Jan Hermes

RENDEZVOUS IN TURBULENT TIMES

ABOUT THE BECOMING OF INSTITUTION-CHANGING NETWORKS IN MYANMAR/BURMA
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About the becoming of institution-changing networks in Myanmar/Burma

Academic dissertation to be presented with the assent of The Doctoral Training Committee of Human Sciences, University of Oulu for public defence in the Arina auditorium (TA105), Linnanmaa, on 6 May 2016, at 12 noon

UNIVERSITY OF OLUU, OLUU 2016
Abstract

The resolution of humanitarian crises in, for example, ethnic conflict regions, is dependent on the interaction of different actors. They need to collectively engage to change the conflicting parties’ perception of one another and their ways of interacting. The efforts of these institution-changing networks can be seen as an integral element of a change process to transform harmful societal practices which have become institutionalized over decades into socially and economically conducive practices.

Located at the cross-roads of sociological institutionalism and critical entrepreneurship discourse this study borrows from both the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing rooted business network mobilization approach and organizational legitimacy discussion. It provides processual and contextual understanding of how individual actors act in the process of forming collectives for institutional change as an early stage of a peace-building process.

The data of this study consists of a set of conversations with governmental, non-governmental and private sector actors and observations and secondary data about the peace-building and democratization process in Myanmar/Burma. These were used to produce insight into individual actors’ acting for forming institution-changing networks.

Pluralism, non-linearity and non-teleology were identified as characteristics of institutional entrepreneurial acting in turbulent and unpredictable contexts generally. Exploring the pluralist characteristic further, the study identifies in Myanmar/Burma’s peace-building context reticence, adaptability, incentivization, and perseverance as ways of acting to instigate the formation of networks and the creation of legitimacy therein. Due to the underlying non-linearity and non-teleology of these ways of acting the formation of networks is referred to as process of becoming.

Theoretically this study responds to the need for processual conceptualizations of networks changing over time through a rich and locally contextualized understanding of network forming processes. Methodologically, it advocates for a network- or meso-level approach to help transcending the distinction between individual and structure levels of analysis which allows viewing institutional entrepreneurship processes where they are enacted. Practically, this study gives guidance to business actors about balancing the conduct of business and building society at the same time.

Keywords: crisis management, entrepreneuring, institutional entrepreneurship, legitimacy, network mobilization, peace-building
Hermes, Jan, Tapaamisia turbulentteina aikoina. Instituutioita muuttavien verkostojen muotoutuminen Myanmarissa/Burmaassa

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Tiivistelmä

Humanitaaristen kriisien ratkaisu esimerkiksi alueilla, joissa on etnisiä konfliktteja, riippuu eri toimijoiden vuorovaikutuksesta. Heidän täytyy pyrkiä verkostoissa vaikuttamaan konfliktin oso puolten vuorovaikutustapoihin ja näkemyksiin toisistaan. Näiden instituutioita muuttavien verkostojen pyrkimykset voidaan nähdä keskeisenä osana prosessia, joka muuttaa ajan saatossa institutionalisoituneita haitallisia yhteiskunnallisia käytäntöjä sosiaalisesti ja taloudellisesti hyödyllisiksi käytännöiksi.


Acknowledgements

The journey of my dissertation, the result of which you are holding in your hands or are about to scroll through, started rather unexpectedly in the end of 2011. Initially meant as a thematic continuation to my Master’s thesis on value networks and business models, diverse resisting and supporting forces urged me on; after about half a year I felt confident enough to pursue a type of doctoral dissertation that I felt had real meaning. With real meaning I conceive something that truly supports the well-being of all of us in a sustainable way. Research on organizations is a theoretically fascinating and challenging field that has the potential to create, among other things, understanding of organizational processes of becoming, as conducted in this dissertation. Equally as important to me, however, is what I can achieve with my research. It is not about advancing or specializing tools for making business processes more efficient or more effective for individual stakeholders in the developed part of the world. In the contrary, both business and research about it are, to me, ways to support the improvement of society at large.

Recent disconcerting political and social developments in the Middle East and Europe, for example, have shown that larger societal conflicts or problems are not any longer subject only to the region they have their seeds in. Rather, we need to acknowledge that the world’s connectedness, i.e. globalization, exceeds purely economic levels and becomes noticeable in social and political developments right in the backyard of the “developed” part of the world, too. Researching a phenomenon related to the peace-building process in South-East Asia’s Myanmar/Burma, I am convinced, is a contribution to society in both a regional and global context. Business in the form of private sector involvement, as I show in this dissertation, thereby takes on crucial facilitating and exemplary roles. Together with other, non-business actors, the private sector is able to influence regional economic developments and respective legislations and, through that, the peace-building process and society at large.

The complexity of these processes is reflected in researching them, too. I.e., making sense of how different actors get together to collectively influence the change of institutionalized practices (as one way to support peace-building) and interpreting them by means of business theories is a task of tremendous magnitude. I do not intend to claim that I coped with that task perfectly. I would rather like to point out that it can be tackled only with the help of others. Many persons and organizations supported me and the progression of my dissertation during the past
four years, all of which I am grateful to and some of which I would like to mention at this point by name.

Special thanks go to my primary supervisor Prof. Tuija Mainela. She has been my motivator, co-author and deadline-setter; besides these vital roles in the life of a doctoral student, I am grateful to her actively supporting my dissertation idea in its early days. Likewise, I would like to thank Dr. Petri Ahokangas, my secondary supervisor, for advising me to start this journey in the first place; I might not have chosen to do so otherwise.

Many thanks go to the members of my Follow-up group for doctoral training at the University of Oulu Graduate School, Prof. Veikko Seppänen, Prof. Asta Salmi and Dr. Ville Brummer, for their thorough comments on my dissertation and its progress. In addition, I would like to thank Prof. Veikko Seppänen for countless supportive conversations during the past five years; his ease and pragmatism ignited lights at the end of seemingly dead-ended tunnels. I would like to thank Prof. Asta Salmi, too, for her motivational support both as part of my Follow-up group and as commentator during conferences. During several meetings Dr. Ville Brummer from Crisis Management Initiative, Finland, kindly provided me with his valuable expert opinion on peace-building as well as key contacts in the field for which I am grateful. Likewise, I would like to thank Dr. Kimmo Kiljunen, Mrs. Kristiina Rintakoski from Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission and Mrs. Anne Palm from Civil Society Conflict Prevention Network, Finland, for their kind provision of further important contacts in the field.

In 2013, I attended two doctoral tutorials and received important feedback on how to improve my research plan. I am particularly thankful to comments from Prof. Marian Jones and Dr. Thomas O’Toole. I would also like to thank the teachers of about a dozen doctoral courses I took in 2012 and 2013 both in Finland and abroad. In 2014, I had the pleasure to visit the University of Adelaide, South Australia; many thanks go to Dr. Chris Medlin for making the research visit happen and for several inspiring conversations about research philosophy.

In addition to the continuous and generous financial support from Martti Ahtisaari Institute at Oulu Business School, i.e. particularly Prof. Veikko Seppänen, Sauli Sohlo and Marja Aro, I would like to thank the institute for the various opportunities I was given to expand my professional network. Moreover, I would like to express my gratitude to the EUDA doctoral program at the University of Oulu which provided me with both an annual stipend and several travel grants. Thanks go to University of Oulu Graduate School, too, for their provision of travel grants. I also received generous financial support for carrying out the data
collection for my study in South-East Asia from Huugo & Vilma Oksanen Foundation (Foundation for Economic Education, Finland) for which I am very grateful. Last but not least, I would like to thank the merchants’ club of Oulu (Oulun Kauppaklubi) for their grant for ethical business research.

I am grateful to the many (other) foreign supporters of my study. Several individuals and organizations in Switzerland, Thailand and Myanmar/Burma, many of whom were informants for this study, helped me and my study progress through sharing with me their expert insight and through connecting me to other actors in the field. I am particularly grateful to Sutharee from Bangkok who helped me to get along in Yangon and Bangkok and linked me to many non-governmental organizations in the field.

The work on my dissertation would have been boring and sometimes hopeless if I hadn’t had the enjoyable and inspiring company of my dear friends and colleagues at Oulu Business School, in particular at the departments of Management and International Business and Marketing. I hope these people will recognize themselves and understand that I cannot mention them all by name. There is just not enough space in this chapter to tell all the famous (and infamous) anecdotes necessary to honor them duly; thank you all so much. For particular reasons, however, I would like to highlight my dear colleague and office fellow (soon to be) Dr. Irene Lehto; thank you, Irene, for countless conversations over coffee and, through being a role model doctoral student, continuously helping me to refocus on my research.

This dissertation would not be what it is now without the support from my friends and family. Many of my friends from both Finland and Germany always had an open ear for my problems; that was important to me, thank you all for that. My relatives and, in particular, my parents supported me throughout the doctoral training period in their very own and very important ways. I am more than grateful for your help – I could not have done without. Last but actually first, I would like to turn to my dear wife Michelle. You were the closest to me in the process of becoming of this dissertation. I am deeply thankful for your comments, questions, language correction and the philosophical conversations we had so often. Foremost, however, I wish to thank you for your patience, understanding and motivation during (too many) periods of distress and absence. Together with Sophie you showed me that there is a vitally important life outside work, too. I guess I owe you…

Oulu, 26 March 2016

Jan Hermes
Original publications

This thesis is based on the following publications, which are referred throughout the text by their Roman numerals:


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1 Introduction

As the opening to my doctoral dissertation, in this chapter, I provide a concise but sufficiently comprehensive overview of the present doctoral dissertation. In this chapter, I summarize its objective, expressed through respective research questions, the location of the thesis’ topic in the scientific landscape, and its major contributions in theoretical, methodological and managerial terms. Given that the context of this thesis is of the utmost importance, both practically and theoretically, I continue with an overview of the study’s empirical undertaking. To begin with, however, I would like to state in a personal note the motivation, divided into a stimulus and an animus, for conducting the study behind the thesis.

1.1 Stimulus and animus

Practical acts of business in the form of value exchanges have served humankind to satisfy people’s vital and trivial needs. Although certain business acts have taken extreme forms that primarily serve the goals of a few individuals only and, simultaneously, stunt the betterment of society as a whole, I am convinced that value exchanges generally have a vast potential to improve the lives of the members of society collectively. Similarly, research about business can be a powerful tool for influencing our understanding of how business is conducted and the organizations and individuals involved; depending on the goal and way of conducting business research, we may be led to support selected social groups or society as a whole.

The stimulus for performing research about peace-building organizations is rooted in my conviction that both practical acts of business and research on the subject can and should support humankind as a whole and, thus, individual human beings. Choosing to examine peace-building activities in Myanmar/Burma may seem a far-fetched topic from a Northern European perspective, considering that societies here are also under increasing economic, social and ecological pressure. Undoubtedly, they are, and they equally deserve as much practical and scientific attention. Simultaneously, what occurs “on the other side of the earth” should not be neglected because its economic, social and environmental effects can be witnessed, directly or indirectly, in the short term or in the long term “on this side of the earth”, as well (cf. Talvitie 2013).

With business activities becoming progressively more global, economic activities organized by, for instance, Northern European enterprises in developing
South-East Asian countries occur, as well. The institutional environment in Myanmar/Burma as one South-East Asian country is insecure; the three divisions of government, i.e., the judiciary, the executive and the legislative authority, are weak or inconsistent, and the socio-political development toward democracy and peace is unpredictable. Hence, the involvement of abundant international enterprises in a host country’s local economic activities always and automatically means an involvement in steering the host country’s social development. This involvement entails great responsibility for international enterprises in “developing” countries. Depending on the manner in which international actors perform this task, they have the potential to both conduct beneficial business activities and, simultaneously, support a country’s journey toward an economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable future.

In peace-building in Myanmar/Burma, the responsibility of international and national private sector actors becomes especially apparent. They are part of a society that is in the midst of transitioning from a military regime, including decades of civil war among ethnically conflicting parties, to a democratic and peaceful union of different ethnicities. Especially, but not exclusively, resource-intensive and widely geographically distributed business affects the perceptions and minds of the conflicting parties and the civil society at large. In scientific terms, these influences can be viewed as part of a change process of transforming harmful societal practices, which, over the course of decades, have become institutionalized, into socially conducive practices.

The animus for this study, therefore, is to provide an understanding of how different private sector, governmental and non-governmental actors that are directly or indirectly involved in peace-building in Myanmar/Burma form collectives to support the change in societal practices. I also presume that, in this context, “unity is strength”; through showing how unity is formed in an institutionally precarious environment, I hope to contribute to business research and practiced business that advances the understanding and benefit of not only individual organizations or people but also society as a whole. The proverb below nicely hints at what it takes (and what it does not take) to change societal practices.

"If you want to walk fast, walk alone; but if you want to walk far, walk together." African proverb
1.2 Objective and research questions

The focus of the early scholarly institutional entrepreneurship discourse was centered on the actions of individuals and, in particular, their characteristics (cf. Battilana et al. 2009). Since then, the importance of collectives in institutional change activities has gained increasing attention (e.g., Wijen & Ansari 2007; Möllering 2007; Steyaert 2007; Ritvala & Salmi 2009; Lounsbury & Crumley 2007; Dorado 2005). The need for a collective of actors (both individuals and organizations) in institutional change processes is rooted in the collective’s extended reach with regard to the mobilization of resources (Dorado 2005) and the creation of a critical mass for the change project (Brito 2001). In both concerted and unstructured efforts, many actors together contribute to the instigation and implementation of institutional change (Battilana et al. 2009).

These change actions have been characterized as long-term planned, goal-oriented and strategic (cf. DiMaggio 1988), as routinized agency based on past, familiar routines (cf. Giddens 1984), or as sense-making acts that help guide actors in their present problematic situation (Dorado 2005). Drawing on this temporal differentiation of institutional change actions, Dorado (2005) ascribes a primarily past and present orientation to the actions of entrepreneurs in particularly hazy and uncertain environments. By contrast, entrepreneurial action based on predictable means-ends logic in an uncertain environment, i.e., strategizing institutional change (Dorado 2005: 397), appears inappropriate and is likely to lead institutional entrepreneurs to “retract from using the future as dominant temporal referent”. If past routines and present sense-making influence institutional entrepreneurs’ actions in hazy, uncertain environments, then how do institutional entrepreneurs perform the mobilization of indispensable collectives for their change intents?

The answer to this question, I argue, lies in understanding the formation of collectives in a turbulent environment as a process that is characterized by more flexible and creative acting. Hence, the phenomenon of this study is the process of forming collectives of actors as an early part of an institutional change process. Although institutional change, e.g., in the form of a societal practice consisting of rule-informed actions (Weik 2011), is the intent of such a collective, this study’s focus does not fall directly on the actual institutional change process but on the formation of collectives as a necessary basis for it. In view of the study’s empirical context, peace-builders from a private sector, governmental, and non-governmental background form networks to instigate a change in the institutionalized practices among conflicting parties in Myanmar/Burma.
The manner in which individual actors (humans and organizations) act in the forming of collectives for institutional change constitutes the core focus of this research. Hence, the leading research question of this study asks: How do individual actors act in the process of forming collectives for institutional change in peace-building in Myanmar/Burma? This question reflects the underlying processual nature of change, i.e., a focus on processes instead of static phenomena (cf. Rasche & Chia 2009; Langley et al. 2013).

The forming of collectives of actors, who I regard as institutional entrepreneurs, in particular institutional change processes is assumed to be subject to context-specific characteristics. Emphasizing the magnitude of environmental influences on individual acting, an exploration of individual institutional entrepreneurs’ acting for the creation of collectives requires an understanding of how acting can influence the environment while simultaneously being influenced by it. Therefore, this study aims to answer two research sub-questions, the first of which provides the understanding for answering the second. The first sub-question asks: How does the acting of institutional entrepreneurs in unstable environments influence such environments? It aims to explore the interplay between actors’, i.e., institutional entrepreneurs’, acting to influence their environment and, in parallel, the environment’s unpredictable influence on actors’ acting. Examining this recursivity from the actors’ perspective is expected to illuminate the conceptual characteristics of acting and behaving in institutional change processes in turbulent environments.

Bearing these characteristics in mind, the second sub-question asks: How do institutional entrepreneurs in Myanmar/Burma instigate the forming of peace-building networks? This question turns to the actual process of actors forming networks for institutional change. Theorizing from data created about and in the study’s context, Myanmar/Burma, the forming of collectives, viewed as mobilizing networks, is investigated in light of the non-linear and non-teleological characteristics of acting in turbulent environments. The second sub-question focuses on understanding individuals’ acting for mobilizing others to join collectives and for creating legitimacy for being part of the collectives.

1.3 Positioning and contributions

This dissertation explores a phenomenon, i.e., the forming of institution change networks, that is anchored in the disciplines of sociology, management and organizational studies, as well as marketing, and that is embedded in an international business context. In the scientific-theoretical landscape, the study is
located at the crossroads of sociological institutionalism and creative/critical entrepreneurship. Through additional borrowing from the business network approach rooted in Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) and the discourse of organizational legitimacy, I aim to provide an understanding of a crucial element of institutional entrepreneurship, namely the forming of collectives. These collectives are viewed as networks that consist of relationships among individual and organizational international actors and are interwoven in wider social, economic and cultural environments. Hence, this study contributes to debates about contextualization in international business research, too (cf. Baker et al. 2005; Mainela et al. 2014).

