded shelter for abused women; a localized project to teach agricultural skills; and a project to teach women artistic skills as a therapeutic exercise to build trust levels necessary to increase networks. Social capital provided perspective for examining the bonds between individuals and groups and how they affect individuals' access to resources.

Framed by a literature review, the case studies synthesized literature and first hand experiences and knowledge. A question protocol was used to query the case studies in order to identify best practices. The literature review demonstrated that the most reliable indicators of social capital are trust and association and suggests accepted indicators for each. By querying the case studies, it was determined that best practices for a project designed to build social capital in disempowered, traumatized communities include stipulations on the size of groups, how time is scheduled for informal interaction, identifying indicators of trust, and how conditions for group outcomes were met.

This study found that, with an intentional design focus on group outcomes, as well as with attention to other best practices, creative practice is a viable method to increase the levels of

trust necessary to set conditions for further development of social capital in the identified

communities.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Acknowledgements

I extend my gratitude to my Capstone Advisor and Committee Members for their involvement and guidance throughout this process. I would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Mary Emery for overseeing the independent study which ultimately developed into this project.

Preface

The desire to increase the social capital amongst women in Afghanistan and thereby their access to resources is a deeply meaningful goal developed through living and interacting with these women and their stories. This research work was important to me on a personal level because of my desire to feel empowered to contribute to the work of these women in the future. At the time I was preparing to report to Afghanistan, there were stories in the newspapers about women committing suicide by self-immolation. Learning of this, I recognized how dire conditions must be for women to turn to that as a means of escape. I recognized intuitively that development efforts with a community this traumatized would require a means to address the trauma first and repair past wounds in order to set the stage for future development.

The research question was put into the context of a traumatized community with the military as the vehicle through which community development projects can be delivered and administered. The reason for this context is that the security situation at the time I was in Afghanistan (2010-2011) did not permit non-profit organizations to pursue development projects without partnering with military forces for security at a minimum and for resources and transportation in most cases. Although non-governmental organizations are generally preferable to the military for delivering development programs, the conditions of serious criminal and terrorist threats required military involvement and, often, military leadership. This study does address whether the military is adequately suited to assist in building social capital.

The use of the military as the delivery method for these community projects is significant in the response from the community. Through my personal experiences living, working, and sharing informal meetings in the Kabul area, I understood that the U.S. military evoked varied, but non-neutral responses from different segments of the community. I was aware, while

pursuing this research, that interviewing local women involved in the projects was not likely to produce reliable data. This is because of a common view of the U.S. military being a means to provide tangible items (foodstuffs, medicine, fuel, etc.) to the local population, and the instrumental relationship can influence participants to attempt giving the answers they think will please the military representative rather than genuine answers. My perceptions of what I could expect from the local women did influence the way I recognized limitations in my project and framed my research.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Purpose

Many women in and around Kabul, Afghanistan continue to live under conditions of abject poverty, domestic violence, and difficulty in accessing resources such as food, medical care, paid work, safe places to live, etc. Within communities of some variance in wealth, and among different ethnic groups, women are disempowered in their individual communities as well as in the community at large. In fall of 2010, I began working on a small project in Kabul, Afghanistan during a deployment as an Army Officer. My attempt to design and implement a project was guided by the flexible vision of helping some of these women begin seeing their negative experiences as an asset to draw creativity from and to slowly build independence. Hindered by extenuating circumstances, the project was cut short and only partially adopted by another organization.

The purpose of this subsequent research study was to examine and understand the potential of group art practice to set the conditions necessary to build social capital in a traumatized community. This permits a better understanding of the possible value of my project and similar projects in the Kabul area, and will guide future work in traumatized communities. The first step in conducting this inquiry was to discuss and determine the overarching research objective. The literature review provided background information to delineate the terms in the problem statement. The literature review also permitted consideration of accepted indicators of social capital and identification of best practices in similar projects with disempowered communities, recognizing that trust is the fundamental indicator required to be in place before further development can begin. This background guided development of a protocol for evaluating the actual and potential efficacy of three relevant case studies conducted by the U.S.

military in and around Kabul and surrounding areas. By using the protocol to guide a discussion of the results of each project, overarching trends were identified which can assist in answering the research question and identifying areas where further research is necessary. Furthermore, recognition of the instrumental relationship between the U.S. military and the local Afghan population necessitates discussion of whether or not the military is adequately suited to lead projects to build social capital.

Through reflection, I discovered that the objective was to use group art practice to transform negative emotions and outlook into creative activity—as a means for developing or strengthening the networks between these women: their social capital. Identifying the desired outcome as an increase in social capital led to a protocol useful for evaluating the project design and informing subsequent work. The research question also indicates understanding of the foundation of trust necessary to pursue further community development within a traumatized community.

Research Question

What is the value of small-group creative practice used to set the conditions necessary to develop or strengthen community networks (as a form of social capital) in a disempowered, traumatized community?

Chapter 2 - Background

Site Background

In a culture defined by war, occupation, poverty, and drug addiction, the women of Kabul comprise the population segment most in need of increased access to resources and increases in social capital. United States Agency for International Development official and Performance Monitoring and Reporting Specialist, Mary Crane, conducted an assessment three years ago and noted, "Things do not look good for Afghanistan" (Crane, 2009). One of the facets of community most in need of improvement is gender equality: Women were still being bought and sold, abused and mistreated, and were living under conditions so damaging that some turn to self immolation for relief (Ibid.). Many news articles have raved over increases in modernization (or Westernization) in Kabul, and of women doffing their blue burqas and donning flashy headscarves. While some women were doing this in the central city, most were still wearing the guise of the "blue ghosts," the medium blue burqas that are popular around Kabul's city streets. The overall state of development was grim as well: Most people live in small villages with mud buildings and only donkey carts for transportation by road (Ibid.). Among grim conditions, the outlook for the women was the harshest due to their low social status.