Network formation, or mobilization, processes have been subject to research in political science, too. For example in the field of public administration network studies are concerned with decision making processes about public resource allocations (policy networks), collaborations among actors who by themselves are not able to provide a good or service (collaboration networks), or the coordination of network member organizations (governance networks) (cf. Isett et al. 2011). Within the discourse about policy networks challenges similar to the one connected to this dissertation’s phenomenon have been researched. For example, Bevir and Richards’ (2009) analysis of methodologies in policy network research shows the necessity of contextualized approaches to network dynamics so as to create an understanding of the unique and unpredictable nature of steering policy networks. Moreover, in studies focusing on development and peace-building the dynamics between different actor groups have been investigated (e.g. Barnett et al. 2007; Gerson 2001). Here, too, the interest in understanding involved actors’ collaboration, especially with the private sector, comes close to this dissertation’s concern.

Despite similar and partly overlapping research interests and fields, however, this dissertation differs from political science discourses through an emphasis on business actors and their collaboration with other, political actors. In contrast, networks in political science studies are largely seen through the lens of public actors and focus on decision-making or power dynamics in relation to other actors, including the private sector.

The theoretical basis of network studies in political science remains somewhat vague (cf. Isett et al. 2007) through building in part on quantified views on social networks (e.g. Snijder 2011) and resource dependence theory (Pfeffer & Salancik 1978) as utilized, for example, by Huang and Provan (2007). I draw in my business study on theoretical discourses originating in marketing, organizational and
entrepreneurship research. In these fields, network mobilization has been researched more generally in the institutional entrepreneurship literature and, more specifically, from a network dynamics perspective in the IMP business network literature, among others. Institutional entrepreneurship researchers (e.g., DiMaggio 1988; Aldrich and Fiol 1994; Fligstein 1997; Dorado 2005; George et al. 2015) have emphasized the importance of understanding the mobilization of resources for institutional change intents (cf. Dorado 2005). Business network researchers (e.g., Halinen et al. 1999; Brito 2001; Mouzas & Naudé 2007; Ritvala & Salmi 2009) have also given attention to how and under what circumstances networks are created.

The outcomes of existing studies in this field have produced insight into the different stages of mobilization processes and the individual characteristics of mobilizing actors. However, an understanding of the process of network creation, particularly in an unpredictable context, requires a more intense consideration of the context’s influence. This consideration, I argue, can be achieved through a contextual and processual view of the forming of a network.

As a first step, I identified the characteristics of institutional entrepreneurial acting generally in turbulent contexts (see publication 1). Turning to a relationally and temporally embedded view of agency (Emirbayer & Mische 1998) and borrowing from bricolage (Lévi-Strauss 1966), emancipation (Rindova et al. 2009) and effectuation (cf. Sarasvathy 2001) as theoretical perspectives on creative entrepreneuring, I maintain that institutional entrepreneuring in turbulent contexts is characterized by pluralism, non-linearity and non-teleology. These characteristics, I contend, serve as the basis for and theoretically and methodologically inform research about institutional entrepreneurship as a process in turbulent contexts.

Building on this conceptual foundation work, I scrutinize the pluralist characteristic in two subsequent studies (see publications 2 and 3). Analyzing peace-building networks in Myanmar/Burma, I provide an understanding of how institutional entrepreneurs, functioning as network mobilizers, act in the process of network mobilization, i.e., reticence, adaptability and incentivization. In the third study, I investigate the creation of legitimacy for becoming part of an institution changing network and show how perseverance in the form of repeated engagement in an ad-hoc network leads to legitimacy as an incumbent in a peace-building community and how legitimation affects the network itself. All four identified methods of acting are rooted in the characteristics of institutional entrepreneuring, i.e., they are non-linear, non-teleological and inherently collective. These methods
of acting constitute what has been referred to as becoming, based on Whitehead’s (1929; cited in Steyaert 1997) process philosophy. Institutional entrepreneuring includes the process of becoming of a network and describes a dilemma that is characterized by environmental dependency and economic uncertainty (Steyaert 1997).

Through this contextual and processual view of the forming of collectives for institutional change in a turbulent environment, the study allows insights into individual acting in relation to others in the network forming process. The focus on individual acting in this organizational concern from a process perspective has been noted as being underrepresented. (Langley et al. 2013); my study contributes to an understanding of this phenomenon.

Additionally, the study responds to the need for processual conceptualizations of network structure changes over time (Ritvala & Salmi 2009; Halinen et al. 1999) and, more specifically, the mobilization of actors in hazy organizational fields (Dorado 2005). In contrast to the hitherto prevalent view of the institutional entrepreneur as a pro-active actor (Battilana et al. 2009) or “champion for institutional change” (Ritvala & Salmi 2009: 412), my study points to the reticence of network mobilizers, which helps them in overcoming obtrusiveness and creating legitimacy to act as network mobilizing institutional entrepreneurs.

I provide a rich and locally contextualized understanding of this entrepreneurial process and, in doing so, respond to a call for social constructionist-informed research (Fletcher 2006); the relational and temporal embeddedness and dependency become apparent when examining the phenomenon as a relationally and communally constituted process (ibid.). Consequently, my study also contributes to knowledge about institutional change instigation processes in the form of processual “know-how” instead of variance-based “know-that” (Langley et al. 2013). More generally, this research represents a contribution to understanding institutionally rooted change processes in networks (Brito 2001) and also provides insight into entrepreneurial activities in the political sector (Jennings et al. 2013).

Although one of the main outcomes of this study, i.e., the analysis of four methods of individual entrepreneurial acting, is individual by nature, the methods of acting are related to collectives of actors and occur in collectives. Thus, my conceptualizations methodologically contribute to a meso-approach that helps transcend the distinction between the individual and the structural levels of analysis (cf. Steyaert 1997; Dorado 2013) and thus makes it possible to observe one of the main elements of institutional entrepreneurship where it is enacted.
The introduction and summary of the study’s three articles reflect, too, the development of my own thinking about research. Written over a period of four years, the different approaches to theory, methodology and philosophy of science become visible in the three articles and, to some degree, are the cause of discrepancies which I point out in the end if this study.

1.4 Empirical undertaking

My dissertation draws on a set of interviews, observations and secondary data about the peace-building process in Myanmar/Burma. During two periods in 2013 and 2014, I conversed with governmental, non-governmental and private sector actors about their involvement in the South-East Asian country’s transition from a war-ridden dictatorship to a peaceful and democratic nation.

Myanmar/Burma, as a context, lends itself to analyzing the forming of peace-building networks because numerous organizations have entered the country since its opening in 2011. Since then, non-governmental organizations have been able to legally operate in Myanmar/Burma, international sanctions in the form of trade embargoes have been loosened—attracting international companies—and foreign governmental representations have returned or resumed their operations in Myanmar/Burma.

The country remains affected by warlike operations between the national military and several armed ethnic minority factions. Furthermore, politically, the central government is close to the national military, and political representations of the ethnic minorities struggle for power and recognition in determining the country’s future. In addition, religious tensions, primarily between Buddhist and Muslim communities, complicate the political and social environment for negotiating peace and creating a democratic society. Overall, the institutional environment in Myanmar/Burma is turbulent, unpredictable and adverse (cf. Meyer & Thein 2014).

In Myanmar/Burma, institutional change in the form of socialized practices among conflict-afflicted actors entails, for example, the manner in which the conflicting parties perceive one another and act in relation one another. To achieve this change, networks of governmental, non-governmental and private sector actors provide platforms for conversations, consult the afflicted parties, build capacities among them and mediate their armed and non-armed conflicts.

In my conversations with informants, which were performed in Finland, Switzerland, Myanmar/Burma and Thailand, I aimed to create an understanding of
their daily activities in relation to peace-building generally, its instigation and the cooperation and collaboration with other actors. The outcome of my empirical undertaking is a set of conversations, of which 20 were used for the purpose of this study, and a rich amount of accompanying material in the form of my personal diary, organizational reports, local newspapers and other materials that supported my understanding of the phenomenon.

1.5 Dissertation outline

The remainder of this thesis consists of four main parts. In the following, the second chapter, I introduce and summarize the main theoretical discourses that this study, albeit to different extents, borrows from and contributes to. Chapter three is dedicated to elaborating the study’s research design. Following a description of the chosen scientific-philosophical orientation (i.e., assumptions about ontology, epistemology and human nature), I present the utilized methodological approach.

Thereafter follows a wider contemplation of the study’s empirical context, i.e., the course of peace-building in the South-East Asian country of Myanmar/Burma, with a specific focus on collectives of individual and organizational actors from non-governmental, governmental and private sector organizations. I describe the method by which data were collected in and about the peace-building collectives in Myanmar/Burma and conclude with details about the process of data analysis.

The fourth chapter provides summaries of each of the three publications that can be found at the end of dissertation. The first publications (I) is a conceptual paper on the interrelation of agency and structure in institutional change activities. This paper was co-authored and my contribution to it was the planning, co-conceptualization and writing of the paper. The second publication (II) is an empirical study about entrepreneurial behavior in processes of mobilizing peace-building networks. For this co-authored publication I conducted the planning, co-conceptualization, data collection, data co-analysis and writing. Third is an empirical paper (III) about the creation process of legitimacy for peace-builders in Myanmar/Burma. The third paper was sole authored by me.

The fifth and last chapter provides a unified discussion of the main findings of the three papers and answers the study’s research questions. Conclusions are made in the form of theoretical, methodological and managerial implications. Based on a contextual and processual examination I identify adaptability, incentivization, reticence and perseverance as ways of individual actors’ acting for the forming of
networks. These ways of acting reflect the process of becoming of a network as they are non-linear, non-teleologic and pluralist by nature.

Finally, I reflect personally on the peace-building process in Myanmar/Burma and as well as on the course of producing this study and its outcomes and note both its limitations and the potential future research avenues.
2 Literature review

The scientific literature that this study is based on revolves around the collective change of societal practices. With a specific focus on the forming of joined forces for change intents, I refer mainly to the discourse of institutional entrepreneurship and elaborate on an IMP-informed perspective on business networks.

The process of mobilizing or joining a network seems to heavily rely on actors’ ability to create legitimacy in the eyes of other involved actors, which is why I turn to the scientific discourse of organizational legitimacy afterwards. The assumedly wide influence of the institutional environment on the change process and the involved actors demands specific attention to understanding how change collectives come into being. Hence, I introduce a creative and embedded view of agency in institutional change processes and the forming of collectives therein. Drawing on temporally and relationally embedded agency, as well as creative entrepreneuring, in the forms of bricolage, effectuation and emancipation makes it possible to view the acting of individuals in the forming of collectives in a commonly created, contextual and processual manner. The chapter ends with a compendium of utilized theoretical concepts, in which I provide a conceptualization of the forming of collectives for institutional change based on the reviewed literature.

2.1 The change of institutions

Institutions, and societal practices as one form thereof, have been the subject of discussion in sociology for almost half a century. Drawing on early work in institutional theory (cf. Meyer & Rowan 1977; Powell & DiMaggio 1991), Jennings and his colleagues (2013: 2) broadly define institutions as routinized and taken-for-granted sets of ideas, beliefs, and actions with formal and informal characteristics within a society. Viewed as societal practices, institutions are actions by a large group of people in which, over time, certain ways of acting have become institutionalized (Weik 2011).

Institutions can be further classified into regulative, normative and cognitive forces (Scott 2008) that have attained high degrees of resilience and that are reified as social structures (Delbridge & Edwards 2013). Regulative institutional forces, such as legislations and standards (cf. North 1990), can be ascribed to formal institutions, whereas normative and cognitive institutional forces constitute informal institutions and are more resistant to change than formal institutions.
In particular, normative and cognitive informal institutions refer to the values related to socially appropriate and expected acting and behavior and gradually constructed, contextualized rules and meanings, respectively (Bruton et al. 2010). In this study, I concentrate the discussion about societal practices on informal institutions as socially constructed values and meanings that reify themselves in “ways of life and expressions of societal (sub-) cultures” (Weik 2011: 472). Following an informal and constructionist approach to institutional theory (Jennings et al. 2013: 2), I adopt Weik’s (2011: 473) argument that institutions are sets of practices that consist of the actions of many.

Hence, when speaking about institutional change, I refer to changes to constructed values and meanings that are triggered by human beings and expressed in institutionalized societal practices, which, over time, lead to the institutionalization of new sets of societal practices. The change of an institution is addressed most prominently in the discourse of institutional entrepreneurship. In the following two sub-sections, I first explore the roots and current state of affairs of institutional entrepreneurship and then turn to collectives of human beings that both maintain and disrupt societal practices.

2.1.1 Institutional entrepreneurship

The field of institutional entrepreneurship, considered to have been conceived by DiMaggio in 1988 (Battilana et al. 2009: 66), combines the somewhat adverse scientific discourses on institutional theory and entrepreneurship. Neo-institutionalism, as a sociologically rooted perspective on individuals’ and organizations’ congruence with existing rules and norms (Meyer & Rowan 1991), is inherently concerned with the stability and stabilization of the institutional structure that reifies these rules and norms (Kalantaridis & Fletcher 2012). A rule’s or norm’s becoming part of a society’s institutional structure, i.e., a set of institutional prescriptions that guide society’s everyday life, is referred to in the literature as institutionalization. This process leans on the discourse about diffusion in institutional theory (cf. Greenwood et al. 2002) and builds on the connection between cognitive legitimacy and mimetic isomorphism; the larger the group of adopters of a rule or norm is, the larger its acceptance and legitimacy will eventually be (Deephouse & Suchman 2008).

Entrepreneurship, in turn, is about the change and modification of an existing state (e.g., Battilana et al. 2009). The concept has its roots in the Old French term
entreprendre, which means to undertake something (Crookall 1994: 333), and it stands in contrast to stabilization and stagnation.

Combining the discourses of entrepreneurship and institutional theory (cf. Bruton et al. 2010; Pacheco et al. 2010), on one hand, helps researchers in understanding social forces as motives of organizational action in addition to purely individualistic, rational choice-driven acting (Bruton et al. 2010) and, on the other hand, brings to light how stagnant and deep-rooted rules or norms can be changed through the intentional or unintentional actions of individuals or groups of individuals (DiMaggio 1988; Fligstein 1997; Bruton et al. 2010). With regard to the latter perspective, research on institutional entrepreneurship focuses on how institutions, which the literature also refers to as norms, rules, beliefs, and (societal) practices, can be revolutionized (Hwang & Powell 2005; Fuller et al. 2007; Steyaert 2007; Battilana et al. 2009; Garud et al. 2007; Pacheco et al. 2010), i.e., how change that diverges from existing institutions can be initiated and implemented (Battilana et al. 2009). Thus, the focus has been less on explaining externally initiated change (cf. Wijen & Ansari 2007) and more on analyzing endogenously initiated processes (Delbridge & Edwards 2013: 7), i.e., change induced by actors, i.e., institutional entrepreneurs, located within their surrounding (institutional) structure.

The induction of change can be viewed as a form of agency, whereas societal practices, as the targets of change, represent part of the (institutional) structure in which the agency occurs. Hence, Battilana and her colleagues (2009: 67) describe the focus of the institutional entrepreneurship discourse as being on the exploration of agency “however institutionally embedded [in its structure] human agency might be”. The resultant debate, often referred to as an agency-structure debate or a paradox of embedded agency (e.g., Seo & Creed 2002; Garud et al. 2007; Battilana et al. 2009; Wijen & Ansari 2007), centers on the question of how actors can change institutional practices—and thus the institutional framework—if they are influenced by and take for granted the very same institutional framework that prohibits them from envisioning alternatives (cf. Weik 2011: 471).

The paradoxicality of agency in the structure leads to institutional change processes that are complex and inherently social (Ritvala & Salmi 2009). The range of explorations and suggested remedies for this Gordian knot in the institutional entrepreneurship literature is wide. A considerable number of studies have focused on the individual characteristics and practices of agency and human agents as successful institutional entrepreneurs (Fligstein 1997). Ritvala and Salmi (2010) maintain that network mobilizers as individuals typically feel responsible for and
are pro-actively pursuing institutional change, whereas Battilana et al. (2009: 72) define institutional entrepreneurs, whether organizations or individuals, as “agents who initiate and actively participate in the implementation of changes that diverge from existing institutions, independent of whether the initial intent was to change the institutional environment and whether the changes were successfully implemented” (Battilana et al. 2009: 72). Whether intended or unintended, institutional entrepreneurs represent one type of change agents (Pacheco et al. 2010; Battilana et al. 2009) who, as individuals or organizations, “break with [the] institutionalized template for organizing within a given institutional context” (Battilana et al. 2009: 68). For them to be able to act in manipulative (cf. Oliver 1991; Wijen & Ansari 2007) or order-altering ways (cf. Henrekson & Sanandaji 2011), institutional entrepreneurs require the legitimacy of others (Kalantaridis 2007). In other words, institutional entrepreneurs are actors who are able to leverage sufficient resources to create new or transform existing institutional frameworks (DiMaggio 1988; Battilana et al. 2009).

More recent accounts in the discourse of institutional entrepreneurship attribute entrepreneurs’ ability to initiate change mainly to rhetorical proficiencies in the form of guiding discourses about phenomena (Phillips et al. 2004). Inducing new and altering prevailing discourses requires institutional entrepreneurs to possess rhetorical skills and the ability to relate to the situation of others (Fligstein 1997; Battilana et al. 2009) when aligning dispersed interests and opinions to create a common vision for change (Wijen & Ansari 2007). Practically, visions of change are created by means of, e.g., framing activities that explicate the advantages and disadvantages of new and old practices (Battilana et al. 2009; Suddaby & Greenwood 2005; Misangyi et al. 2008). Additionally, institutional entrepreneurs can choose to stimulate the motivation of other actors through appealing to their ethical values (Wijen & Ansari 2007). The approaches that institutional entrepreneurs take to motivate others for their vision of change necessitate adaptation and tailoring to the target audience (Ritvala & Salmi 2009), i.e., its background, expectations and circumstances (cf. Berger & Luckmann 1967).

In addition to the guiding discourses about phenomena, Fligstein (1997) emphasizes institutional entrepreneurs’ political abilities to create and maintain the rules to which disparate groups adhere. These abilities consist of interpreting formal and informal structures, creating commonly shared frames about these structures, and advocating for their legitimacy (Hwang & Powell 2005). In the case of institutional voids, abstract categories must be created, which is also referred to as theorization, or institutions need to be transposed from other domains (ibid.).
Institutional entrepreneurship studies, furthermore, note the environmental conditions in which institutional change can be initiated. Although some studies (cf. Friedland & Alford 1991; Thornton & Ocasio 2008) refer to the potential contradictions of structural institutions within a field as enablers for institutional entrepreneurs to act upon them, other studies note the effects of entrepreneurs’ being located between differing institutional fields (e.g., Seo & Creed 2002). In contextually stable and mature, i.e., highly institutionalized, environments, institutional change is possible for institutional entrepreneurs who occupy a particular position with regard to the prevailing institutions (Greenwood & Suddaby 2006). The institutional entrepreneur becomes dis-embedded from a single (cognitively constricting) environment and is able to envision otherness (Seo & Creed 2002) through exposure to contradicting logics of different organizational fields.

Moving in the borderland of different institutional environments and their regulations grants the institutional entrepreneur the necessary immunity to coercive and normative processes and enables the initiation of institutional change. The gathering of information and political support, in turn, requires institutional entrepreneurs to occupy central positions in networks that span across multiple fields (Emirbayer & Mische 1998) to include formal and informal economic, political and social actors (Ritvala & Salmi 2011).

Institutional change processes are preceded by triggers or jolts that can be summarized as exogenous field-level conditions and endogenous impulses (cf. Battilana et al. 2009: 74). Exogenously, the event of a crisis can induce the introduction of a new practice that is needed to overcome the crisis. For example, the scarcity of resources in one field can lead actors to migrate into other fields and import divergent practices into their own field or introduce new practices to the new field. Viewed from within, certain activities of incumbent actors may create opportunities for change, as well. Whether exogenously or endogenously induced, the creation of a common vision for change in institutional practices is confronted by the historically situated practices and institutionalized processes of the mobilization's target actors (Mouzas & Naudé 2007), requiring institutional entrepreneurs to guide and alter prevailing discourses, as described in this sub-chapter above.

Alongside creating a vision of change, institutional entrepreneurs must identify supporters, opponents and other stakeholders of the change intent (Scully & Creed 2005). According to Wijen and Ansari (2007), a critical mass of supporting actors is necessary to leverage the new practice, i.e., to institutionalize it. Therefore,
monetary and social resources are elementary ingredients (Battilana et al. 2009; Wijen & Ansari 2007) to motivate and appeal to actors for the change intent or compensate for financial losses caused by it (Greenwood et al. 2002).

The characteristics of institutional entrepreneurs, including their abilities and capabilities, in addition to the activities involved in initiating institutional change processes and the conditions of the environment in which the change occurs, are summarized below in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional entrepreneurs’ characteristics</th>
<th>Institutional change activities</th>
<th>Environmental conditions and triggers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutionally dis-embedded position</td>
<td>Guidance of political and institutional discourse</td>
<td>Cross-field contradictions of institutional structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially, politically, economically embedded position</td>
<td>Resource and actor mobilization</td>
<td>In-field crises or voids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimacy from others</td>
<td>Creation of vision for change (framing, theorizing)</td>
<td>Stakeholder identification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and political skills to mobilize resources and actors</td>
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As the preceding overview of the institutional entrepreneurship discussion shows, the ability to initiate and implement a change of societal practices is to a large extent dependent on institutional entrepreneurs’ ability to mobilize like-minded actors, which is also referred to as the process of intérressement (Callon 1991). Only with a critical mass of adopters in place can isomorphic pressure be created, leading to the adoption of a new practice and, eventually, a new institution (Wijen & Ansari 2007). In the following sub-chapter, I elaborate how collectives in initiating institutional change processes come into existence by reviewing the literature on the mobilization of business networks and organizational legitimacy.

2.1.2 Collectives in institutional change

Change in existing institutions or the creation of new institutions is contingent on joined forces, i.e., a suitable collective of supporters who enact the institutional entrepreneur’s claim (cf. Möllering 2007). I treat institutional change collectives as networks that consist of actors, i.e., individuals, organizations, or groups thereof, that are connected through relationships and interact by involving the exchange of
diverse resources (see, e.g., Håkansson 1989; Snehota & Håkansson 1995). The actors of these business networks, originating from a European research project on IMP from the mid-1970s (Håkansson 1982), consist of economic actors and also diverse socio-political actors (Hadjikhani et al. 2008).

Business networks cater not only to an individual or firm level but also to a more aggregated view of network dynamics (Mouzas & Naudé, 2007); therefore, they lend themselves to multi-level and multi-actor analyses in complex environments. Halinen and her colleagues (1999) go so far as to maintain that the business network approach better describes and reveals the creation and especially the transmission of change from one network part to another than traditional organizational theory and marketing approaches. Based on the inclusion of multiple actor types and levels of analysis, as well as the approach’s suitability to view change over time, I utilize the scientific discourse of business network mobilization to investigate the creation of institution-changing networks.

Mobilizing networks for institutional change, also referred to as mobilizing bandwagons (Wijen & Ansari 2007), is facilitated through the process of “enrolling large numbers of other participants to generate diffusion processes in favor of the collective issue at stake” (Wijen & Ansari 2007: 1085). Institutional change begins with an institutional entrepreneur and spreads from the individual to the organizational and, eventually, the network and societal level (Ritvala & Salmi, 2010). Hence, network mobilization is an integral initial part of the institutional change process, which is why I consider institutional entrepreneurs to be network mobilizers by necessity. Put differently, network mobilizers are “the initial champions for institutional change” (Ritvala & Salmi, 2009: 412) who promote the change intent among the network mobilization targets, i.e., those actors that are supposed to become supporters of the change intent. In the following, when using the term institutional entrepreneur, I implicitly refer to someone who also needs to mobilize a network of supporters. Similarly, when referring to network mobilizers, I mean those actors who mobilize networks for the change of institutions. Although the two designations are connected to institutional change, both the part of the institutional change process they refer to and the underlying theoretical discussion are different. Hence, I use both designations depending on the role that the actor is more involved with at a certain point in time.

The mobilization of a network can be explained through the changes of a network’s structure (Lundgren 1992), specifically the changes of rules that constitute and govern the relationships between the network’s actors (Snehota & Håkansson 1995; Mouzas & Naudé 2007; Ritvala & Salmi 2012). Thus,
relationships are based on both formal deals between actors and the concurring informal interests of the actors, and they are conditioned by the resource- and activity-based interdependencies of the relationship partners (Araujo & Mouzas 1994; Araujo & Brito 1998). The quest for complementary resources and activities is one of the main influencing factors of network mobilization (Mouzas & Naudé 2007).

The process of uniting diverging interests for network mobilization is, to a large extent, similar to the initiation process of institutional change, as discussed above. The business network mobilization literature has borrowed from institutional entrepreneurship to better understand the mobilization process of networks (cf. Ritvala & Salmi 2009; 2010; 2011). Network mobilizers face historically-rooted institutional resistance (Mouzas & Naudé 2007) and collective inaction as major obstacles to network mobilization (Oliver 1991), and they are confronted with power struggles over resources and activities and the need to interrupt adversaries’ interventions (Brito 2001). Clarifying the positive or negative monetary and social consequences can help network mobilizers overcome collective inaction (Olson 1965; Ritvala & Salmi 2010). Substantiating the likelihood of these consequences can lead to social pressure (Olson 1965) and group solidarity as positive motivational factors (Posner 1996).

To summarize, the process of mobilizing a network can be divided into interest converging, inaction overcoming and interrupting elements. The resource interdependencies among involved actors and their commitment to the common goal enable the mobilization process. The outcome of mobilization activities can be long-term relationships in smaller networks or short-term relationships in wider networks. Table 2 below outlines the mobilization enablers, process elements and outcomes based on the business network mobilization literature. It is an elaboration of the ‘actor and resource mobilization’ activity that is part of the larger institutional change process.
Table 2. Business network mobilization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mobilization enablers</th>
<th>Mobilization process elements</th>
<th>Envisioned outcomes</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource interdependency</td>
<td>Converging interests to create common change vision</td>
<td>Long-term relationship development for small networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment of actors</td>
<td>Overcoming collective inaction through group pressure and solidarity</td>
<td>Short-lasting relationship development for wide networks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interrupting adversaries’ interventions

The process of network mobilization is inherently relational, i.e., it plays out and must be investigated between the network mobilizer and the target actors. Both the enablers and the process elements noted above are dependent on the mobilizer and mobilization target. The perspective from which the mobilization of networks has been presented in the reviewed studies, however, is at least implicitly that of the network mobilizer. The creation of legitimacy, as discussed below, is equally relational in nature but assumes the perspective of a nonmember, or mobilization target, of a network in the mobilization process. In addition to the emphasized role that technical and material resource interdependency and actor commitment play in network mobilization, actors who become part of an institution-changing network need to possess legitimacy by their constituents to do so (e.g., Scott 2008; Maguire et al. 2004; Ritvala & Salmi 2009). Ritvala and Salmi (2010: 901), for example, stressing the benefits of consensus-building and political will creation that an environmental rescue organization gained from legitimacy in the form of a “holy aureole gleaming around it”. Legitimacy from key constituents provides network mobilizers with the possibility of accessing other stakeholders and scattered resources (Maguire et al. 2004: 658).

The legitimacy of an entity has been addressed most prominently in the discourse of organizational legitimacy. Dating back to the early and mid-20th century, the sociologists Parsons (1960) and Weber (1978) gave direction to what constitutes legitimacy in today’s organizational legitimacy discourse, referring to the congruence between an evaluated entity and the reference values or norms that determine the social evaluation criteria (Kostova & Zaheer 1999; Deephouse & Suchman 2008). The legitimacy of an entity is viewed as obligatory or exemplary for an actor or a group of actors (Weber 1978) and, more importantly, depends on the values of a wider social community, i.e., it is inherently collective (Parsons 1960). In his definition of legitimacy, Suchman (1995: 574) aims to include both...
the efforts of actors to create legitimacy and the influence that the surrounding institutional environment has on it, stating that legitimacy is “a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions”. Thus, the legitimacy of an entity is something that is inherently relational (Suchman 1995; Deephouse & Suchman 2008); it exists as a congruent social construction between an entity and the shared beliefs of a social group and is dependent on collectives but is independent of particular observers (Suchman 1995; Kostova & Zaheer 1999). For example, in their study about the legitimacy of multinational enterprises, Kostova and Zaheer (1999: 64) define organizational legitimacy as the acceptance of an organization by its institutional environment.

The legitimacy of a social entity can be socio-political or cognitive in nature (cf. Aldrich & Fiol 1994; March & Simon 1958). Respectively, an entity conforms to recognized principles, accepted rules and standards or is cognitively taken-for-granted. Providing a three-fold perspective of organizational legitimacy, Suchman (1995) subdivides socio-political legitimacy into exchange- or influence-based pragmatic acts and moral or normative evaluations of entities with regard to their consequences, procedures or structures. The source of pragmatic, moral/normative and cognitive types of legitimacy is dependent on the characteristics of the entity that requires legitimation and its surrounding social (institutional) system (Deephouse & Suchman 2008). In explicating what influences an entity’s legitimacy, Kostova and Zaheer (1999: 64) argue that the process of legitimation itself influences the perception of the entity, as well. Observers of organizations, for example, assess the conformity of an organization’s characteristics to specific standards or models based on their varying interests and positions in relation to the entity (Ruef & Scott 1998). The fact that the institutional environment and the entity to be legitimated influence the entity’s legitimacy reflects an underlying institutional-determinist and strategic-voluntarist logic, respectively, according to Suchman’s (1995) definition of legitimacy.

Entities typically gain legitimacy at an explicit, pragmatic level first and only over time advance to be morally/normatively and eventually cognitively legitimated (Scott 2000; 2008). Accordingly, legitimation, i.e., the process of an entity’s becoming legitimate (Kostova & Zaheer 1999) through an evaluating collective construing it as such (Johnson et al. 2006), eventually leads to its taken-for-grantedness (Zucker 1977; Suddaby & Greenwood 2005: 37). Legitimation processes follow patterns that are similar to institutionalization (Lawrence et al. 2001; Deephouse & Suchman 2008) and network mobilization processes. They are
often triggered by a precipitating jolt or impetus that creates a need for institutional change (Greenwood et al. 2002) or legitimation (Johnson et al. 2006). Thereafter follow different measures to nurture the institution’s or entity’s vigor; as with institutionalization processes, the legitimation of an entity requires its assertion as being functionally superior to the status quo and its construal by constituencies as being concordant with prevailing normative prescriptions (Greenwood et al. 2002), which Johnson et al. (2006: 60) refer to as a widely accepted cultural framework of beliefs, values and norms.

Legitimation and institutionalization processes alike are dependent on collectives of supporting individuals or organizations to result in legitimacy for an entity or the establishment of a new practice, respectively. In other words, no single actor or no single organization alone is able to gain legitimacy for a social entity. Instead, networks of individuals and organizations need to be mobilized to participate in and support the legitimation of an entity (Deephouse & Suchman 2008; Suchman 1995; Elfring & Hulsink 2003).

As part of a small circle of researchers (Human & Provan 2000; Elfring & Hulsink 2003; Walker et al. 2014; Klijn et al. 1995) elaborating the role and influence of networks in organizational legitimation processes Klijn et al. (1995) and Elfring and Hulsink (2003) emphasize the prominence of actors’ existing relationships with already legitimate entities for the creation of local consensus concerning a novel entity in a network. Human and Provan (2000) also point at the interdependency of a network’s legitimacy and that of a network member. Hence, both entities’ legitimacies are causally interlinked (Human & Provan 2000; Walker et al. 2014). Networks can gain legitimacy, in the form of status and credibility, as perceived by both outsiders and its own members, which, in turn, influences the network’s institutional context (Human & Provan 2000). Similarly, an individual network member’s increase in legitimacy can influence the network, its legitimacy and the institutional context (cf. Walker et al. 2014; Ritvala et al. 2010).

As the preceding discussion about networks and legitimacy shows, the mutual influences of the individual, the network and the wider context on legitimation processes are manifold and complex. Networks transmit construal about a new entity (Rowan 1977), i.e., they advance the perception (and legitimacy) of and for an entity within the network. In doing so, networks are both relationally and institutionally embedded, i.e., in addition to the coordination of and control over relationships, they need to symbolically respond to the institutional requirements of their surroundings (Owen-Smith & Powell 2008: 597). The roles that a network in these processes assumes are thus not limited to the creation and spread of legitimacy for
a new entity only. The exogenous pressure that a network is exposed to makes it, particularly in flux, a modifier of the meanings of entities itself (Owen-Smith & Powell 2008), as shown by Scott et al. (2000) in their study about a US metropolitan health care delivery system. Pressure from outside also influences the interaction and thus the relationships between its members (Aldrich 1979; Klijn et al. 1995). Below, figure 1 summarizes the recursive influences of actor legitimacy and the network on the individual, the network and the wider context.

![Fig. 1. Legitimacy and networks.](image)

In addition to the prevailing complex and mostly recursive influences, the relationship between the legitimation process and collectives poses a paradox; as discussed above and assumed at the beginning of this study, legitimacy is required to create a collective (or network). Simultaneously, however, the organizational legitimacy literature notes the need of collectives to create legitimacy for an actor.
Moreover, despite the acknowledgement of influences by the surrounding prevailing institutional framework, the picture that has been created by the network mobilization and organizational legitimacy discourse about the emergence of collectives for institutional change remains both overly voluntaristic and static.

The findings of several studies in the institutional entrepreneurship literature exploring or explaining the initiation of institutional change have led to an over-esteemed, heroic and agentic perspective on institutional entrepreneurs (cf. Hwang & Powell 2005; Jennings et al. 2013). Institutional entrepreneurs seem to act with purpose and in a goal-oriented, teleological manner only (Bruton et al. 2010: 429). This individualist-managerialist perspective “reduces institutionalist theory to a functionalist perspective in which the only place for an agent is to pull the trigger for change once all field requirements are in place” (Weik 2011: 472).

Already more than four decades ago, Giddens (1971: 35), in referring to Marx’s seminal opus *Capital*, writes that “human consciousness is conditioned in a dialectical interplay between subject and object, in which man actively shapes the world he lives in at the same time as it shapes him”, concluding that “[t]he concept of the ‘isolated individual’ is a construction of the bourgeois philosophy of individualism”. This functionalist idea of rational actors disregards contextual influences or contingencies (Weik 2011). Similarly, the decisive power of others in entrepreneurial change processes is overlooked in the existing entrepreneurship discourse (Jones & Spicer 2009), although Berger and Luckmann (1967) maintain that change processes, including institutional change, must be understood as dialectical processes in which actors simultaneously make society and are made by society.

To understand the initiation of institutional change, and specifically the emergence of joined forces for that purpose, as recursive process (cf. Battilana et al. 2009) in between acting (agency) and context (structure), in the following sub-chapter, I turn to a type of entrepreneurial acting that is complex and embedded in nature and that constitutes a multilayered phenomenon.

### 2.2 Creative embedded acting

Institutional entrepreneurship, particularly human institutional action, is a “highly complex and uncertain process, the outcome of which is difficult to predict” (Battilana et al. 2009: 96). The unpredictability of institutional change initiation and, therefore, the necessary creation of collectives require us to view entrepreneurial acting for it as being embedded in rather than being independent of
the surrounding environment (Friedland & Alford 1991). In other words, what occurs around institutional entrepreneurs indeed has an effect on what they do to mobilize networks for institutional change.