There were a number of different groups working to provide services to citizens in the Kabul area, including a smorgasbord of multinational non-governmental organizations. However, these organizations found it necessary to partner with military agencies in order to access the levels of protection and security necessary to operate within the environment of armed conflict. Furthermore, the organizations operating in the Kabul area at the time were focused chiefly on providing the immediate critical care and resources necessary to meet individuals'

needs, and were not focused on pursuing projects designed to promote lasting change within the community. Because these projects were focused strictly on immediate individual outcomes, they were disregarded for the purpose of this research.

The role of the U.S. military has changed dramatically in the last decade to shift away from a focus on traditional linear combat and towards a role of nation building and community engagement. The shift has been slow, with community projects preceding doctrine in most cases, but the reality is that the military was the organization most actively pursuing community level development at that time in the Kabul area. The perception of the U.S. military on the local level would naturally affect the outcome of projects with the community and had to be considered while defining the limitations of the research project.

One of the types of groups working on effecting social change in Kabul and surrounding areas were the Female Engagement Teams (FETs), which are teams of ten to twenty women who do projects and meetings part time as an attachment to a regular unit. The FETs have met with such strong senior interest that the Army is now organizing FETs as units. The new FETs have a traditional chain of command and will be a group of woman soldiers who serve on the FET as a full-time job. In the past, the FET was guided toward gathering information for intelligence use with no emphasis on development projects and each FET rarely traveled to a single community more than once—prohibiting the development of relationships and networks. Ideally, a FET will develop a relationship with a single village and contribute to a long-term community development initiative. The FETs will now focus their energies on forming social bonds with female villagers in order to improve their access to resources provided through government services.

Because the FETs are a new and evolving concept, and because their experiences and results are limited, a literature review is absolutely necessary to shed light on what has resulted from similar types of projects and also to ground these unique and new practices in relevant theory. The literature review could then offer theoretical guidance to fill in gaps in information within the most relevant case studies.

Literature Review

The work of the literature review was to illustrate what I should expect to find in practical applications of social capital theory. The literature review began by defining the terms in the research question. As the desired outcome was an increase in social capital, it was fundamental to be able to define what social capital is and what it would mean to have an increase in social capital. Because social capital is such a broadly used term in the Community Development field, an operational definition specific to this project was most appropriate to guide the inquiry. The literature review determined that, in traumatized communities, certain conditions must be met in order for further development of social capital to take place. The literature sought to draw out the indicators of social capital which demonstrated the presence or absence of those conditions in other projects. The literature review then considered several examples of other completed projects and programs that provide insight into best practices in building social capital in disempowered and traumatized communities. Finally, the literature review discusses the potential results for communities using creative practice and identifies a contemporary example of a project which links creative practice with an indicator for social capital. The study must necessarily begin with an attempt to define social capital in order to best recognize its various manifestations.

Social Capital

Social capital is an attribute of both individuals and groups and is defined in specific ways for each. Cornelia and Jan Flora first shed light on social capital by examining human interaction in communities and noting that social capital is often explained through identifying "norms of reciprocity and mutual trust" within a community (Flora and Flora, 2008, 117). A useful perspective of social capital is that it comprises the resources available to individuals and groups through their connections to social networks (Kawachi and Subramanian, 2006, Pg. 197). Social capital is both an attribute of individuals, and of communities. Flora and Flora describe the outcome of levels of social capital, "ultimately, it is the quality of community social capital that affects the extent to which people expand their scope of concern beyond self-interest and beyond their family to include the community as a whole (Flora and Flora, 2008, 116). This study recognized social capital as the means to increase women's access to a variety of resources. This study also recognized that development efforts within a traumatized community must first address the history of trauma and build norms of trust in order to set the conditions needed for social capital to form.

Traumatized Communities

The study did not have the benefit of literature addressing the specific traumatized community of the women in Kabul, and very limited information was available about working with communities during the time of active armed conflict. While literature was not available to speak to a community engaged in active conflict, there was literature relevant to communities that have a long history of trauma as Kabul does. Al Nygard, a community development consultant, worked with Native American communities and recognized that their history of trauma had to be addressed before further development could take place. He noted that traumatized communities, "do not begin the process of development at the same point as other

communities" (Nygard, 2009). First, he noted that the community attribute of trust must be present: "the element within a community that allows it to take a leap forward and build relationships of mutual reliance" (Ibid.) The acknowledgement that trust is needed to form interpersonal relationships guided this research project, and influenced the limitations and priorities that were set. Nygard recognized several attributes that needed to be weak in the community to create the conditions allowing for further development. These attributes were lateral oppression, racism effects, and hurt (Ibid.). Hurt, in particular, "Directly relates to historical trauma in a community; individually and collectively. Understanding past injustices and empowerment are the method to address unresolved feelings of hurt presenting a barrier to trust building" (Ibid.). This study recognized that the women of Kabul experienced a great deal of hurt and needed a way to feel understood and empowered in order to be able to build trust and develop the relationships that social capital consists of. A chief focus of the study was on the conditions which allow for formation of trust and that sense of empowerment.

Bonding Capital

Small group creative practice in this project aimed to create and strengthen bonding capital within the group, as a result of creating a climate of trust. On the individual level, reciprocity and trust are key factors for building bonding capital: the networks between members of a homogenous group (Irwin, et al., 2008, Pg. 1936). One facet of the bonding form of social capital on the individual level is social support, "a coping resource" (Irwin, et al., 2008, Pg. 1937). Social support is "information that prompts a person to believe she is 'cared for, loved, esteemed, and valued and is a member of a network of common and mutual obligation" (Larence and Porter, 2004, 677). Social support is a key element of social capital due to its connections to increased mental and physical health, and, in the case of traumatized communities, to addressing

the background of hurt. Increased bonding capital may begin with increased feelings of self-efficacy, but must evolve into more concrete advantages in order to provide lasting social change. Most commonly, these concrete advantages occur through increases in the networks built between the disempowered group and the groups in power.