As shown in the previous sub-chapter, several scientific accounts (e.g., Autio & Fu 2015) acknowledge the environmental or structural influences on institutional entrepreneurial acting and call for embedded and processual perspectives to better understand the process of initiating institutional change. Such process views, in a pure form, require researchers to distance themselves from variance-based schools of thought (Langley et al. 2013). What ‘goes on’ in mobilizing collectives for institutional change requires the inclusion of the environment or context. A process view entails that the “context is not something that is held constant and outside the changes being analyzed but is itself continually reconstituted within and by processes of interaction over time, generating unexpected and largely uncontrollable chains of activity and events in which actors, environments, and organizations are all in constant and mutually interacting flux” (Langley et al. 2013: 5).

Thus, institutional entrepreneurial acting as a process is to be viewed as being embedded in its structure, which I also refer to more generally as the context or the environment. The uncertainty inherent to the network mobilizing process, again, requires a shift away from overly purposeful and projectable thinking toward views on acting that meld with and accommodate the ever changing flux that it is part of. To account for both the contextuality and non-projectability of entrepreneurial acting, I first elaborate acting that is temporally and relationally embedded (cf. Emirbayer & Mische 1998) and then provide an overview of what I refer to as a creative approach to entrepreneurship: ‘entrepreneuring’ in the forms of bricolage (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1966), emancipation (cf. Rindova et al. 2009) and effectuation (cf. Sarasvathy 2001).

In a pragmatist and social phenomenological sense, agency, or ‘acting’ as its progressive reification, stands in contrast to more utilitarian models of rational action and Kantian voluntarism (Emirbayer & Mische 1998). Following Emirbayer and Mische (1998), agency is treated as distinct from yet conditionally related to the structure that it operates in and attempts to affect. This perspective makes it possible to analyze agency and structure interrelatedly and facilitates an understanding of the mutual effects and forces while avoiding conflationism, determinism, and voluntarism (cf. Delbridge & Edwards 2013). Agency is situated as a dialogical event inside a structure, i.e., it is embedded in it in a relational and temporal manner (Emirbayer & Mische 1998; Steyaert 2007). The temporal
embeddedness of agency refers to human action’s past, present and future. In processes of selective reactivation, past thought and action patterns, being to some degree prescribed by the surrounding context, influence present acting. Similarly, hope, fear and desire concerning what is to come influence actors’ imaginative generation of possible future trajectories of acting. Present acting, influenced by the past and the future (Garud et al. 2007), is based on a practical judgment of “possible trajectories of action in response to emerging demands, dilemmas and ambiguities of presently evolving situations” (Emirbayer & Mische 1998: 971).

The relational embeddedness of agency, in turn, ascribes a social structure that includes relationships with others in general influential effects on how new institutional arrangements are created (Lamberg & Pajunen 2010). Hence, agency must be continuously reevaluated and reconstructed to meet the changing contexts (Emirbayer & Mische 1998) in which it occurs (Mutch et al. 2006). The reconstruction of agency also implies that institutional entrepreneurs’ acting may not always be directly and deliberately intended to initiate and implement institutional change (Welter & Smallbone 2011). Rather, institutional change is shaped by the continuously evolving patterns of interaction between the structure and agency from which it is reproduced (Bruton et al. 2010).

The surrounding structure or context of institutional entrepreneurial acting requires a more profound recognition to understand institutional change behavior and acting (Friedland & Alford 1991). As analyzed above, the scholarly field acknowledges that human acting is both constrained and enabled by its surrounding institutional structure (Bruton et al. 2010: 426). However, only a few scientific studies address the institutional conditions that support or impede entrepreneurial engagement (Dorado & Ventresca 2013). More recently, studies in institutional entrepreneurship have emphasized structural or environmental influences on institutional change processes (e.g., Hwang & Powell 2005; Welter 2011; Mutch et al. 2006).

Simultaneously, the focus has shifted from the analysis of individuals’ attributes, resources, and opportunities toward the entrepreneur’s environment, which poses legal and political conditions (Hwang & Powell 2005) that are cultural, social (Battilana et al. 2009: 73) and economic in nature (Shane 2003). These environments, also referred to as multi-faceted contexts (Welter 2011), constrain and enable institutional entrepreneurs’ choices (Battilana et al. 2009; Garud et al. 2007) and behavior, especially when they are strongly ambiguous, uncertain and turbulent (Welter & Smallbone 2011; 2003). Viewed in a polarized manner, the influence of context can grow to such an extent that it disables any human,
deliberate and creative acting (Garud et al. 2007: 960). In causally deterministic models, this type of agency is of a second-order nature to structure (Leca & Naccache 2006), with the institutional entrepreneur serving the function of an unreflexive and mechanistically reactive carrier of institutions (Delbridge & Edwards 2013; Welter & Smallbone 2011).

The work of Dacin et al. (2002) serves as one example of walking the tightrope between overly voluntaristic and structural deterministic explanations of acting in context, acknowledging that the context changes and also can be changed. The authors state that, although “institutions serve both to powerfully drive change and to shape the nature of change across levels and contexts, they also themselves change in character and potency over time” (Dacin et al. 2002: 45). Similarly, institutionally entrepreneurial acting in changing contexts requires adaptation and networking according to the contextual flux; only in that manner can perpetually occurring challenges be addressed or circumvented (Welter & Smallbone 2011).

To conclude, entrepreneurial acting and its surrounding structure are recursively affecting phenomena, as shown in figure 2 below as a simplified, circularly influencing framework.

Fig. 2. Temporally and relationally embedded acting.
Approaching entrepreneurial acting as temporally and relationally embedded provides researchers with the possibility of escaping overly voluntaristic and deterministic grounds of reasoning (Delbridge & Edwards 2013) and, instead, allows an understanding of how temporality and relationality influence and are
influenced by the environment and acting, i.e., how they interact. Particularly erratic or turbulent environments develop in highly uncertain and unpredictable ways (cf. Johannisson & Olaison 2007; Tobias et al. 2013), i.e., they must be viewed as non-static (Welter and Smallbone 2011; Welter 2011) and strategically non-projectable (Dorado & Ventresca 2013). The volatility of structure and the embeddedness of non-projectable agency therein require a different approach to entrepreneurial acting, particularly in environments in flux. A creative perspective of entrepreneurial acting depicts one way to incorporate the context to form an understanding of (institutional) entrepreneurial processes as being embedded in and part of their environment. It relativizes the generally acknowledged purposefulness and goal orientation of institutional entrepreneurial action (cf. Hwang & Powell 2005). Institutional entrepreneurship must be understood as constructivist rather than as directly intentional, agentic or purposive (Hwang & Powell 2005). Hence, the most suitable approach to understanding entrepreneurial acting, as I argue, is by means of the concept of ‘entrepreneuring’ (see, for example, Steyaert 1997; Weiskopf & Steyaert 2009).

Entrepreneuring refers to the actions and processes of an entrepreneurial endeavor, rejecting the linearity, progressiveness, and sequentiality of developmental stages and a strictly entitative focus on structures and agents (Steyaert 2007: 456-457). Entrepreneuring in and for entrepreneurial endeavors not only is limited to the creation of new business ventures but also encompasses a wide variety of non-monetary creative change-oriented activities (cf. Rindova et al. 2009). For the purpose of this study, I subsume three related views of entrepreneuring, i.e., emancipation, bricolage, and effectuation. These concepts approach entrepreneuring from distinct directions and are also to some degree contradicting, but they share in common the disaffirmation of linear-normative assumptions.

First, emancipation, as the “pursuit of freedom and autonomy relative to an existing status quo” (Rindova et al. 2009: 478; Baker & Nelson 2005), focuses on personal-level desires for autonomy, expression of personal values, and contributions to a different world. Emancipatory entrepreneuring features three core elements (Rindova et al. 2009), one of which is the pursuit of autonomy. Entrepreneurs aim at breaking free from stable and rigidified social relationships to follow their own paths and define their relationships with others autonomously. Furthermore, the exchanges that occur in these relationships are performed in a manner that secures the emancipatory potential of their desired change. Lastly, entrepreneurs enact their change intent in unvarnished and unadorned ways; they
apply a straightforward rhetoric to declare their intentions to others. Although emancipatory acting, along the lines of Rindova et al. (2009), seems to strive for fundamental individuality, by necessity it remains to some degree a collective endeavor. The relationships and resource exchanges needed for the change intent occur only in collaboration with other actors. This tension becomes clear, for instance, in a case study involving Bolivian barefoot entrepreneurs by Imas and colleagues (2012). These entrepreneurs are relationally (and temporally) embedded in their social and cultural environment, but they seek to resist their marginalization in the form of land deprivation and determination by others.

The barefoot entrepreneurship case (Imas et al. 2012) is also an example of how entrepreneurs under severely limited conditions are able to make use of what they have at their fingertips. This second type of creative entrepreneuring is what Lévi-Strauss (1966) referred to as bricolage. It is rooted in the idea of making do with what is at hand (ibid.). When new, pressing issues unexpectedly arise, there may be no time for well-thought-out, rationalized decision making (Lamberg & Pajunen 2010). As is the case in improvisation-driven acting (cf. Di Domenico et al. 2010), a bricoleur will create something from nothing in a creative, resourceful and adaptable manner (Baker & Nelson 2005: 361). This process often includes degraded, fallow, and otherwise undeveloped resources that need to be transformed and reconfigured according to constrained structural contingencies (Baker & Nelson 2005; Garud & Karnoe 2003). Thornton and Ocasio (2008) add that the adaptable and creative way of acting also includes the manipulation of social relationships by importing and exporting practices from one cultural context to another. The outcome of bricolage is seldom a completely solved problem but rather a solution that works “damn well” (Rayner 2006; cited in Dorado & Ventresca 2013: 71).

Effectuation constitutes the third facet of creative entrepreneuring. The origins of effectuation are in the organizational learning theory (March & Olsen 1975), albeit with a focus on new venture creation (cf. Perry et al. 2012). Effectuation also opposes causation-based rational and goal-driven individual acting (cf. Sarasvathy et al. 1998; Sarasvathy 2001; Dew & Sarasvathy 2002). Instead, and similar to bricolage, it draws on the mandate to take “advantage of environmental contingencies as they arise, and learn as they go” (Perry et al. 2012: 837). Effectuated entrepreneurs accustom themselves to the contingencies of (uncertain) situations by making use of who they are and their own knowledge and acquaintances (Sarasvathy 2001: 249).
Emancipatory, bricolage-based and effectuated entrepreneurial acting provides views of entrepreneuring that depart from the existing, traditional entrepreneurship literature. In contrast to a stable and causation-based worldview, an entrepreneuring perspective entails a socially (relationally) and temporally entangled and unpredictable perspective (Steyaert 2007). Acting in the form of entrepreneuring is embedded in and sensitive to the contingencies of the past and the present in that it stands in dialogue with the surrounding changing institutional forces. Therefore, and importantly, entrepreneuring is never an individually encapsulated endeavor but instead is relationally embedded and dependent on social interaction. Both bricolage and effectuation explicitly draw on the social connections of the entrepreneur. Although emancipation is, at first glance, an individual, autonomous form of acting, at a more fundamental level, it represents a necessary engagement with and inevitable relational embeddedness in the entrepreneur’s surrounding structure.

Common to all three perspectives of entrepreneuring is the non-projectability and, hence, creativeness of acting (cf. Sarasvathy 2001). Especially, but not exclusively, in contexts characterized by circular causalities and contradictory certitude, entrepreneuring means that the reason an entrepreneur does what he or she does often becomes clear only over the course of acting or afterwards (Dew & Sarasvathy 2002; Steyaert 2007; Dorado & Ventresca 2013; Di Domenico et al. 2010). The characteristics of the emancipatory, bricolage- and effectuation-based facets of creative entrepreneuring are summarized below in figure 3.
2.3 Compendium of utilized theoretical concepts

In the preceding two literature review sub-chapters, I have attempted to clarify and provide an overview of the state-of-the-art literature on institutional entrepreneurship and a non-projective view of agency therein. The focus has been on the initiation of institutional change, particularly on the creation and legitimation of collectives, here viewed as networks, for institutional change. I have elaborated the characteristics of network mobilization and legitimation processes for network entry and described what non-projective agency or acting for initiating institutional change can look like.
The forming of collectives for institutional change (see sub-chapter 2.1) can be understood as a network mobilization process. Viewed from a conventional business network and institutional entrepreneurship perspective, network mobilizations consist of three main elements. First, the diverging interests of different to-be-networked actors must be converged to create a common vision of change. Second, exerting group pressure and solidarity helps in overcoming the inaction of collectives of actors. Third, the process of mobilizing the network needs to be protected from adversaries’ interventions through interrupting their influences on the to-be-networked actors.

The process of network mobilization is supported and facilitated through the commitment of the to-be-networked actors to the common goal of the network. Furthermore, the interdependence of resources among to-be-networked actors works as pull factor and renders network mobilization possible. When actors are perceived as legitimate in the eyes of others within the realms of the network, the process of mobilizing a network is supported, as well. Both the elements and the facilitators of network mobilization processes for institutional change are illustrated below in figure 4.

![Network mobilization process elements and facilitators.](image)
Institutional entrepreneurship, as outlined in sub-chapter 2.1, occurs through individuals’ acting within and on their surrounding structure. After a review of the conventional literature on institutional change processes, I have concluded that a more flexible and contextual perspective of human agency is required to understand how entrepreneurs perform institutional change endeavors.

Agency as a temporally and relationally embedded phenomenon (see sub-chapter 2.2) provides the basis for such a perspective. Viewed in the context of entrepreneurship, the notions of emancipation, bricolage, and effectuation create a view of human acting that also features, in addition to temporal and relational embeddedness, the contextual contingency and non-projectability of acting. This type of acting is referred to as ‘entrepreneuring’, and its characteristics are summarized below in figure 5.

![Diagram of entrepreneuring](image)

**Fig. 5. Entrepreneuring as embedded, contingent, non-projectable acting.**

By means of the empirical study of this thesis, I aim to provide an understanding of how individuals act in the process of forming collectives for institutional change. Stated theoretically, I explore what creative entrepreneuring means in network mobilization processes. Before turning to the empirical part of this study, the following chapter introduces and clarifies the design of the conducted research.
3 Research design

To a large extent, the design of the empirical research for this study has already been set in the previous chapter about the utilized literature. In proposing a contextual, process-based theoretical view of how collectives for institutional change come into being, it is imperative that I make to corresponding choices with regard to the research methodology, including the treatment of the context and data (cf. Lincoln et al. 2011).

First and foremost, I argue, this study must be qualitative in nature. With its roots dating back to the 1920s and 1930s in sociology and anthropology, qualitative research is a field of inquiry that is home to different ontological and epistemological assumptions and methodological approaches (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). It is viewed as spanning two diverging streams: on one hand, a broader and more interpretive, post-modern and critical sensibility and, on the other hand, narrower positivist and naturalistic conceptions of human experience (ibid.).

Quintessentially, however, qualitative research “is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world […] attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 3). Qualitative research enables a necessary proximity to the subject of interest and provides rich and thick descriptions about it; a qualitative approach is “more likely to confront and come up against the constraints of the everyday social world” (Denzin & Lincoln 2011: 9). A researcher following a qualitative approach needs to be fully engaged as a person in the process of performing the project to feel emotions and interrogate whatever he or she is doing (Sergi & Hallin 2011). By contrast, quantitative paradigms focus on the abstraction of a phenomenon (Denzin & Lincoln 2011) to estimate what similar future phenomena will look like, are based on and will lead to. Due to the inherent contextuality of this study, such a predictive approach is, at least in a statistical sense, not feasible.

The commonly criticized unreliability, impressionism and non-objectivity of the interpretive methods of inquiry and analysis in qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln 2011) can be countered by stating that all research, including qualitative and quantitative approaches, is interpretive by necessity: “it is guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (Denzin & Lincoln 2000: 19). Research in general and the social sciences in particular are always embedded in issues of values, ideology, power, desire, sexism, racism, domination, repression, and control (Denzin & Lincoln 2011: 11). During and after the collection and analysis of empirical material bearing on a research
question, researchers speak from within a particular interpretive community that, in its own way, configures the multicultural and gendered components of the act of research (Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Lincoln et al. 2011).

For this study, then, “to talk of entrepreneurship as ‘entrepreneuring’ has major implications for how we think of entrepreneurial knowledge, theory and methods” (Steyaert 1997: 19). Epistemology, method and theorization are interconnected, and methodological considerations cannot be made without taking into account the context of research, specifically the site of research and the researchers’ fundamental understanding of it in the research process (Steyaert 1997).

Inquiring about entrepreneuring for the initiation of institutional change means posing questions about “how and why things emerge, develop, grow, or terminate over time” (Langley et al. 2013: 1). The phenomenon under study is viewed as de facto evolving, and theorization from it builds on its temporal progression (ibid.). In line with Denzin and Lincoln’s (2011) description of the general features of qualitative research, process-informed thinking also specifically makes it possible to investigate human acting in maintaining and disrupting day-to-day organizing (MacKay & Chia 2013). The temporal progression of processual phenomena implies that researchers need to distance themselves from substantive forms and strive for proceeding or progressive forms of thinking that may start with the use of verbs instead of nouns to describe the research scene (cf. Weick 1979). Progressive thinking, furthermore, connotes that the border between theoretical concepts and the empirical context should and will blur (MacKay & Chia 2013). A process view entails that “context is not something that is held constant and outside the changes being analyzed but is itself continually reconstituted within and by processes of interaction over time, generating unexpected and largely uncontrollable chains of activity and events in which actors, environments, and organizations are all in constant and mutually interacting flux” (Langley et al. 2013: 5).