Describing social capital as a resource available to people which increases their access to other resources (Brune and Bossert, 2009, Pg. 885) recognizes that disempowered groups are characterized by the limitations on their ability to access resources through their formal networks. However, growth of bonding capital in the group in power can increase mental distress for disempowered persons as it contributes to exclusion within the community (Irwin et al., 2008, Pg. 1936). Thus, it is vital that the disempowered group form strong bonds in order to access power held by groups with better established networks. After the disempowered group reinforces inter-group social bonds, the necessary next step is to create bonds with more empowered groups in the neighborhood in order to gain new access to resources. While the focus of this study was on the group level, understanding the progression in building social capital across groups allows a broader perspective of where a community project fits along the spectrum of development and was briefly addressed.

Bridging Capital

Neighborhood social capital is linked to many significant outcomes including self-reported health quality, mental health, crime rates, and mortality rates (Kawachi and Subramanian, 2006, Pg. 197). Whereas bonding capital brings together a homogenous group of people (homogenous primarily in terms of social status), bridging capital exists in networks between people and groups from different social cohorts (Irwin, et al., 2008, Pg. 1937).

Studies of the impact of social capital on civic action suggest that bonding capital is an antecedent to bridging capital as bonds among residents "empower them to protect and pursue their collective interests (Larsen et al., 2004 Pg. 65). Larsen et. al write "individuals with reportedly strong social bonds in their neighborhood are indeed more likely to engage in problem-solving actions that represent the formation of bridging social capital (Larsen et al., 2004, Pg. 65). For example, communities with higher amounts of social capital are "able to organize relief and rescue efforts better, to disseminate information more quickly to community members, and to provide bridges to formal institutions" (Kawachi and Subramanian, 2006, Pg. 198). While bridging capital is necessary to lead to long term changes in social status, this study focused chiefly on the bonding capital which small group practice builds because bonding capital sets the conditions necessary for the disempowered group to lobby the group in power for change.

Indicators of Social Capital

Understanding the potential to build social capital requires a way to assess the level of social capital. Trust is a preeminent indicator in a traumatized community. Furthermore, the primary indicators of conditions which can allow for and increase social capital are trust and association. Trust tends to be tested with various self-reporting exercises, whereas association is measured by frequency of, "behaviors that produce familiarity, such as informal socializing or lending a tool or assistance to complete a household task" (Larsen et al., 2004, Pg. 65). Several studies demonstrate methods for observing these two indicators.

Trends in studies designed to observe indicators of social capital offer useful strategies for assessing trust. The best practices for discovering indicators of trust are survey based interviews and comparisons between a post-project or intervention assessment with a baseline

assessment. Interviews take approximately one hour per person and are often self-reported (Irwin, et al., 2008, Pg. 1938). The best practice for measuring social capital is to isolate indicators of trust, and to identify trust between subjects and neighbors, between subjects and officials, and between subjects and strangers. One study, designed to measure networks comprising social capital, used self-reporting on indicators such as, "How well do you know your neighbors?," and "How much can people in your neighborhood be trusted?" to understand the situation (Larsen et al., 2004, Pg. 70). Another method for assessing social capital in terms of trust is an exercise that tests individuals' "willingness to pay for an envelope (containing money) with their name on it dropped in different places within a specified community and under different conditions e.g., sealed, unsealed, unstamped) (Kawachi and Subramanian, 2006, Pg. 198). As studies suggest that changes in trust must be assessed over a minimum period of several years, another area to assess change in social capital is in perceived social support, or solidarity. Researchers also must take care to identify the possible influence their methods for facilitation have on changes of trust levels within the subject group. The importance of trust, necessary to set conditions allowing further development of social capital in a traumatized community, was demonstrated and reinforced throughout a series of case studies and significantly contributes to answering questions concerning the utility of small group creative practice in building networks.

A study of projects intended to build social capital in post-conflict communities in Nicaragua assessed projects designed as two-year management and leadership training programs. The study found initial increases of distrust and violence. The study used the World Bank's Social Capital Assessment Tool (SCAT) to gauge community levels of social capital and focused on feelings of trust and solidarity, using Likert scales, to assess individual levels of social capital (Brune and Bossert, 2009, Pg. 886). The study found a link between the management program

and statistically significant increases in self-reported solidarity, and that the intervention programs had resulted in an increase among residents of feelings of empowerment, but not of trust (Brune and Bossert, 2009, 885-893). Proposed reasons for the lack of increase in feelings of trust are the longer timeline for developing trust feelings compounded by a short timeline for conducting post assessments imposed by project restrictions (less than one year after the baseline) (Brune and Bossert, 2009, Pg. 892). The timeline of a project is an important factor in determining whether or not it will be able to set the conditions necessary to build social capital, particularly when trust must be developed first in a traumatized community.

In addition to the importance of timeline, another study found that the project facilitators can grossly sway a project's ability to build social capital. A study of community driven development projects in the Philippines considered a project designed as a competition for funding which required stakeholder participation throughout all stages of the project beginning with project framing and project proposal submission (Labonne and Chase, 2010). Similar to the project in Nicaragua, this project also used a methodology of survey based interviews at a baseline and then after implementation of each stage of the project (Labonne and Chase, 2010). While the goal was to build community collective action capacity, the project did find that the initial assessment cycle resulted in decreased levels of trust in neighbors. This was attributed to distrust that surfaced during efforts to build consensus on a single project proposal, or also feelings of being threatened by the changes in the community (Labonne and Chase, 2010). Towards the end of the study, researchers did observe increased levels of bridging trust which is characterized by the study as either trust toward officials or toward strangers (possibly connected to trust toward the project facilitators) (Labonne and Chase, 2010). Following an understanding

11

of how to gauge levels of social capital, further research focuses on identifying the most significant causes of increases in social capital in disempowered communities.

Best Practices in Social Capital Community Building Projects

This project focused on the positive aspects of projects which led to increases in social capital. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is a guiding paradigm for development work including efforts to build social capital along the spectrum of development. Efforts using AI build on strengths and what is going well in a program rather than on weaknesses and shortcomings. A group of development professionals wrote, "One way to think about this approach is that if we focus on problems, we create more problems. If we focus on solutions, we can create more solutions. If we talk about our dreams, we can create a vibrant new future. AI is a process that encourages us to think and talk about what is working and how it could work better both within communities and within individuals (Emery et al., 2006., Pg. 7).

AI can be a challenging- but highly effective- construct to use when working with a community which seems to have few positive resources. Persistent deprivation and trauma in a community, often experienced as the result of prolonged political and military conflict, can lead to residents' social isolation, weaken bonds, and generate distrust among neighbors who grow to view each other "as threats rather than as sources of support or assistance" (Larsen et al., 2004, Pg. 67). A guiding question in assessing best practices of building social capital is "Why do some communities respond better to trauma than others?" (Kawachi and Subramanian, 2006, Pg. 195). Researchers found that "individual's risks of post-traumatic stress disorder after a disaster vary according to the level of social capital within the community in which they reside" (Kawachi and Subramanian, 2006, Pg. 196). The researchers use the PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) Checklist to measure the effects of trauma as a function of social capital, but

12

note that, at the individual level, the most reliable indicator of social capital is perceived trust within the neighborhood (Kawachi and Subramanian, 2006, Pg. 199). Kawachi and Subramanian argue that the benefits of social connections become most apparent in the presence of a major stressor, but cite a shortage of empirical studies to support the claim (Kawachi and Subramanian, 2006, Pg. 197). They also suggest there is a need for further study on the growth of social capital specific to traumatized communities. While there is a shortage of data available to examine specific development projects in post-war communities, there are other forms of trauma which weave a common thread through the lives of many groups of women: abuse, sexual violence, limitations on medical resources and child welfare resources, etc.

The projects examined for best practices in the literature review were analyzed through the lens of needs of a traumatized community: to build trust and to address hurt. Initiatives which best accomplished these two goals had similar formats. Two studies that address small-group formation as a method for network building with female trauma victims are a study using Hope Circles with primarily low income, African American women near St. Louis and a study of women victims of domestic violence in small-group work. Both studies reference a decades-long history of women coming together in "various small group formats" for purposes of empowerment and to "share knowledge, share artistic pursuits, raise social and political consciousness, and gain emotional solace (Wilson et al., 2010, pp. 519 and Rothman in Larence and Porter, 2004, 678). The groups of women are characterized by a fluidity that allows a group organized on the face for an artistic or purely social purpose to evolve into a group to work for collective action. The two groups share many common threads which can inform estimated potential among other work with small groups of women.

Both groups make use of the small group format with between five and 15 women in the Hope Circles and five to 10 in the domestic violence groups and both explicitly promote a safe space to discuss controversial issues in both formal and informal time (Larence and Porter, 2004, Pg. 677). Both studies indicate that best practices are to create spaces for women to share stories, and to create opportunities for informal networking. The domestic violence study finds that "women's conversations during group are essential to their trust and network formation" (Larence and Porter, 2004, Pg. 685) and that informal time provides an opportunity to exercise "freedom and individualism to choose her own relationships" (Larence and Porter, 2004, Pg. 686). Informal time is a technique which will be echoed in examination of case studies and consideration of small group creative practice.

Informal spaces contribute to an increase in social capital. The domestic violence small groups build bonding capital in women in order to increase their access to the resources those networks provide. Over 400 women enrolling in one set of small groups studied suffer, "varying degrees of social isolation and damaged, if not severed, personal relationships" (Larence and Porter, 2004, Pg. 676); they engage in a program which uses an educational curriculum to create spaces for the sharing necessary to building trust and feelings of empowerment necessary to bonding networks (Larence and Porter, 2004, Pg. 683). The individual intake assessments for small groups for domestic violence victims give women opportunities to acknowledge their social history in a safe way and be assured of confidentiality, and also provide facilitators an opportunity to assess each client's existing social support network (Larence and Porter, 2004, Pg. 681). The study found that women tend to build mutual trust that leads to social networks and to social capital (Larance and Porter, 2004, Pg. 676). They were able to build trust through sharing stories with other women who had lived through similar experiences, and their choices of when

14

to tell their story and how much of it to tell each time were their first steps in gaining back a sense of self efficacy (Larence and Porter, 2004, Pg. 683). In telling and retelling their stories, the women solidify their sense of personal empowerment. As the women build networks, they are able to access the social capital they have built by sharing transportation, bartering child care services, helping with tasks such as moving to a safer location, providing emotional support, and exchanging skills such as haircutting or exercise instruction (Larsen and Porter, 2004, Pg. 686). For many women, these are resources that were unavailable to them because of their situatinos of being cut off from bonding networks. Changes in access to resources are the tangible effects of increased social capital which future projects are designed to achieve.

Studying Hope Circles reinforces the use of bonding capital to lend to increases in bridging capital. The Hope Circles present an interesting study because they bring together non-homogenous groups of women. The Circles present both an opportunity for social support and for moving beyond as a venue to organize for change through civic action (Wilson et al., 2010, pp. 519-20). The groups frequently began with food, often contributed by the women, and time for informal conversation (Wilson, et al., 2010, 528). Other studies suggest that the sharing of small gifts or food and time for informal social interaction are necessary to trust building in small groups of women (Labonne and Chace, 2010). The methodology used mirrors the theory that bonding capital is the antecedent to bridging capital; the process used by Hope Circles is to build sequentially through personal efficacy to collective efficacy (Wilson, et al., 2010, Pg 521). The Hope Circles were assessed through focus groups of participants who completed short, self-administered questionnaires which were then coded by researchers to find consensus in responses (Wilson, et al., 2010, pp. 522-24). The researchers noted the surprising results that groups of women that were non-homogenous in terms of social privilege felt a sense of

15

belonging and "experienced growth and felt empowered" and that many believe they "benefited from the experience" (Wilson, et al., 2010, Pg. 530-33).