For researchers following this type of school of thought, the implication is as follows: “we interpret, we perform, we interrupt, we challenge, and we believe nothing is ever certain” (Denzin & Lincoln 2011: 10). Building on a qualitative and process-oriented approach to the design of this study’s empirical research, I elaborate its philosophical underpinnings and the consequences for methodological choices in the following sub-chapters. Moreover, I introduce the context of the study and describe how data were “collected” and analyzed.
3.1 Research philosophy

The research philosophy, or the basic system of belief or worldview of a researcher, is reflected in researchers’ ontological and epistemological orientations and ideas about human nature, and it has direct implications for methodological approaches (Guba & Lincoln 1994; Burrell & Morgan 1979). Hence, before turning to the methodological choices made for this study, I explicate its ontological foundation and epistemological orientation and comment on the voluntarist-determinist dichotomy reflected in the discourse on human nature in the subsequent three sections.

3.1.1 Ontological foundation

Ontology, as the philosophical study of reality, is concerned with assumptions about the very essence of the (social) phenomena under study. Referring to Burrell and Morgan (1979), from a simplified and polarized view, ontological assumptions can be divided into two opposing groups (for an organizational-theoretical reconsideration of the paradigm, see Hassard & Cox 2013). On one hand, realists who approach the social sciences in an objectivist manner view the social world external to human beings as a tangible structure that exists independent of them and their appreciation of it. On the other hand, a nominalist perspective, which reflects a subjectivist approach to the social sciences, considers that part of the social world that lies outside human recognition to be concepts or labels only. In other words, a concrete social structure as assumed in realist thinking does not exist (Burrell & Morgan 1979).

Critics of this bipolar view of ontology (e.g., Cunliffe 2011) maintain that subjects and objects are mutually enabling and constraining (cf. Giddens 1984), that both subjects and objects possess agency (cf. Latour 2005) and that subjects and objects are no longer perceived in terms of their traditional meanings (cf. Sveningsson & Alvesson 2003). Hence, ontological differentiations must become more fine-grained than the subjectivism-objectivism duality suggests (Cunliffe 2011). The scope of ontological assumptions, which unfolds between the two extremes (cf. Morgan & Smircich 1980), provides a range of views on reality, including intersubjective interaction, social construction, symbolic discourse, the contextual field of information, and concrete process (Cunliffe 2011). Ontologies need to be understood as a continuum of overlapping approaches that are “neither mutually exclusive, nor wholly encompassing” (Peters et al. 2013: 337).
Brannen and Doz (2010) contend that the interactions of today’s organizations are as widely multi-faceted and contextually bound as the ontological approaches sufficiently sensitive to capture the sophisticated and complex situations are necessary. Hence, to be able to analyze and understand actors’ acting in their environment, an ontological approach midway between extreme realist and nominalist thinking is needed.

One such approach is social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann 1967; Giddens 1984), which is a commonly found paradigm in organizational and, in particular, business network research (Schurr 2007; Peters et al. 2013). Social constructionism, in addition to other related ontological paradigms (for a comparison with critical realism, see, e.g., Peters et al. 2013; Järvensivu & Törnroos 2010), treats the structure that surrounds and constitutes part of humans’ reality as being not the same for all humans; instead, it is the temporal result of a social, collective construction by a certain group of humans (cf. Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008). Similarly, Harré (2001: 23) argues that social worlds are not reducible to individuals’ dispositions but only come into being as joint constructions by many actors. Inevitably, this group of actors involves the researching person, as well; the researcher is not an observing, reactive information processor only but is actively involved and situated in the construction of reality (Peters et al. 2013; Mir & Watson 2000; Fletcher 2011).

Focusing on mental constructions of reality as individual cognitive processes, social constructivism also accounts for socio-cultural practices as an influencing force on the world-creation process (Fletcher 2006). Compared with constructionist thinking, however, constructivist ideas are less concerned with the interplay between acting and the structure it is embedded in (Fetcher 2006). A discourse-based turn in constructionist thinking has led to a stream referred to as relational constructionism. Researchers in this stream focus on the relationality between humans and their contexts, which are primarily expressed rhetorically (cf. Fletcher 2006; Hosking 2004). “Social actors produce social reality through social interaction”, which does not exist outside the social actors (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008: 7). Structure is but an illusion of human practices and their communicative and creative skills (cf. Peters et al. 2013). Hence, social structures are viewed as not possessing active causal powers over humans (Harré 2001; Peters et al. 2013). Relational, social constructionism de-centers particular individuals and emphasizes relational processes as the interactive creation of local rationalities instead (Hosking 2004).
Giddens’ (1984) idea of the construction of society, articulated in his interpretation of a structuration theory and used as the basis for social constructionist thought today (cf. Fletcher 2006), implies that the structure and the agency therein form an inextricable duality. This duality is necessary to understand their mutually constructive relationship (Hosking 2004). By contrast, Emirbayer and Mische (1998), representing critical realism, argue that a related yet distinct view of structure and agency is needed to create a mutually constituting analysis.

For this study, I choose a moderate form of social constructionism that shares similar ontological grounds with critical realism (Järvensivu & Törnroos 2010). This form of social constructionism regards structure and agency as one entity that nonetheless requires analytical distinction to be better understood. Given that business networks are complex, emergent, unpredictable and, thus, limitedly controllable (Ford et al. 2011; Matthyssens et al. 2013), a moderate form of social constructionism makes it possible to recognize and analytically distinguish, albeit in a strongly interdependent manner, the existence of structure (external to human recognition) and agency (see, e.g., Emirbayer & Mische 1998; Archer 1995). That is, humans’ deliberate and unintentional influence on the environment in which they are embedded and that simultaneously affects them is viewed as interconnected and coexistent.

The chosen ontology, furthermore, implies that contextuality is of the utmost importance (cf. Welch et al. 2010) in that truth claims are acceptable only within communities. They need to be based on “evidence that is acceptable to the community and if the community is open to investigating the claim and its evidence in an openly critical manner” (Järvensivu & Törnroos 2010: 101). Lastly, I argue, social constructionism is a suitable ontological paradigm for process-based research. It lends itself to process research because it addresses the ongoing interaction between individuals, organizations and wider fields of context (Langley et al. 2013: 9). That is, organizations are viewed as a progressive form, organizing (cf. Weick 1979), and constituted by their members’ interaction (Langley & Tsoukas 2010). Entrepreneurial processes, characterized by environmental dependency, can especially be understood only if they are recognized as series of events in which “every existing entity unites the multiplicity of the world and thus creates identity and meaning out of its relationship with other entities and parts” (Steyaert 1997: 21).
3.1.2 Epistemological orientation

Epistemology, as the study of knowledge (Steup 2005), is concerned with the relationship between the inquirer and the known (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). To clarify an epistemological orientation means to ask, “What are the necessary and sufficient conditions of knowledge? What are its sources? What is its structure, and what are its limits?” (Steup 2005).

Epistemological thought revolves around assumptions about the grounds of knowledge and falls into a simplified dichotomy of positivism and anti-positivism (cf. Burrell & Morgan 1979). Researchers’ central epistemological concerns are also to determine how to understand and communicate the social world to a constituency. These concerns entail ideas about the types of knowledge that are obtainable. From a positivist perspective, inquiries about the social world seek to explain and predict its development through inherent regularities and causal relationships between its constitutive elements. Assuming the other perspective, the anti-positivist extreme means understanding the (social) world as relativistic and comprehensible by the human beings individually involved in the activities under study only. Anti-positivist research, therefore, cannot observe social phenomena but can understand them only from within (Burrell & Morgan 1979).

As elaborated above, I advocate a temporal, contextual process view of entrepreneurial change activities and conclude that a moderate form of social constructionism as ontological foundation corresponds to process thinking. Hence, an appropriate epistemological orientation “makes human meanings, intentions and actions essential to the generation of an adequate interpretation of a given social phenomenon” (Curran & Burrows 1987: 8). It is located between extreme positivist and anti-positivist epistemologies and includes the researcher as the creator and representor of reality, demanding the researcher’s creativity in conducting the research.

That also means that entrepreneurship research cannot merely “formulate general theories and universal insights” (Steyaert 1997: 23) in an epistemologically functionalist manner (Burrell & Morgan 1979). Furthermore, knowledge about entrepreneurial processes cannot be predictive by implication (Hisrich 1988), or as Langley and Tsoukas (2010: 5) maintain, “human phenomena cannot be properly understood if time is abstracted away”. Rather, entrepreneurial processes such as the initiation of institutional change must be viewed as providing temporally and locally valid accounts that are created through fragments of holistic studies that focus on local knowledge. These accounts must be viewed in their processual
entirety without making direct inferences about the transferal of insight to other contexts (Steyaert et al. 1996). The local situatedness and processuality of knowledge are also reflected in the research questions of this study, as presented in the introduction.

Process-based research is performed following either a variance- or process-informed epistemology (Van de Ven & Poole 2005; Langley et al. 2013). Variance-based epistemology has by far been the preferred understanding of knowledge in the social sciences; it attributes fixed entities with varying characteristics that possess a single meaning over time and are rooted in the immediate causality and uniformity of the context (Van de Ven & Poole 2005). Process-informed epistemology, in turn, takes researchers into the “conceptual terrain of events, episodes, activity, temporal ordering, fluidity, and change.” (Langley et al. 2013: 10). The temporality of social practices and their inherent uncertainty require researchers to transcend the distinction between individual and structure levels and move toward a meso-approach where interactions are described in their context (Steyaert 1997). The interpretation of knowledge based on such an approach offers an understanding about emergence and change, as well as the becoming of something, which marks a landmark in a continuous process of change and serves as an input for the further development of the flux (Langley et al. 2013).

3.1.3 Human nature

Assumptions about human nature in the social sciences concern the relationship between humans and their environment, which is an essential element of this study’s problem setting. In the literature review, I devised a conceptual possibility of viewing the agency-structure dilemma, which is also at the very center of the exploration of human nature. Hence, I do not repeat in depth the argument concerning voluntarism and determinism in this section but provide a brief overview only.

Emerging in the Renaissance and maturing during the Enlightenment, voluntarism and autonomy-based thinking about human nature developed. This type of thought has led to the isolation of reason from faith, knowledge from belief and, fundamentally, human liberty from the moral order (Christians 2000: 133). Based on the earlier prestige of the natural sciences, people were thought to have been set free and to dominate nature after a period of having been dominated by nature (ibid.). As one of the most famous Romantic, non-rationalist advocates of human liberty in the social sciences, Jean-Jacques Rousseau regarded self-
determination as the highest human good (Christians 2000: 134). Parson (1937; cited in Coleman 1986) advocated for methodological individualism, which, in essence, is a voluntaristic theory of action and resembles a pure form of human liberty. John Stuart Mill, paving a neutrality-dominated path for utilitarian thinking, maintained that humans prefer to choose badly for themselves rather than have the state force them to choose well (Christians 2000: 134). Although a supporter of neutrality in the social sciences, Max Weber specified and to some degree de-radicalized the value-free nature of the social sciences; in his argumentation, the presentation of research (in the social sciences) must be value-free, i.e., no morally or politically loaded judgment may be made.

However, as explicated above, by its very nature, the research discovery phase cannot be free from personal, cultural, moral or political values (Christians 2000; Denzin & Lincoln 2011). As an opposing, extreme perspective to voluntarism, a determinist viewpoint regards humans and their experience as being products of their external social environment (Burrell & Morgan 1979: 6). In this line of thinking, humans are but reactors whose only degree of freedom is to pull the trigger for an action once all field requirements allow doing so (Weik 2011).

From a more aggregate perspective, thinking about the nature of society can also be put in a dichotomous form. Dahrendorf (1959; in Burrell & Morgan 1979: 10) was among the first to explicitly distinguish between arguably opposing schools of the nature of society, i.e., regulation and change. Theorists of order or regulation regard societies as being persistent and value-consensus-based structures of maintaining elements, whereas change advocates regard the world as being driven by dissent and disintegration, leading to ubiquitous change (Burrell & Morgan 1979). The bipolarity of regulation in human affairs, on one hand, and humans’ emancipation from the limiting structures around them, on the other hand (Burrell & Morgan 1979), also must be considered when defining and enacting the scientific-philosophical orientation of research in general and defining human nature in social phenomena in particular.

Ontology, epistemology and human nature have direct implications for the methodological nature (Burrell & Morgan 1979: 2) of an empirical social investigation. I elaborate these methodological choices in the following sub-chapter.

3.2 Methodology

Methodology refers to the ways of investigating and obtaining knowledge about the social world. Similar to the philosophical orientations discussed in the previous
sub-chapter, methodological choices are also subject to different scientific-philosophical streams and are inevitably intertwined with choices concerning ontology, epistemology and human nature (Burrell & Morgan 1979).

In search of universal laws, nomothetic approaches to obtaining (social) knowledge are concerned with the identification and definition of elements of reality, i.e., their concepts, systematic measurement by mostly quantitative means, and underlying themes (Burrell & Morgan 1979). Ideographic approaches, in turn, emphasize the subjective experience of humans in creating social reality. Instead of seeking to reveal universal laws as part of one, single truth, these approaches center on the ways in which individuals understand the creation, modification and interpretation of their social reality (ibid.). Only through a holistic background concerning the subjects in question, through firsthand knowledge acquired in close proximity to them and through becoming involved in their every-day life can their social world be understood (Burrell & Morgan 1979). Independent of the chosen approach, its methods must follow philosophical decisions so that social research does not become a pure technique (cf. Morgan & Smircich 1980; Cunliffe 2011). This task is not trivial, given that, currently, qualitative research in the field of organization and management theory offers a vast range of metatheoretical and methodological options from which researchers must choose (Cunliffe 2011: 648).

Similar to other qualitative, interpretivist methodologies, the social constructionist-based methodology has the potential to reach beyond the exploratory outcomes of the investigation (cf. Steyaert 1997). Countering traditional critics, it can provide an understanding of the construction of ongoing (entrepreneurial) processes through “the actions and interactions of respondents, by virtue of grasping and comprehending the culturally appropriate concepts through which they conduct their social life” (Steyaert 1997: 26). A methodology along these lines must be context-sensitive (Fletcher 2011). It must be insightful with regard to the researcher’s experience and tacit knowledge of conducting research. Similarly, the feelings of the researched humans, in the form of anxieties, fears and social problems, need to be made explicit. As a whole, context-sensitivity in the process methodology means a turn toward ethnographic accounts, in which locally contextualized understandings of all the people involved in the research process are emphasized (Johannisson 2002; Fletcher 2011). Practically speaking, entrepreneurial processes can be investigated in the form of stories (Steyaert 1997) or events of certain individuals’ experiences, interactions, and anticipations, for instance (Langley et al. 2013). Therefore, longitudinal data from archival, historical or real-time field observations are necessary to follow how processes unfold over
time (ibid.). This phase of research, which is mostly referred to as data collection or gathering, should in fact be designated ‘data creation’ in social constructionist-informed research. As elaborated above, the material that is eventually set down as text in black and white is the result of listening, speaking and interpreting, i.e., creating instead of cherry picking pre-existing fruit off a tree.

Creating data often proceeds along an abductive path of reasoning or theorizing (Klag & Langley 2013). Abduction is a protracted process of zigzagging between empirical data and theory (Gadde & Dubois 2002; Locke et al. 2008), in which “empirical observations and surprises are connected to extant theoretical ideas to generate novel conceptual insight” (Langley et al. 2013: 11).

In the first of the following two sections, I provide details about the data creation (learning) process as it was performed for the two empirical publications included in this study. Then, I turn to the methods by which the data were analyzed and specify how they differ from one another to some degree in the two empirical publications. The third section is dedicated to describing the empirical context of the study.

3.2.1 Data creation

The data of this study are based on conversations with people who are involved in the peace-building process in Myanmar/Burma and on the experience of being present in the crisis region and participating in different events revolving around the peace-building process. Additionally, I collected newspaper articles and research reports about Myanmar/Burma’s peace-building process.