Research holds that creative practice does have concrete value in increasing levels of self-efficacy and trust in women suffering traumatic conditions and after effects. Art Therapy expert, Nancy Halifax, characterized art history as a participatory therapy, and as an empowering experience. She wrote, "In feminist psychotherapy, power in the relationship is explored. Both participants are imbued with expertise, so that, from the beginning, the client is an active participant" (Halifax, 1997, Pg. 53). "This kind of theory suggest that people entering a supportive, collaborative, empowered, therapeutic relationship will carry that experience with them into their world" (Ibid., 54). Halifax warned, "As art therapists, we often deal with issues that are not readily manifest in society or culture, issues which have no audience, no community. We are dealing with the common and profound problems of chronic illness, poverty, malnutrition, racism, abuse, trauma, despair, depression, isolation, and disconnection" (Ibid., 55). One example of work being done with using small group creative activities to build trust and solidarity is the ArtReach foundation:

> "The work of the ArtReach Foundation has from the beginning been based on the assumption that creative artistic, imaginative, and self-expressive activities are emotionally healing and promote positive growth and development. This assumption is well founded in concepts and observations of psychologists, educators, and specialists in human development" (Kempler, 2011).

The work of art therapists has proven promise for improving self-efficacy, but is just beginning to be applied to projects aimed at improving group efficacy through social interaction. The literature review can guide development of a framework to investigate the potential of small group creative practice to build social capital in the traumatized community under study.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

The intent of the methodology was to evaluate the problem statement and determine the value for creative practice to set the conditions for social capital in the context of the attempted project with women in Kabul. The methodology began with the research question, or problem statement; prescribed the literature review to better understand and begin to answer the research question; and, then, identified case study analysis as the most expedient method for completing a study bridging theory and practice thereby formulating the most reliable answer to the question. At this point, it is useful to review the central focus on this research, which is answering the research question.

Research Question

What is the value of small group creative practice used to set the conditions necessary to develop or strengthen community networks (as a form of social capital) in a disempowered, traumatized community? The answer to this question will provide a means to improve upon future projects and better guide attempts to build social networks.

Proposed Methods to Answer Question

The first step in answering the research question was to conduct a literature review that sought to define social capital and its forms; to identify the indicators of social capital and how levels of social capital in a community may be assessed; and to draw out best practices in building social capital that are most relevant to the problem under study.

The second step was to identify a set of questions that could be used to query how a project aligns with known properties of social capital and network building and how it reflects

best practices in similar projects. The presence or absence of these best practices was most significant in assessing the potential of creative practice as a means to build networks. A summary table was used to organize the expected data and is located with the protocol and in the discussion section.

The third step was to identify and summarize relevant case studies to consider which meet the terms of the research question. The most relevant case studies approximated the conditions of the research question: work with a disempowered community; work with a traumatized group; and the use of creative exercise as the process for initiating social interaction and relationship development. Each of the case studies chosen approximates those conditions. However, case studies were not available for projects intentionally designed as social capital building projects. The discussion will address whether these projects are designed for community development or only for individual development and address their role in community development.

The Kapisa Women's FET Project built a women's shelter to house a dozen women and four female children which would be maintained partially by sale of the women's handicrafts. The Parwan Chicken Project organized classes for women on raising chickens and provided all participants with the hens and roosters necessary to begin raising their own flocks. The Phoenix Women's Art Project proposed using a curriculum of creative expression in a small group format to create a safe space for story-telling and development of social support and trust. Each study examines a disempowered community, a traumatized group, and varying levels of creative practice.

The final step was to use the question protocol to examine the case studies and draw conclusions from the comparison to inform the research focus. Comparing and contrasting

results of the case study examinations provided insight into what the potential results will be for a project designed around the goal of encouraging network formation through creative practice. However, a couple of important factors were excluded from the analysis because they were determined to be outside the scope of the project.

In addition to recognizing that the projects were not designed by community development professionals, and perhaps because of that not intentionally for building social capital, the study recognized the shortfall in using indicators of trust in order to gauge levels of social capital. The literature review highlighted the importance of using the indicators the measure levels of social capital through intake and subsequent assessments (Irwin, et. al., 2008, Pg. 1938 and Labonne and Chase, 2010) over a period of three years or more (Brune and Bossert, 2009, Pg. 892). None of the projects under study used intake and subsequent assessments and none had been in effect for three or more years at the time of study. In these two areas, there were and still are significant limitations on the ability of the military element to meet those conditions effectively. While military personnel could administer surveys, the target population is primarily illiterate and would have to complete the surveys orally with the help of an unfamiliar interpreter. Because of the instrumental relationship between the military and the local population discussed earlier, any data from the surveys would be likely skewed and could not be reasonably assumed to be reliable. As for the timeline, it is difficult for a facilitator spending less than a year with a community to establish trust with the community, but the military operational design and tempo does not permit longer relationships in the majority of cases. Because these are limitations outside the scope of the project, they were excluded from the case study analysis.

Data Analysis

A set of questions developed from the literature review and aligned with the purpose of this project will be used to guide discussion of each case study:

1. Project Organization.

  a. What is the purpose of the project? Is it intended to address community outcomes, or only individual outcomes?

  b. How does the role of the facilitator affect the outcome of the project (Labonne and Chase, 2010)?

2. Conditions for Building Social Capital

  a. How is the program organized? Into groups of what size? How many meetings/how often (Larence and Porter, 2004, Pg. 677)?

  b. Does the program allow for both formal and informal meeting space? What opportunities for informal discussion do women (group members) have (Larsen, et. al, 2004, Pg. 65 and Larence and Porter, 2004, Pg. 686)?

  c. How is confidentiality of group members ensured? How is it communicated to the group members (Larence and Porter, 2004, Pg. 681)?