When drafting the data collection periods in the beginning of my doctoral training, in a somewhat crude manner, I decided that the method for acquiring data for this study would be personal interviews. After all, according to Steyaert (1997: 27), interviews enable “impressions of various perspectives of the phenomenon and how they are interconnected and they provide some insight into the interrelation between the interpretation of meanings and interactions”. For the first series of interviews, which occurred in Finland and Switzerland in January 2013, I outlined a loose script, including questions that were supposed to open up conversation partners’ personal and professional backgrounds, in addition to their involvement in crisis projects more generally and Myanmar/Burma more specifically (see appendix 1). The questions for the second series of interview, conducted in Myanmar/Burma and Thailand in April, May and June 2014, additionally included the topic of collaboration with other peace-building actors.
(see appendix 2). Details about the interviews conducted and analyzed for this study as well as the motivation for selecting interview partners are provided in table 3.
Table 3. Interviews and interviewee details

<table>
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<th>Interview partner</th>
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<th>Length of recorded interview</th>
<th>Title/position of interview partner</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Organization type</th>
<th>Selection motivation</th>
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<td>50 min / 10 pp</td>
<td>Program Director</td>
<td>Alpha</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
<td>Lead informant and representative of key 2nd-tier negotiation NGO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>21.01.2013</td>
<td>50 min / 13 pp</td>
<td>Special Representative for peace mediation</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>Key-governmental actor with expertise in context region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>22.01.2013</td>
<td>70 min / 18 pp</td>
<td>Deputy Executive Director</td>
<td>Gamma</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
<td>Representative of independent NGO focusing on business involvement in conflict regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>22.01.2013</td>
<td>40 min / 10 pp</td>
<td>Program Manager for business involvement</td>
<td>Gamma</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
<td>Representative of independent NGO focusing on business involvement in conflict regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>22.01.2013</td>
<td>40 min / 10 pp</td>
<td>Executive Director</td>
<td>Gamma</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
<td>Representative of independent NGO focusing on business involvement in conflict regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.04.2014</td>
<td>70 min / 17 pp</td>
<td>Project Manager for private and public sector risk management</td>
<td>Gamma</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
<td>Representative of independent NGO focusing on business involvement in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>22.01.2013</td>
<td>30 min / 8 pp</td>
<td>Executive Coordinator</td>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
<td>Representative of key-NGO uniting policy-making, peace-building NGOs and GOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>24.01.2013</td>
<td>80 min / 19 pp</td>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>Epsilon</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
<td>Representative of key policy-making NGO representing national NGOs in a European country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>24.01.2013</td>
<td>60 min / 15 pp</td>
<td>Advocacy Manager</td>
<td>Zeta</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
<td>Representative of global, faith-based NGO with recently launched operations in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.04.2014</td>
<td>40 min / 9 pp</td>
<td>Director of ceasefire negotiations implementation</td>
<td>Eta</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
<td>Key-governmental actor in peace negotiations in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview partner</td>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Length of recorded interview</td>
<td>Title/position of interview partner</td>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Organization type</td>
<td>Selection motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>23.04.2014</td>
<td>50 min / 14 pp</td>
<td>Deputy Head of Mission Theta</td>
<td>Theta</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>Governmental actor advocating economic and social interests of a European country in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>25.04.2014</td>
<td>60 min / 18 pp</td>
<td>Chargé d’Affaires Iota</td>
<td>Iota</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>Governmental actor advocating economic and social interests of a European country in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>08.05.2014</td>
<td>50 min / 12 pp</td>
<td>Director Kappa</td>
<td>Kappa</td>
<td>Non-governmental</td>
<td>Key-native actor in peace-building process with legitimacy among ethnic minority authorities and the international community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>09.05.2014</td>
<td>40 min / 11 pp</td>
<td>Senior Vice President Lambda</td>
<td>Lambda</td>
<td>Private sector, telecommunications</td>
<td>Representative of MNC recently entered Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.05.2014</td>
<td>30 min / 10 pp</td>
<td>Tax Director Mu</td>
<td>Mu</td>
<td>Private sector, consulting</td>
<td>Representative of consultancy for foreign investment in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>23.05.2014</td>
<td>30 min / 6 pp</td>
<td>Managing Partner Nu</td>
<td>Nu</td>
<td>Private sector, consulting</td>
<td>Representative of consultancy for foreign investment in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>25.04.2014</td>
<td>40 min / 9 pp</td>
<td>Founder O micron</td>
<td>O micron</td>
<td>Private sector, luxury food industry</td>
<td>More than 20 years of experience as entrepreneur and peace-builder in various parts of Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>24.04.2014</td>
<td>70 min / 19 pp</td>
<td>Development Consultant Pi</td>
<td>Pi</td>
<td>Private sector, consulting</td>
<td>Representative of consultancy for foreign investment in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>13.05.2014</td>
<td>60 min / 14 pp</td>
<td>Economic Advisor Rho</td>
<td>Rho</td>
<td>Governmental</td>
<td>Governmental actor advocating economic and social interests of a European country in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>12.05.2014</td>
<td>50 min / 10 pp</td>
<td>Policy Advisor Sigma</td>
<td>Sigma</td>
<td>Private sector, consulting</td>
<td>Representative of consultancy for foreign investment in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Process research requires longitudinal data in the form of archival, historical, or real-time field observations to be able to observe processes unfold over time (Langley et al. 2013: 6). I talked with my conversation partners about their involvement in the peace-building process in Myanmar/Burma, mainly in a retrospective and present manner; however, I also made inquiry into their future expectations. Given that the peace-building process in Myanmar/Burma, and the processes of forming peace-building collectives within it, has been ongoing for several years and is likely to last for a while, it is impossible to temporally delineate from other processes. More generally, Vidich and Lyman (2000: 38) state that “the data collection process can never be described in its totality because these ‘tales of the field’ are themselves part of an ongoing social process that in its minute-by-minute and day-to-day experience defies recapitulation.” Hence, my aim was to understand how my conversation partners have so far gone about facilitating (the necessary) collaboration with other individuals or organizations to form collectives that support the peace-building process. This understanding does not provide beginning-to-end processes but remains a fraction of processes that are constantly ongoing.

My conversation partners were people of both domestic and international origin, working with or for for-profit organizations, not-for-profit/non-governmental organizations or governmental organizations of Burmese and/or international backgrounds. A clear distinction between domestic and international actor affiliations can therefore not be made. Through the initial contacts of my university with Finnish governmental departments and non-governmental organizations, I made first contact with individuals performing peace-building work in Myanmar/Burma. After the first series of conversations in Finland and Switzerland, I had made sufficient contacts from my conversation partners in a snow-balling fashion (Noy 2008) to arrange meetings with mostly non-governmental organizations in Thailand. I started the second series of conversations with people in Bangkok and, again, by means of snow-balling, made an ample number of contacts in both Thailand and Myanmar/Burma. Once I arrived in Yangon, I was able to meet people based on the recommendations of previous conversation partners. Additionally, I boldly (and naively) contacted embassies, sneak into blocked business towers, crept into press conferences concerning peace talk progress reports or started chats with expatriates in cafés and restaurants who either themselves agreed to a conversation or recommended other people or places where I could potentially find more conversation partners.
In addition to the conversations, I kept a diary (on a daily basis) during the second series of encounters in which I reflected on the experiences gathered during the day. These experiences were not restricted to encounters with conversation partners but included memories from and thoughts about my daily activities. For instance, I visited a Thai hospital providing health care for Burmese refugees located in the border region between the two countries. I attended a conference for Norwegian for-profit enterprises in Yangon and accompanied the company representatives to meetings with Burmese ministers in Naypyidaw. I joined a team of local journalists on an expedition to the Myitsone Dam near Myitkyina to listen to a regional army’s announcement about the progress of the peace talks between the government and the ethnic minorities. During my data creation trip, the notes helped me to form my own understanding of the peace process as the scene of the phenomenon (cf. Makkonen et al. 2012) that I am interested in. Afterwards, reflections on these events helped me put myself in the places and circumstances of the conversations I had and clarify how things came about.

The method for identifying my conversation partners and ending up in certain geographical places and thematic events was rooted in the readiness to accept and follow serendipity, i.e., planned happenstance (cf. Mitchell et al. 1999). Additionally, the metaphor of the qualitative researcher as a methodological “bricoleur” (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1966) who uses his or her craft’s tools and deploys whatever strategies, methods, or empirical materials are at hand (Becker 1998) fits how the data for my study came to be, i.e., became (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). For instance, I challenged myself to stay open-minded and be alert to opportunities to learn and become acquainted with new people. Although I do not speak Burmese, I acquired the verbal and nonverbal vocabulary to greet locals to approach them more closely and show them my willingness to approach them. Appendix 3 shows a scrap sheet I carried with me in Myanmar/Burma to recognize and pronounce numbers. In this manner, and in addition to the self-written notes about abovementioned peace-building events and experiences, I was able to gather a total of 38 face-to-face conversations (with the exception of three video-conference events), of which 20 were used for systematic analyses in this study, thereby providing a highest possible homogenous proportioning of actor-types. The other conversations as well as other data were analyzed not structurally and served to create wider, contextual understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Further systematic analysis of this latter part of data, I maintain, is unlikely to produce new or other conceptual insight. See table 4 below for details about the
type of data created and collected as well as its use for the research project as a whole and the understanding of the research phenomenon in specific.
Table 4. Progression of data collection/creation and understanding of the phenomenon

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Type of data</th>
<th>Type of documentation</th>
<th>Amount of data*</th>
<th>Use in terms of the research project</th>
<th>Contribution to understanding of the research phenomenon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/2012 – 12/2012</td>
<td>Key informant discussions</td>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>180 min (60 min + 120 min)</td>
<td>Presenting research plan, defining research context, identifying initial informants</td>
<td>Defining research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/2013</td>
<td>Primary data – 1st set of interviews (interviews 1 – 8)</td>
<td>Transcribed recordings</td>
<td>420 min (avg. 53 min per interview), total of 101 pp</td>
<td>Exploratory study for 1) gaining general insight into peace-building network mobilization and 2) getting connected to key peace-building actors in context region</td>
<td>Understanding network formation processes for peace-building in turbulent contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/2014 – 6/2014</td>
<td>Primary data – 2nd set of interviews (interviews 9 – 38)**</td>
<td>Transcribed recordings, notes</td>
<td>1680 min (avg. 56 min per interview), total of 362 pp**</td>
<td>Main study for 1) gaining insight into peace-building community in Myanmar/Burma and 2) getting connected to further key peace-building actors in Myanmar/Burma (used together with 1st set of interviews)</td>
<td>Understanding network formation and actor legitimation processes for peace-building in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/2014 – 6/2014</td>
<td>Primary data – diary</td>
<td>Personal, handwritten memo</td>
<td>50 pp</td>
<td>Providing reflection on interview setting during data analysis</td>
<td>Complementing understanding of peace-building network formation processes in Myanmar/Burma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing</td>
<td>Type of data</td>
<td>Type of documentation</td>
<td>Amount of data*</td>
<td>Use in terms of the research project</td>
<td>Contribution to understanding of the research phenomenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/2014 –</td>
<td>Secondary data – 4\textsuperscript{th} set of inquiries</td>
<td>Media reports</td>
<td>7 pp</td>
<td>Clarifying historical and institutional conditions in Myanmar/Burma</td>
<td>Complementing contextual understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/2015 –</td>
<td>Key informant discussions</td>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>180 min</td>
<td>Presenting research plan, defining research</td>
<td>Defining research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/2012 –</td>
<td>Secondary data – 1\textsuperscript{st} set of inquiries</td>
<td>Media and research reports</td>
<td>169 pp</td>
<td>Providing preliminary understanding of context region and its peace-building development</td>
<td>Embedding network forming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/2013 –</td>
<td>Primary data – 1\textsuperscript{st} set of interviews</td>
<td>Transcribed recordings</td>
<td>420 min</td>
<td>Exploratory study for 1) gaining general insight into peace-building network mobilization and network mobilization and 2) getting connected to key peace-building actors in context region</td>
<td>Understanding network formation processes for peace-building in turbulent contexts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Amount of data given in pages (pp) refers to one A4-sized page, standard margins, font size 12, single-line spacing

** Only interviews 9 – 20 were systematically analyzed for paper 3 due to perceived conceptual saturation; interviews 21 – 38 served as non-systematically analyzed background information of Myanmar/Burma’s peace-building community activities.
The outcome of my empirical endeavor is primary data co-created by my conversation partners and me in the form of stories and personal notes I took to support an understanding of the peace-building process in general and the conversations in particular. The stories contain my conversation partners’ (and my) experience and view of the peace-building activities in general and the initiation of forming collaborations with others in particular. Most of these stories are rich, generous stories in which the conversation partners placed their narratives about something that occurred related to peace-building in Myanmar/Burma in the surrounding context (cf. Makkonen et al. 2012).

Most interviews developed into deep and rich conversational accounts of viewpoints and experiences. Only few conversations remained rather short, lasting approximately a half hour and somewhat strictly following the scripted questions; I assume that cultural differences in the understanding of the purpose of my contacting the conversation partners and time constraints or confidentiality issues may have led to those question-and-answer encounters. Nevertheless, also shorter encounters were helpful in contributing to the understanding of the research phenomenon in large.

With all respondents being part of the same peace-building community, both the shorter interviews as well those not structurally analyzed functioned as jigsaw pieces of the puzzle as a whole, i.e. the contemporary and contextual reality. In other words, not systematically analyzed data helped me to establish relations between my informants and key concepts and phenomena occurring in the peace-building in Myanmar/Burma. Moreover, all reported conversation lengths show only those times which were recorded and then used for analyzing data. The encounters with my informants, however, lasted usually a lot (up to two hours) longer. I took notes of non-recorded conversation periods and used to reflect upon when analyzing the recorded data material.

In addition, table 3 provides an overview of the secondary data collected for this study. The reason for choosing a historical and retrospective data creation method lies in its time efficiency and cost efficiency, in contrast to real-time observations of lengthy processes, which nonetheless make it possible to create an understanding concerning the phenomenon of interest, i.e., tracing back what had occurred until the time of the conversation (cf. Langley & Tsoukas 2010). I remain in touch with some of my conversation partners, who inform me about their or their organization’s ongoing activities in Myanmar/Burma. Despite the serendipitous nature of finding conversation partners, their sampling can be described as nonprobabilistic and purposive (cf. Miles & Huberman 1994). Snow-balling as one
purposive method fits especially to cases where the research population is hidden and hard-to-access, as described above.

In order to transport the reader into the research setting, thick descriptions are necessary to create “verisimilitude, statements that produce for the readers the feeling that they have experienced, or could experience, the events being described in a study” (Creswell & Miller 2000: 129). The conversations, which I refer to in my publications as ‘interviews’, are wide and open-ended conversations; indeed, they come closer to being what are referred to as ‘stories’ in a narrative methodology (cf. Gubrium & Holstein 2009; Holstein & Gubrium 2011; Makkonen et al. 2012). The reason is, first, the conversations turned out to be more interactive and mutually constitutive than initially expected, i.e., they were social encounters of collaborative knowledge construction (Järvensivu & Törnroos: 2010). I was not an interrogator, and neither were my ‘interviewees’ respondents simply providing answers to my questions. I realized that merely “maximizing the flow of valid and reliable information residing inside the informant’s mind”, as is common in critical realist studies (Järvensivu & Törnroos 2010: 102), would not allow me to create a sufficiently deep understanding of the phenomenon in question. To understand my conversation partners’ acting in the initiation process of forming collectives for institutional change, I actively and deliberately contributed to the conversation about the phenomenon. According to Langley et al. (2013) and Douglas (1985), creating an open and trusting atmosphere is necessary for researchers to be able to gain access and relate to specialists in the phenomenon in question. Only by these means can a deep and fine-grained understanding of processes at the micro level be created and its credibility and trustworthiness ensured (ibid.).

Next, I turn to the methods by which the data were analyzed for the two empirical publications included in this dissertation.

### 3.2.2 Data analysis

The focus of my data analysis has been on individual acting in relation to others in the forming of collectives for institution-changing peace-building networks. Speaking in terms of individual acting inevitably implies that the analysis aimed at an individual level (in the form of individual human beings or individual organizations as actors). However, the nature of the social construction of individuals’ realities also means that what occurs between the individuals, e.g., within an organization, a network, etc., plays a major role in individuals’ acting. Hence, I do not commit myself to stipulating the individual as the only level of
analysis in this study; instead, I employed a multiplicity of levels to understand what an individual’s acting in the becoming of collectives is like.

The mostly retrospective nature of my data is, as argued in the previous section, indeed suitable for process-based analyses (Flick 2004; Halinen & Mainela 2013). Retrospective and real-time data make it possible to understand phenomena as they have come into being and as they are occurring right now, and they are based on the researcher’s own experience, their subsequent events and the construction of history and anticipation of the future (Halinen & Mainela 2013). Therefore, the analysis process benefits substantially from the involvement of both insider and outside researchers who offer “a means to balance differing perspectives, combining intimacy with local settings and the potential for distancing” (Langley et al. 2013: 6).

In my study, I had the opportunity to take on the role of an insider conversing with individuals and experiencing the peace-building process in Myanmar/Burma up close. My co-author, in turn, was able to view data from further away and provide a slightly different, balancing perspective with regard to the data and their analysis. Moreover, the seesaw between the different sources of data (see section before) and between the literature and the real world helped create a continuously refined understanding of the phenomenon. Okely (1994: 32) describes this abductive method of creating understanding through “insights [that] emerge also from the subconscious and from bodily memories, never penned on paper. […] Writing and analysis comprise a movement between the tangible and intangible, between the cerebral and sensual, between the visible and invisible. Interpretation moves from evidence to ideas and theory, then back again.”

The outcome of analyzing process data needs to enable conceptualizations characterized by tensions, contradiction, paradox, and dialectics in driving patterns of change (Langley et al. 2013: 9). The conceptualizations may take the forms of contextualized, temporally repetitive patterns, underlying mechanisms, and meanings that individuals create through their construal of change events (Langley & Tsoukas 2010). For the first of the two empirical publications (see publication 2), the transcribed conversation data were coded by means of NVIVO (qualitative data analysis software, QSR International Pty Ltd., Version 10, 2014) as a computer-based qualitative data analysis tool. I followed a three-fold analytical process in which, first, the main actors, their activities and the levels of operation were identified. Second, I sought to deduce the enablers of and obstacles to network mobilization processes and, third, concluded with individuals’ entrepreneurial
acting (in the paper, referred to as ‘behavior’) utilizing the enablers and overcoming the obstacles.

In contrast to the somewhat entity-driven nature of mobilization processes (cf. Van de Ven & Poole 2005; Langley et al. 2013), in publication 2, the analysis of the data for the second empirical publication (see publication 3) more closely approaches what Langley and her colleagues (2013) refer to as process-based process research. This difference may be due to my changed personal understanding of processes in management and organizational research; it is certainly also due to the limitations entailed by a variance-based perspective.

With a focus on actor legitimation for becoming part of a network, I initially attempted to identify legitimation processes in a computer-based coding manner in the conversation data. I abandoned this approach, having understood that the process of legitimation cannot be limited to and identified by means of certain indicators such as keywords, mostly due to the bounded rationality and imperfection and complexity of legitimation processes in general (March & Simon 1958). Instead, I manually identified legitimation episodes as parts of the wider process of collective forming (cf. Herbst et al. 2011) through rereading the conversations used for this publication.

I relied on methodological accounts (Ruef & Scott 1998; Suchman 1995) in the organizational legitimacy literature to find and interpret informants’ explicit and implicit construal processes of a novel entity in their peace-building activities. I depicted the episodes by breaking them down into their contextualizing environment, source, target, type and level, as shown below in table 5. In order to evaluate a legitimation episode by means of its environment I compared the legitimated entity with surrounding reference values or norms. The identification of a legitimation source required an inquiry into who or what legitimates. Similarly, identifying the legitimation target meant to ask for whom or for what legitimacy was created. The type of legitimacy created refers to Suchman’s (1995) three-fold categorization of pragmatic, moral/normative, and cognitive legitimacy (see section 2.1.2). Finally, in order to identify the levels on which legitimacy operates I looked at its flow on and between social, network and individual levels.

Important, however, these individual elements of legitimation episodes served only to enhance the analytical understanding of the episode; without viewing them in connection with the other constitutive elements and as being embedded in their context, they are as such not meaningful. The analysis of legitimation episode elements produced emerging themes which were then observed more in detail and put in relation to each other.
Table 5. Legitimation episode elements and their analysis foci

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element of legitimation process</th>
<th>Legitimation episode and legitimacy-contextualizing environment</th>
<th>Legitimation source</th>
<th>Legitimation target</th>
<th>Legitimacy type</th>
<th>Level of operation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus of analysis</td>
<td>Comparison between entity and reference values/norms</td>
<td>Legitimation through whom (subject) or what (object)?</td>
<td>Pragmatic, moral/normative, individual level</td>
<td>Social, network, legitimacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Klag and Langley (2013: 152) refer to the process of interpreting and theorizing from analyzed data (in an abductive manner) as conceptual leaping. It is also what has been described as bricolage (cf. Klag & Langley 2013; Langley 1999), i.e., a tedious and vacillating method for generating abstract theoretical ideas from empirical data. Having oscillated between emerging patterns, themes or meanings in the analyzed data and the respective literature, the understanding of individual acting is less of an attempt to create meaning structures aimed at generality than it is an attempt at local circumscriptions (Geertz 1983; Steyaert 1997; Holstein & Gubrium 1994). To move from the description of surface abstractions to explanations of abstract processes (Langley et al. 2013), I sought to emphasize the mechanisms in the process of collective forming that are common to the group of individuals with whom I conversed. These findings are locally bound and context-dependent but “without preventing us from retelling such a story/theory elsewhere” (Steyaert 1997: 29).

To provide a better understanding of peace-building in Myanmar/Burma as the locality of this study, I present in my empirical papers a selection of text artifacts from media and tales from my stay in Asia that hopefully help in grasping the study’s context.

### 3.3 Peace-building in Myanmar/Burma

This study rests on and its phenomenon of interest is located within the ongoing peace-building process in Myanmar/Burma. Officially, the country’s name is the ‘Republic of the Union of Myanmar’. To date, however, certain ethnic groups and other government-opposing actors remain ideologically opposed to the current military-based government and prefer to call their country by its former name, ‘Burma’, which dates back to the British colonial era that ended in the mid-20th
century. To underline my political neutrality as a researcher I decided to refer to the country as Myanmar/Burma within this study.

Myanmar/Burma is located in South-East Asia (see figure 6), bordering Bangladesh and India to the North-West, China to the North-East and Laos and Thailand to the East and South-East. The country has a coastline on the Andaman Sea that is several thousand kilometers long. Its administrative capital is the built-from-scratch city of Nay Pyi Taw, located approximately 300 km north of the former capital and current financial and social metropolis of Yangon, also known as Rangoon. According to the latest population and housing census from spring 2014 (Ministry of Immigration and Population 2015), there are approximately 51 million people living in Myanmar/Burma, with the majority being Theravada Buddhist. Stemming mainly from Bangladesh, there is also a Rohingya-designated Muslim minority that lives predominantly in Rakhine State in Western Myanmar/Burma and the larger metropolitan areas of the country.
Since the end of the 50-year military junta in 2011, an official peace-building process has been under way, paired with democratization as the political opening of the country. Several ceasefire agreements between the Tatmadaw, i.e., the national military, were made, and peace talks were initiated. Most of the armed groups have indicated their willingness, albeit conditionally, to sign a nationwide ceasefire scheme, with the latest development being a collective ceasefire ratification between eight of the ethnic armed groups and the Tatmadaw (Fisher 2015a). The country has also taken steps to increase its governmental transparency.
and accountability. Despite the closeness of the majority of parliamentarians to the military regime, several judges close to the regime were replaced in 2012 (Merikallio 2012).

As a response to the democratic improvements in Myanmar/Burma, the international community is actively facilitating the country’s integration into world trade. In April 2013, for example, the European Union further eased trade and economic sanctions (Community Schools Program 2015). Many public sector loans by countries such as Japan and China, which are represented by the Paris Club, an informal group of official creditors, have been abated (Hein 2013), and considerable amounts of money have been channeled into development projects, with some being criticized for not being purely philanthropic but aimed at paving the way for economic involvement (Hein 2012a). International enterprises are establishing operations in, for instance, energy production and distribution or telecommunication (cf. Kumar et al. 2015) to provide infrastructure for the otherwise economically and infrastructurally underdeveloped country (cf. Germany Trade and Invest 2014; Yan Naing 2014). Low labor costs, among other factors, also make Myanmar/Burma an attractive location for the manufacturing industry, which produces for the South-East Asian market (Boot 2014a).

Despite the end of the military junta, which lasted approximately 50 years, the quasi-democratic elections held in November 2015 and the generally positive economic and social developments, the country continuously experiences setbacks. Myanmar/Burma still practices political and economic absolutism according to the Iron Law of Oligarchy (Dapice & Vallely 2014). In this system, the change from a totalitarian and closed system to an open system is hindered by the elites’ resistance to reforms. These reforms, which require constitutional changes, include, among others things, fair elections and shared, regional autonomy, the sharing of revenues from resource extraction and processing and commonly agreed-upon functions for the national military (ibid.).

To date, the country has been negatively evaluated in terms of the enabling environment for society; its control of corruption, government effectiveness, democratic accountability, and the rule of law have been stated as being among the weakest worldwide (Revenue Watch Institute 2013). In 2013, the Lower House of Parliament approved the Printing and Publishing Enterprise Law (PPEL), which arguably reintroduces censorship of the press, which had recently gained freedom (Community Schools Program 2015). Efforts to change the 2008 constitution in 2013 to allow the opposition’s figurehead, Aung San Suu Kyi, to run for the presidency (Günsche 2013a), among others, were obstructed by the national
government. Furthermore, economically, the country is struggling with its past as a military regime. The Tatmadaw still maintains a strong hold on many of the country’s business enterprises (Boot 2014b). In 2006, for instance, certain nongovernmental organizations refused to accept a large amount of development money from an international oil-producing company due to its dealings with the military regime, which was accused of involvement in forced labor and human rights violations (Sam 2006).

Even more alarming, however, are the recurring armed incidents in the country. The Tatmadaw and the armed factions of ethnic minorities (e.g., the Kachin Independence Organization and the Shan State Armies in Myanmar/Burma’s Northern regions) remain caught in on-and-off-again armed operations that also have a major impact on the ongoing peace talks between them. These tensions are also rooted in struggles over the monetary profits from legal and illegal economic activities in the regions of the country dominated by ethnic minorities. Resource extraction and large-scale energy production sites, which, to date, have served only a few individuals close to the government, are especially controversial subjects for the afflicted parties (cf. SZ.DE 2015). This problem crystallizes first and foremost in land grabs; a number of individuals and organizations close to the government secured rights to resource-rich land in Myanmar/Burma (Farmlandgrab.org 2012). Other reports on Chinese organizations’ involvement in agriculture claim that these organizations’ engagement aims at reinforcing control over land and resources in Myanmar/Burma in the longer run (McCoy 2007). Arbitrary control over land and resources also has a decisive influence on whether and how the conflicting parties in Myanmar/Burma will proceed with peace negotiations (Dapice & Thanh 2013).

Furthermore, religious hatred remains a threat to a democratic coalition in Myanmar/Burma (Dapice & Vallely 2014). Violent tensions between the Rohingya Muslim minority and extremist Buddhist communities have resumed, leading to the displacement of thousands of Muslims in Western Myanmar/Burma (Hein 2012b). The Rohingya Muslims have been ordered to follow a two-child-policy (Spiegel Online 2013) and, in many cases, have been forced to leave their country and seek refuge in other South-East Asian countries, where they often end up enslaved or die on the way across the Andaman Sea (Günsche 2013b). Here, too, economic interests are in play that prevent the central government from actively backing and protecting the Muslims; to secure the export of oil and gas from Burmese oil and gas fields in the Bay of Bengal to China, the Buddhist majority in Rakhine State must not be provoked (Hein 2012b).
In collaboration with governmental organizations and private sector actors, several local and international non-governmental organizations work at both the grassroots and policy-making levels to build capacities among the afflicted parties and conduct mediation activities. Oftentimes, governmental representations in Myanmar/Burma employ non-governmental actors to perform particular tasks that they possess the capacities for and can do in an agile and confidential manner if necessary (Piiparainen & Brummer 2012). Through these peace-building related activities in the fields of social, economic, development and humanitarian support, political and diplomatic efforts, and justice and reconciliation activities (cf. Barnett et al. 2007), governmental, non-governmental and private sector organizations aim at stabilizing the volatile social situation in the country. Their activities are mainly targeted at changing involved conflict parties’ perceptions of one another. In that respect, the involved actors can be referred to as institutional entrepreneurs as they are engaged with launching and carrying out activities which break with the status-quo perceptions, i.e. existing institutions, which have dominated the country’s society for several decades under military rule.

Although a process-oriented ontology suggests that (social) life is in permanent flux and, thus, any context region for a study, such as this thesis, is turbulent per se, I argue that Myanmar/Burma, in particular, lends itself to investigating the dynamics between peace-building organizations. The recent opening of the country to international relations, trade and aid has led to a surge of private, governmental and non-governmental organizations entering Myanmar/Burma. Their positioning in the Burmese peace-building scene allows insights that are recent and ongoing. Peace-building in general and in Myanmar/Burma in particular is highly competitive; although peace can be created only through the active and deliberate participation of all afflicted parties, and most of them are willing to coordinate, only few parties are ready to be coordinated (Kiljunen 2012). Moreover, active foreign involvement in peace-building is often declined by domestic afflicted actors. Instead, foreign parties need to identify support and facilitation roles for domestic/regional peace-building activities, for instance, enabling political dialogues (ibid.).

Thus, theorizing from the peace-building processes in Myanmar/Burma not only is interesting for its novelty as a research site (Ahlstrom 2012) but also provides an understanding of beginning institutional change through peace-building dynamics in a distinctive, accessible and widespread manner. In the following chapter, I provide concise summaries of the publications included in this dissertation.
4 Summaries of original publications

The dissertation is composed of three scientific publications. The first publication, published as a book chapter, is conceptual in nature and explores institutional entrepreneurs’ acting/behaving in erratic environments. The second publication, published as a journal article, is an empirical study about crisis managers’ entrepreneurial acting/behaving for mobilizing networks in peace-building. Drawing on an extended set of data, the third publication, presented at a management conference, empirically investigates the legitimation process of peace-builders for entry into peace-building networks.

4.1 Institutional Entrepreneuring in Erratic Environments

In “Institutional Entrepreneuring in Erratic Environments”, I aim to create a conceptual understanding of how institutional entrepreneurs act and behave when performing institutional change in unpredictable, erratic environments. My initial thought was that the existing research on institutional entrepreneurs’ influencing socialized practices has not paid sufficient attention to the turbulence and unpredictability of the surrounding environment, i.e., the structure that it aims to change. In such environments, as is case of Myanmar/Burma with regard to its peace-building efforts, static and foreseeable activities may quickly be obsolete due to unexpected developments in the peace-building process, the economy or society at large.

Hence, I turned to theory concerning the change of socialized practices as institutions, i.e., institutional entrepreneurship, and used the intriguing relationship between agency and structure as the starting point for this study. Agency/structure, culminating in the paradox of embedded agency (cf. Battilana et al. 2009; Weik 2011; Wijen & Ansari 2007; Holm 1995), has received extensive attention in management and organizational research.

Traditionally, research on institutional change has assumed actor- or agency-dominated positions (e.g., Hensmans 2003), i.e., heroic views of individuals or groups of individuals in which humans are almost independent of their environment and, consequently, can manipulate or change the environment at will. Assuming that the environment, especially in the case of this study, plays a major role in understanding entrepreneurial acting for change in the environment, agency-dominated views seem somewhat unsuitable.
More recently, the inclusion of structural conditions in the agency of institutional change (e.g., Steyaert 2007; Tobias et al. 2013; Aldrich 2010; Dorado & Ventresca 2013) has led to a recursive view of the influences of agency and structure. In parallel to this shift in understanding human nature, the ontological and epistemological orientations of institutional change processes have also experienced a move from stable, rational decision-making and causation-based explanations to complex and dynamic perspectives on institutional change processes (Garud et al. 2007; Steyaert 2007).

I subscribe to this latter contextual view of institutional change and, first, investigate the temporal and relational embeddedness of structure-changing agency generally (Emirbayer & Mische 1998). Second, bearing in mind an embedded view of agency, I explore entrepreneurial acting through three creative and process-based lenses on entrepreneurship, namely ‘entrepreneuring’ (Steyaert 2007). These lenses are emancipation (Rindova et al. 2009), bricolage (Baker & Nelson 2005; Dorado & Ventresca 2013) and effectuation (Sarasvathy 2001; Perry et al. 2012).

The resulting consolidated view of institution-changing agency in erratic environments produces characteristics of acting and behaving for institutional change that embrace the unpredictability and turbulence of such contexts. These characteristics are pluralism, non-linearity and non-teleology, and they constitute the core attributes of institutional entrepreneuring, particularly in erratic environments.

Pluralism indicates a need for collectivity in institutional change processes. As has been proposed in previous institutional entrepreneurship studies, traditional and critical, institutional change is dependent on the participation of collectives. The study also notes how the pluralist characteristic of entrepreneurial acting is enacted; it occurs in collectives and on a collective level.

Non-linearity refers to the absence of linear and straightforward activities for which “actors create a vision of the future and implement it exactly in the way envisaged and with the intended results” (Möllering 2007: 20). The deficiency and erraticity of entrepreneurs’ political, cultural, and social environments inhibit the longer, static planning of institutional change process. By contrast, non-linearity requires institutional entrepreneurs to reevaluate and modify their activities in a resourceful and improvisatory manner according to the given circumstances.

Finally and relatedly, the non-teleology of institutional entrepreneurship points to the impossibility of always acting purposefully in erratic environments. Instead, the purpose of and motivation for change activities may arise only while the process
of enacting change unfolds over time (Dorado & Ventresca 2013; Zahra & Wright 2011).

The characteristics of institution-changing agency in erratic environments form a recursive view of the process of institutional entrepreneurship. These processes, characterized by mutual influences of acting and structure, enable a non-conflated, embedded and process-based perspective of institutional entrepreneurship, here designated institutional entrepreneuring. Importantly, the pluralist characteristic necessitates understanding entrepreneurs’ acting not as a singular activity but rather as a collective endeavor of many. Methodologically, doing so can be best achieved by breaking the agency-structure dualism and introducing a meso or network level in the process of institutional change in erratic environments.

4.2 Mobilizing crisis management networks – Entrepreneurial behavior in turbulent contexts

The second publication of this dissertation is entitled “Mobilizing crisis management networks – Entrepreneurial behavior in turbulent contexts”. Based on the assumption that institutional change can be achieved only by a collective of actors, I provide an understanding of institutional entrepreneurs’ acting/behaving for creating these collectives. The creation of collectives is viewed as the mobilization of networks of individuals and organizations. Hence, network mobilization is a carrier or vehicle of institutional change (Hargrave & van de Ven 2006; Möllering 2007).

Although the IMP-based network mobilization discussion has mostly paid attention to the factors and mechanisms of how (business) networks are mobilized (cf. Mouzas & Naudé 2007; Ritvala & Salmi 2009; 2010; 2011), this paper aims to emphasize the otherwise implicit acting/behavior of institutional entrepreneurs in network mobilization processes. The mechanisms of network mobilization include collective interpretations, the alignment of interests, the interruption of interventions and the overcoming of collective inaction. Utilizing additional insights concerning the loosening and replacement of institutionalized practices from the institutional entrepreneurship literature, I describe the current scientific state of affairs of network mobilization for institutional change. That is, based on change-enabling conditions, network mobilizers overcome mobilization obstacles, which eventually leads to changed institutionalized practices that, in turn, influence the conditions for future change.
Based on this literature-based network mobilization framework, a case study consisting of interviews with peace-builders was conducted. All eight conversation partners, most of whom also had insight into the ongoing peace-building efforts in Myanmar/Burma, had been involved in humanitarian crisis management at the time of the inquiry. The conversation partners represented governmental and non-governmental organizations and, in some cases, were closely collaborating or advising private sector organizations with regard to their involvement in peace-building in politically turbulent regions. The organizations are referred to alphabetically A – E which corresponds to the Greek acronyms Alpha – Epsilon used in table 3 in section 3.2.1. The types of peace-building activities that the conversation partners were involved in included network- or platform-building and crisis detection or direct mediation work.