3. Indicators in Social Capital

  a. What tangible increases in social capital are there for association (e.g. exchange of skills; transportation sharing; child care bartering; emotional support; etc.) (Larence an Porter, 2004, Pg. 686)?

b. What indicators of social support; trust; network growth are present (Larsen et al., 2004, Pg. 70 and Brune and Bossert, 2009, Pg. 886, and Kawachi and Subramanian, 2006, Pg. 197)?

4. Best Practices in the Project.

  a. What best practices did the project meet?

  b. What best practices did the project fall short of? Could these have been incorporated within the vision of the project?

Table 3.1 Data Analysis Format

	Outcomes	Facilitator	Group Size	Informal Space	Indicators
Women's Shelter					
Chicken Project					
Phoenix Art					

Data Collection Strategy

Data for the case studies on The Kapisa FET project and the Phoenix Women's Art project was available from limited printed materials and primarily from first-hand experience (encapsulated in case studies). Although it is impossible to encapsulate all information or impressions succinctly, the summary of case studies attempts to highlight the most important and reliable information in a way which clearly demonstrates their relevancy to the problem statement being investigated.

Printed materials included a couple of news articles. One is from the Freedom Watch magazine which is a magazine printed locally throughout the Afghan Theatre of Operations in order to improve morale of U.S. service-members. No classified information is printed in the Freedom Watch. Another article is from the Regional Command East (RC-E) newsletter. RC-E contains the geographic area of Kabul, Parwan, and Parwan province. The RC-E internal website provided an unpublished news release which provided basic information about a project.

I also had available the full lesson plans and operational plans for the Phoenix Women's Art Project (2010) because that was my own work. The remainder of my information came from opportunistic interviews when I would travel to different locations and meetings throughout Kabul and Parwan for my primary duties. Many of the people I met gave me only a nickname, or were able to show me a message they had gotten from a friend but which I had no means to capture other than by writing notes and storing them all in a binder I maintained through the deployment, returning home to organize the notes, rewrite some, and develop a clearer picture of what had happened in several projects by piecing my earlier notes together in early 2011. I have made an effort in this project to rely primarily on the printed materials. Where the official documents leave significant gaps, I have filled that in with notes taken during my deployment which were from a reliable source and have noted where two significant conversations took place. The notes were taken at the time for a different purpose than for this research study, but many of the notes were necessary to sufficiently understand the case studies under investigation.

Chapter 4 - Case Studies

Selection

The goal in selection of case studies was to find three studies which most closely approximated the conditions of the problem statement which were work in small groups, work involving creative practice, work in a disempowered, traumatized community, and work used to develop networks. Each case study selected addresses a group of women because they are the disempowered group in this traumatized community. No case studies were available which explicitly stated a primary goal of network building, but each of these cases was selected because they do aim for the closely related objective of increasing women's access to resources. Two of the cases also make use of small groups and creative practice. The third case study was selected because it teaches women a skill (although agricultural rather than artistic), and because it caters to a specific area of women.

I. The Kapisa Women's Shelter. The Kapisa Women's Shelter was a project designed by the Female Engagement Team (FET) in Kabul. They helped plan, coordinate, and build a women's shelter, which housed twelve women and four children. Once they completed the shelter, the government became the primary maintainer with partial funding from the sale of handicrafts that the women and children living there make (Udd, 2010). I was able to informally discuss the funding process for the Women's Shelter with the woman contractor in charge of managing those development funds. The original project concept was to build a self-sustained house for hundreds of women but the support for the project dwindled once initial capacity was reached.

II. The Parwan Chicken Project. The Task Force Wolverine FET out of Parwan initiated two significant projects in 2010: a bee keeping program, and a chicken project. The chicken project provided 25 Afghan women each with nine hens and a rooster and a one-week class covering care of the chickens, how to give vaccinations, feed them, and how to market the eggs (Ferrell, 2010). According to the project concept, once the women got their first proceeds from the sales, they would be able to maintain their own flocks and increase production. The program benefited from knowledge learned through iterations; during previous iterations, the chickens did not all survive youth and the training on their care was improved in accordance. (I was able to reach one of the women working on the project by secure phone line to ask her how the results of the project were used.)

III. The Phoenix Women's Art Project. The Phoenix Women's Art Project was a design that was not fully carried out. The design was for a series of five art classes for women in Kabul. The art classes each taught a couple of techniques for using art as a means for creative expression, gave time for group practice, time for informal conversation, and also included a class exploring marketing techniques and a plan for marketing the artwork both to a home community to compensate the women, and to the local art market for a sustainable practice for the group of women. The project depended heavily on other female volunteers to carry out, and on collections of donated art supplies (original plans from 2010).

Discussion

Using the data analysis protocol developed with insights from the literature review, each case study is discussed in as much detail as possible below in order to provide evidence with which to evaluate the proposed research more fully. Where there are not results yet available for study, effort is made to demonstrate how a similarity between the project and information

uncovered in the literature review offer a reasonable prediction for what might develop. The discussions are organized in the same way in which the data analysis protocol is organized, and each case study is discussed sequentially to allow for a comparison across case studies and for pulling out common threads which inform a proposed project in a similar community.

Project Organization

Project Organization addresses the purpose of the project and the role of the facilitator. The purpose clarifies the stated project goals of addressing group outcomes or only individual outcomes. The role of the facilitator was also considered as it can have a significant impact on both the perceived and actual results of the project.

The purpose of the Kapisa Women's Shelter was to provide safe housing for women and children who were either living on the street or victims of domestic violence who could not live with any other family members without remaining under the control of the abuser. In many situations, the women and children would be escaping a male head of household with a strong opium dependency. The facilitator for this project was the local Afghan government leadership which would, using U.S. funds, build a facility, recruit qualified residents from the Kabul population through established community groups, and then teach or leverage skills the female residents had to earn pay for ongoing maintenance costs. The outcome would be for a group of women and would consist of providing the physical location for them to form new relationships to substitute for the non-existent or toxic ones they left behind. Once the structure was complete and some basic processes put into place, the government would (and, in actuality, did even at partial completion) maintain a hands off approach and allow the women to manage their own relationships.

The purpose of the Parwan Chicken Project was to teach Afghan women a new and sustainable source of income. The U.S. led reconstruction team recruited local women and taught a one week class covering everything needed for raising and caring for chickens, and for marketing their eggs. There was no data available to explain how women raising flocks for the same market would manage their sales to avoid driving prices down, especially as more women were able to raise their own flocks. The project focused only on individual outcomes, and not on the outcomes of the group. If the project were reformulated to address group outcomes, the project would address women's market power (both in buying and in selling) as a whole. The facilitator played a strong role in this project because everything was facilitator led, driven, and controlled with little opportunity for organic relationships to develop among the women.

The stated purpose of the Phoenix Women's Art Project was to collaborate with Afghan women and use art as a way to express pain and build confidence and concurrently improve their economic situation (from the project report I wrote in 2010). The project was characterized by Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and progressed through the U.S. facilitator gathering resources from donors and assessing capacities in volunteers to course design and recruiting women students through execution and evaluation of the project. This project used an attitude that all expression is valued, and that there is no good expression versus bad expression in the creative work; in this sense, the facilitator acted as a guide during the actual project execution while allowing for relationships to form naturally. The project was focused on creating space for women to network and was intended to effect both individual and group outcomes.

Each project had a goal which did not explicitly call for formation of increased social networks, yet each project brought together a group of women to guide them through a shared learning experience. While the Women's Shelter and the Phoenix Art Project both focused on

26

group outcomes, the Parwan Chicken Project focused solely on individual outcomes. Unlike with the other projects, the role of the facilitator in the Parwan Chicken Project seems too rigid to allow for the conditions necessary to social capital development.

As discussed, the primary objective of small group creative practice is to set the conditions to allow for the formation of social capital; the literature review shaped the discussion of best practices in creating these conditions by addressing hurt, building trust, and creating networks. This study did recognize that, in the culture of this traumatized community, confidentiality would be a necessity in setting conditions to allow for trust.

Conditions for Building Social Capital

The Women's Shelter was envisioned as a facility for several hundred women but was only realized at a capacity for a dozen. This size did allow for the group of women in the facility to develop helpful interpersonal relationships. There were no formal meetings but rather informal meetings that the women had themselves to divide responsibilities. Similarly, participant observation and key informant interviews suggested the contribution to self-efficacy and social capital that these informal meetings offered. The women did share their food and income. Confidentiality in this program was difficult to maintain because the women had to interact with the public to sell their goods, but the faces and names of the women were shielded and protected in promotional articles.

About two dozen women attended each cycle of the Parwan Chicken course. The course was held daily for one week- the cultural context of the area demanded that the course graduate on either Thursday afternoon or Friday morning. There was no data available for the specific course schedule, but it is likely that there were limited times for informal discussion when the women were filtering in to class in the morning, and also when they ate lunch in the afternoons.

Because the women had to travel to a central location in Parwan, there was very little opportunity for confidentiality. However, the project was something which was culturally acceptable for the women in that region to participate in so the necessary threshold for confidentiality in who attends was lower.

The Phoenix art program would hold a series of classes with one group of 15-20 women and would meet once a week for five weeks with a potential for more meetings after the initial five. The program specifically created a space for the women to share stories from their lives, and also to decide how much to share and at what depth in order to hone in on addressing the past hurt. The program had time for formal meeting during the classes and group practice, as well as time for informal discussion at the beginning and close of each class to allow the women to develop their own interpersonal relationships within the group. The women would have their confidentiality maintained by not being photographed for the program in a way that would distinguish them, or written about by name. If the women were to sell their creative work in the local market, there would be no way to uphold confidentiality, so that would be a choice the women would have to make.

Each program has, in common, the best practice of allowing women to share stories during informal interaction time although there are variances in application. The Parwan Chicken Project would allow very limited time for this informal sharing. In contrast, the Phoenix Women's Art Project would specifically include this time and facilitate sharing of stories in order to address past hurt as needed to set the conditions for building social capital. The literature suggests that this time is vital to the development of bonding capital. This is precisely the kind of sharing encouraged by creative process where art is a mechanism to allow stories to be shared.

Indicators in Social Capital

The ability to assess changes in social capital is vital in project design. Absent a way to assess indicators of success, the project is more likely to deviate from the stated goals and also fails to contribute to the body of knowledge guiding other community projects.

In the Women's Shelter, there were tangible indicators of association reflecting social capital with the women working together to determine their daily routines and division of responsibility. The women in the facility used their interpersonal relationships to share the group responsibilities for cooking, cleaning, and childcare. The women lived together and talked with each other. While no formal data was collected, based on participant observation and key informant interviews, the women became close and began to identify as a family unit within a culture where biological family ties, by rule, are stronger than friendships.

There were not indicators present or expected in the Parwan Chicken Project. Because the project did not lead women to work together or exchange skills, no indicators of either trust or association would be expected. This project did not set the conditions for women to feel a sense of social support because it placed them rigidly in the role of individuals and did not assist them in seeing their place in the larger community.

Because the Phoenix Women's Art Project was not carried through to full execution, there were no tangible indicators observed. With the program's design, indicators of trust and social support would be expected, particularly with the intentional design to address hurt and build trust through social support, while indicators of association would be a reasonable, but not intrinsically expected outcome.

While both the Women's Shelter and the Phoenix Art Project suggested clear indicators of social capital, these indicators were absent in the Parwan Chicken Project due to the failure to

set conditions allowing for trust to be built and further development to take place. The results of the analysis are summarized in the table below.

Table 4.1 Summary of Data Analysis

	Outcomes	Facilitator	Group Size	Informal Space	Indicators
Women's Shelter	Group	Hands off	Small (12)	Yes	Trust Association
Chicken Project	Individual	Tight control	Somewhat Larger (24)	Very limited	None
Phoenix Art	Group	Guide	Somewhat Larger (15-20)	Yes	Trust Social Support

Reflection Upon Best Practices

In reflecting upon the qualities which each program had, it is possible to compare best practices across projects. These qualities may be understood for small-group creative practice as well.

The Kapisa Women's Shelter did incorporate the best practice of allowing space for informal discussions between the women to contribute to stronger bonding capital and allow women to tell their stories on their own terms. The Women's Shelter did not do anything to intentionally address the hurt that the women had experienced and create an environment of social support which would limit their ability to move further along the spectrum of community development.

The Parwan Chicken Project fell short in setting the conditions to build social capital which would have allowed the women to increase their access to resources in the community. Best practices in setting those conditions which could be incorporated into this project without changing the vision would be to create space for informal meetings between the women, to break the women into two smaller groups to work together within the classes of 25, and to address

30

group outcomes by teaching ways in which groups can take care of several flocks together more easily than all doing it in isolation.

The Phoenix Women's Art Project met some of the best practices for setting the conditions necessary for social capital development by creating intentional space for informal interaction specifically addressing past hurt in order to build trust and new relationships. The design intentionally created conditions for women to feel a sense of social support in order to develop trust and strengthen the relationships they were forming.

After discussing each case study, some trends can be drawn out from across discussions, as well as some unique but particularly insightful findings which can be used to form overall conclusions. These conclusions are intended for use in answering the problem statement.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions

The results of the literature review and discussion of best practices in projects indicate that a successful project to develop networks in a disempowered community will focus, at least initially, on bonding capital. For a project working with a disempowered, traumatized community like those considered in the case studies, space for informal relationship building is necessary along with (and in priority to) formal meetings. Using creative practice does offer space for women to share personal stories, and, significantly, to control the pace and depth at which they share their personal stories. The control creative practice offers to women in terms of pace and content of sharing is an advantage over other project designs, and is a strong argument in favor of the success of creative practice in particular because of the way in which it addresses the past hurt of a community and builds trust between participants through creating the sense of social support needed to move past trauma.

The most significant lesson learned from this study is the importance of an intentional design for creating the conditions necessary to build trust and allow a traumatized community to progress along the spectrum of development. The informal conversation and story-telling necessary to spur genuine trust allows for the women to develop lasting networks that they will be able to use as a resource after the project ends.

Following the evidence from the literature view enhanced by the discussion of relevant case studies, a project using small-group creative practice is a viable method to help set the conditions of trust necessary to further build social networks in a disempowered, traumatized community. However, the ability of the military to execute this type of project successfully is limited by barriers outside the control of the military members such as the timeline for the

projects and the local community's perspective of the project facilitators. Addressing once again the instrumental relationship perceived by the local community, genuine focus on hurt and building trust within the community would be degraded by misguided attempts to please the facilitators. Furthermore, the change of personnel every six months to one year would consistently set projects back when the new facilitators would have to regain trust in the traumatized community. The military may only be effective in pursuing this type of project if able to use local leaders as facilitators.

References

Brune, Nancy and Thomas Bossert. (2009). "Building Social Capital in Post-Conflict
Communities: Evidence from Nicaragua." Social Science and Medicine, 68(5), 885-893.

Crane, Mary. "It Becomes a River: Afghanistan at a Crossroads." World Policy Journal 26.1
(2009): 95+.

Emery, Mary and Susan Fey and Cornelia Flora. (2006.) "Using Community Capitals to
Develop Assets for Positive Community Change." North Central Regional Center for
Rural Development.

Ferrell, Peter (SFC, U.S.). (2010). "Kentucky ADT Visits Parwan Director of Women's
Affairs." Retrieved October 12th, 2010, from http://www.cjtf101.com/en/regional-command-
east-news-mainmenu-401/3410-kentucky-adt-visits-parwan-director-of-womens-affairs.html.

Flora, Cornelia and Jan Flora. (2008.) Rural Communities: Legacy and Change (116-17).
Boulder, CO: West View Press. 116-17.

Halifax, Nancy Viva Davis. (1997.) "Feminist Art Psycotherapy: Contributions from Feminist
Theory and Contemporary Art Practice." American Journal of Art Therapy, 36(2), 49-55.

Irwin, et al. (2008). "Social Assets and Mental Distress Among the Homeless: Exploring the
Roles of Social Support and Other Forms of Social Capital on Depression." Social
Science and Medicine, 67, 1935-1943.

Kawachi, Ichiro and S. V. Subramanian. (2006). "Measuring and Modeling the Social and
Geographic Context of Trauma: A Multilevel Modeling Approach." Journal of Traumatic
Stress, 19(2), 195-203.

Kempler, Bernard. (2011.) "Promoting Children's Emotional and Mental Health in
Communities Traumatized by War: The ArtReach Foundation Model." Retrieved on
January 1st, 2011 from www.ArtReachFoundation.org.

Labonne, Julien and Robert Chase. (2010). "Do Community-Driven Development Projects
Enhance Social Capital? Evidence from the Philippines?" Journal of Development
Economics. Published online by Science Direct; no page numbers.

Larance, Lisa and Maryann Porter. (2004). "Observations From Practice: Support Group
Membership as a Process of Social Capital Formation Among Female Survivors of

Domestic Violence." Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 19(6), 676-690).

Larsen, et al. (2004). "Bonding and Bridging: Understanding the Relationship Between Social Capital and Civic Action." Journal of Planning Education and Research, 24, 64-77.

Nygard, Al. (2009). Professional Presentation. Brookings, SD.

Udd, Kristen (Capt, USAF). (2010). "Kapisa Women's Shelter." Freedom Watch, October, 27. (Freedom Watch is a locally created magazine published for deployed personnel.)

Wilson, R. et al. (2010). "Exploring a Feminist-Based Empowerment Model of Community Building." Qualitative Social Work, 9(4), 519-535.