The interviews, which were conducted as open-ended, co-constructed conversations, and the supplementing secondary data were analyzed with a focus on the acting/behavior of entrepreneurially acting network mobilizers in a complex and unpredictable context. The analysis produced, first, a more descriptive picture of the actor, activities and operational levels. Second, the enabling and constraining mechanisms of the network mobilization process were identified. These were, third, used to contemplate entrepreneurial acting upon enabling and constraining conditions.

Enablers for network mobilization include the relationship sediments of involved actors and their legitimacy to act as such in the eyes of other involved actors. The enablers are confronted with actor visibility and process unpredictability as obstacles to the mobilization process. To maneuver their way through enablers and obstacles in the network mobilization process, institutional entrepreneurs may draw on, first, incentivizing acting/behavior to socially and monetarily create collaboration among otherwise competing crisis actors. Second, institutional entrepreneurs may act reticently to gain the necessary legitimacy among the crisis actor community. Third, institutional entrepreneurs need to accept the unpredictability of social, political and economic environments and act in an adaptive manner to embrace sudden and unexpected developments in their environments.

The reticence of entrepreneurs’ acting particularly stands in contrast to the existing network mobilization research, which highlights the pro-active role of entrepreneurs in mobilizing networks. I attend to this seeming paradox of entrepreneurial acting in the third publication, as summarized in the following section.
4.3 Legitimating actors for institution-changing networks – the case of peace-building in Myanmar/Burma

To understand the legitimation of actors for entry into institution-changing networks that support peace-building in pre-emerging markets, in this third publication, I investigate the dynamics of actor-legitimation processes. Mainly building on the organizational legitimacy discourse, this publication contributes to an understanding of legitimation processes at different organizational levels, including their interactions (Deephouse & Suchman 2008). To a large extent, the organizational legitimacy literature (cf. Suchman 1995) views legitimacy from constituencies as enabler for the institutionalization of a novel entity such as a new social practice. Less attention has been paid to legitimacy enabling actors to join collectives that aim at the institutionalization of entities or their change. Through a contextual view at the sources, targets, levels and types of legitimacy I provide an embedded, individual perspective on actor legitimation processes.

Legitimation, according to the organizational legitimacy literature (cf. Suchman 1995), is an expanding process that begins in a local confined space and, over time, leads to the society-wide acceptance of an entity. Therefore, the legitimacy of the entity changes in nature, as well. It advances from more explicit forms of acceptance, i.e., pragmatic and moral/normative legitimacy, to the implicit, cognitively taken-for-grantedness of the entity (Suchman 1995; Scott 2008; Johnson et al. 2006).

In networks, legitimacy can support an entity’s acceptance within the network and simultaneously shape the structure of the network. Here, too, legitimacy as the perception of other network members diffuses within and across networks into similar local contexts before being more widely accepted on a societal level. The network is assumed to play a two-folded role as a vehicle for the legitimacy perception’s flow and spread and as an influencing instance of the meaning, and hence legitimacy, of the entity (Owen-Smith & Powell 2008).

The influences that shape the meaning of an entity become apparent particularly in turbulent situations where “…roles and identities are ambiguous, logics and institutions are conflicting or multiple, and networks span diverse audiences” (Owen-Smith & Powell 2008: 618). Therefore, this study empirically draws on a set of twenty interviews with governmental, non-governmental and private sector organizations that are either directly or indirectly involved in the turbulent situation of peace-building in Myanmar/Burma. Gaining legitimacy is particularly challenging in contexts where the economic, political, and cultural or,
in broader terms, institutional development is complex and fragmented due to multiple stakeholders and multiple institutional pillars (Kostova & Zaheer 1999). In Myanmar/Burma, peace-building actors have an interest in changing societal practices for different economic and social reasons, and they contribute to pacification through the provision and support of facilitation, mediation, education, conversation and consulting platforms, as well as capacity building for crisis-affected parties.

The analysis of legitimation processes in the interview data followed the concept of episodes as parts of a complete process (Herbst et al. 2011). The mobilization processes of networks, consisting of actor legitimation processes, also constitute parts of the wider peace-building process and are difficult to delineate (cf. March & Simon 1958). Hence, I identified legitimation episodes as fragments of network mobilization processes. Specifically, I focused on the “varying sources of legitimacy, the levels at which they operate, the institutional elements that they target, and the environments that contextualize their effects” (Ruef & Scott 1998: 898), in addition to the type of legitimacy at play.

The outcome of the data analysis provides insight into how legitimation acts proceed in a less predictable environment, such as Myanmar/Burma. The findings of this study and the contributions to theory are three-fold. First, In contrast to the existing literature on organizational legitimacy, the sources of legitimacy lie not only in relationships with already legitimate actors but also in new actors’ characteristics in relation to the peace-building context.

Second, initial legitimation of an actor for an ad-hoc network takes place in various ways, following multiple means and motives. One such incident includes the de-legitimation of one party to legitimate or as a consequence of legitimating another party. De-legitimation leads to destabilizing relationships and segregating effects on the network and constitutes a radical change (Halinen et al. 1999) that has a destructive influence on a network.

Third, actor legitimation in turbulent environments is a simultaneous and recurrent process. It creates initial, pragmatic legitimacy for new actors in the community through repeated entry into ad-hoc networks and, only over time, leads to deeper rooted moral/normative legitimacy as an incumbent part of the wider institution-changing community. The study also showed that cognitive legitimacy, i.e., taken-for-grantedness, cannot be created in unstable and unpredictable environments and remains the possession of a few major incumbent organizations only.
Through turning to a less stable and predictable environment (Maguire et al. 2004; Loohuis et al. 2011), in this study, I provide insight into the partly destructive dynamics of the process of actor legitimation and thus contribute to a more contextual understanding of the role of legitimacy in network formation (Gebert Persson et al. 2011) and mobilization (Ritvala & Salmi 2010).
5 Discussion and conclusions

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of the dissertation’s three publications against the backdrop of the existing literature in the fields of institutional entrepreneurship, network mobilization and organizational legitimacy. Beginning by answering the research questions of the study, I provide my view of how individuals act in the becoming of institution-changing networks that support the building of peace in Myanmar/Burma. I continue with how this study contributes to theory, methodology and peace-building as a practice. Finally, I personally reflect on Myanmar/Burma’s process toward a peaceful society and make an attempt to evaluate this study, note its limitations and suggest future research avenues.

5.1 The becoming of institution-changing networks

The study behind this dissertation started by asking the following: How do individual actors act in the process of forming collectives for institutional change in peace-building in Myanmar/Burma? I have argued that a contextual and process-based view of the phenomenon, i.e., the forming of collectives, is necessary to create an understanding of individuals’ acting therein.

Forming collectives for institutional change is an essential part of a wider institutional entrepreneurship endeavor. Grasping what acting for institutional change means, I maintain, is at the heart of understanding the more specific processes of forming collectives. Hence, I began my study with a conceptual analysis of actors’ acting within and for the change of turbulent environments. The outcome, i.e., pluralist, non-linear and non-teleological acting, sets important conditions for considering institutional entrepreneurship activities in turbulent environments.

Pluralist acting means that institutional entrepreneurship activities need to be initiated and performed in collectives of actors. Pluralism also indicates that the analysis of institutional change processes must be understood to occur on a collective, intermediate level located between individuals and their surrounding environment. The non-linearity and non-teleology of acting, again, emphasize that the predictive planning of future actions may be illusory and that the motivation and rationale to act may be clarified only while acting (cf. Reese 1994; Imam 1989). Accordingly, the first sub-question, ‘How does the acting of institutional entrepreneurs in unstable environments influence such environments?’, can be
answered by noting the non-linear and non-teleological characteristics of acting in a pluralist manner, i.e., performed by a collective of actors.

Bearing in mind the basic conditions of entrepreneurial acting in turbulent environments, first, my assumption (based on the existing literature on network mobilization and institutional entrepreneurship) concerning the necessity of collectives was emphasized both conceptually and methodologically. Institutional change processes cannot be instigated or performed by a singular individual or organization. They are always dependent on a collective, group or network of actors to create the necessary momentum for change to advance. Second and consequently, I wondered how these collectives come into existence and asked, ‘How do institutional entrepreneurs in Myanmar/Burma instigate the forming of peace-building networks?’ I contemplated this question in two studies (see publications 2 and 3).

As part of the second paper (see publication 2), I identified both visibility and unpredictability as major obstacles in the process of network mobilization. Certain actors need to act behind the scenes to remain legitimate from the perspective of others. Their active promotion of services can be understood as a sign of obtrusiveness or a hidden agenda that may potentially harm the network mobilizers’ legitimate reputation and inhibit them from performing mobilization tasks. The unpredictability of circumstances, in turn, does not allow network mobilizers to strictly plan their activities far in advance. Building on legitimacy by the wider peace-building community and the existing relationships with others, I argue, enables network mobilizers to facilitate the creation of a network in three ways.

First, network mobilizers may use monetary and social incentives to motivate other actors’ participation in the envisioned network. Second, network mobilizers’ reticent behavior helps them signal their availability to join or mobilize a network without pro-actively promoting their services. Thus, they avoid being perceived as obtrusive and as pursuing an agenda of their own that would deny them access to peace-building networks. Third, network mobilizers must act adaptively with regard to their activities, such as composing network members and structures, to embrace visibility- and unpredictability-related obstacles.

In the first empirical study (see publication 2), it became clear that, in addition to relationship sediments, legitimacy is of decisive importance for enabling the forming of collectives, i.e., the mobilization of networks. The question of how actors can create legitimacy for themselves as peace-builders, however, remained unanswered. The second empirical study (see publication 3) turned to the process of actor legitimation for network entry in a turbulent context. Drawing on
organizational legitimacy studies and the business network literature, in addition to an expanded empirical data set, I identified a repetitive characteristic of pragmatic actor legitimation for joining ad-hoc networks. Over time, pragmatic legitimacy leads to a more profound perception of the novice as an incumbent peace-building actor in the wider peace-building community while potentially causing disruptions in existing relationships and segregation effects in existing network structures.

Hence, the second sub-question of this study can be answered by emphasizing network mobilizers’ incentives to motive participation in a network, the signaling of availability for joining and mobilizing a network and the adaptability to reform a network’s composition according to changing circumstances. These methods of instigating the forming of a peace-building network are rooted in their relationship sediments and legitimacy, which they initially create through repeated engagement in ad-hoc peace-building networks.

I regard the repeated and perseverative manner of engaging in peace-building networks to create legitimacy among the members of a peace-building community as another way of acting that is available to institutional entrepreneurs/network mobilizers. Viewed from the perspective of the novice, joining a network of actors requires them to repeatedly take on tasks as peace-builders in ad-hoc networks to create a more recognized perception, i.e., moral/normative legitimacy, of themselves as incumbent peace-builders.

Incentivization, adaptability, reticence and perseverance as ways of acting are generally socially constructed based on the plurality, non-linearity and non-teleology of institutional entrepreneuring in turbulent environments. In these types of environments, long-term planned and stability- and causality-based collaboration instigations (Emery and Trist 1965; Dorado 2005) seem to be inappropriate and must be replaced with more spontaneous and creative approaches to forming collaboration.

The four identified ways of acting constitute such approaches and share in common the underlying logic of ‘becoming’ of networked collectives for institutional change. Becoming is a form of something’s coming into existence and stands in contrast to something’s being in existence (Weiskopf & Steyaert 2009: 193): “Entrepreneurial becoming is constituted by connected, heterogeneous practices, a form of social creativity that changes our daily practices and our ways and styles of living”. The playful becoming of something (Johannisson 2011) has been attributed to Nietzsche’s (1968: 708) idea of becoming, which must not pay attention to final intentions and which is not intended to be a final state. Following that line of thought, becoming can be illustrated by means of the processual, non-
linear and non-teleological nature of the ways of acting identified in my study. Viewed in the context of Myanmar/Burma’s inherently uncertain and unpredictable institutional environment, these ways of acting also answer my study’s main research question, “How do individuals act in the process of forming collectives for institutional change in peace-building in Myanmar/Burma?”

Figure 7 below is an attempt to visualize these ways of embedded individual acting in the process of becoming of a network. The visualization of a process in a static and two-dimensional setting, such as that on this page of my dissertation, does not meet the demand of providing insight into something’s occurring and changing over time. The pictured ways of individual acting need to be understood as underlying what occurs in the becoming process of an institution-changing network.

Fig. 7. Individual acting in the becoming of networks for institutional change

5.2 Theoretical contributions

Drawing conclusions from an empirical research endeavor, i.e., theorizing from the data, can occur, for example, through analytical generalization (Tsoukas 2009) or conceptual leaping (Klag & Langley 2013). Theorizing often entails the abstraction of results, such as mechanisms, to a level that makes it possible to infer the general
theoretical phenomenon of which the observed particular is a part (Van de Ven 2007). However, that also implies that the contextual nature that is reified in the found mechanisms is in danger of being lost sight of. Following the line of thought of Steyaert (1997), the findings of narrative-informed contextual (entrepreneurship) research are locally bound and context-dependent and cannot be transferred into different contexts without further ado.

The identified ways of acting of institutional entrepreneurs in processes of becoming of institution-changing networks remains a construction of those involved, i.e., first, my conversation partners and me as researcher. My providing access to rich details of the conversations and their surroundings (see publications 2 and 3) leaves the responsibility to evaluate the transferability of this study’s findings largely with the reader (Lincoln & Guba 1985; Langley et al. 2013).

My study contributes to theory in three ways. First, through pursuing a process view of institutional entrepreneurs’ acting based on social constructionist ontology, I contribute to an understanding of relationally and communally constituted entrepreneurial processes (Fletcher 2006), which I call institutional entrepreneuring. Langley and her colleagues (2013: 4) have called for process research that produces ‘know-how’ instead of ‘know-what’. Incentivizing, adapting, acting reticently and persevering are ways of acting, i.e., ways of performing the formation of networks for institutional change. They do not describe a status quo but instead provide knowledge of how to do. These ways of acting are rooted in the non-linearity and non-teleology of entrepreneurial incentives, are inherently constitutive of pluralism and must be viewed as temporally and relationally embedded.

Furthermore, it is important is that the temporal embeddedness of acting in turbulent environments refers to the past as a retrospective component (Welter & Smallbone 2011) and present events only. Future expectations of an entrepreneurial act may exist as more general ambitions, but at most, they remain vague due to the uncertainty and unpredictability of turbulent environments (cf. Dorado 2005). What follows is the inevitability of regarding institutional entrepreneurial acting as non-teleological. Institutional entrepreneurs do not (and cannot) always act with purpose and in a goal-oriented, teleological manner (cf. Bruton et al. 2010). Institutional entrepreneuring, including the process of becoming of collectives for institutional change, is not individualist-managerial (Weik 2011), nor is it uncoupled from its environment. Rather, it constitutes a collective, connected and adaptive approach to attempting to change an institution.

Second, this study relies on and contributes to the IMP-based (business) network mobilization discourse. By providing a processual and context-sensitive
perspective on network mobilization processes, I respond to Ritvala and Salmi’s (2009) call for the investigation of network structure over time through a retrospective analysis. My study emphasizes the process of mobilizing a network in contrast to other empirical, mostly static studies on (business) network mobilization; therefore, it provides a different view of network mobilizers as proactive actors (Battilana et al. 2009) or as a “champion for institutional change” (Ritvala & Salmi 2009: 412). By contrast, the reticence of network mobilizers enables them to overcome obtrusiveness and create legitimacy to act as peace-building network mobilizers.

Furthermore, this study points to the different types of adaptability that are needed in mobilizing networks; the unpredictability of institutional circumstances requires financial and organizational flexibility in mobilizing networks. The study also shows that, in addition to relationship sediments (cf. Agndal & Axelsson 2002), the creation of legitimacy is of crucial importance for actors to be involved with mobilizing networks. Legitimacy by the peace-building community is a result of reticence and perseverance and repeated engagement in spontaneously occurring peace-building activities (and networks). Moreover, the study points to the potentially destructive, i.e., segregating, effects of actor legitimation as an intendedly constructive process.

The third field of theoretical contribution lies in an elaboration of actor legitimation as a process. The third publication particularly adds to the scarce field of “subject legitimation” (cf. Maguire et al. 2004) by showing how actors, instead of novel practices, are legitimated. Although the legitimation of a new practice is important and necessary for its wider institutionalization, actors who support this process in collectives also require legitimacy to do so. This study emphasizes the inextricability of legitimation motives and means and shows how legitimacy flows across different levels while often having its origin on a network level. It provides a thorough analysis of how actors can create legitimacy for themselves through the repetition of pragmatic legitimation episodes in the peace-building community.

Therefore, the study underlines that actors in peace-building in a turbulent environment cannot reach cognitive legitimacy (cf. Suchman 1995). That indicates that the legitimation perception of new peace-building actors will not reach a societal level and will instead remain within the smaller, local circles in which it was created. The institutional environment’s unsteadiness hinders linear and uninterrupted processes of creating deeper-rooted legitimacy.
5.3 Methodological implications

An understanding of entrepreneurial processes, and a theorization made on the basis thereof, requires researchers to rupture the division between individual and structure levels (Steyaert 1997). What is needed instead is a meso-approach in which the phenomenon is viewed as embedded in its context (ibid.). This notion, I argue, is applicable to institutional change phenomena, as well. I suggest a meso- or network-level perspective when investigating institutional change processes, including their instigation in the form of forming collectives. If a study aims to provide an understanding of human beings in institutional entrepreneurial processes, then their acting must be viewed as occurring on a collective level, i.e., as being related to others in the process and inherently collective. Similarly, Dorado (2013) argues that institutional change processes are based on the relationships and relationship exchanges with others.

To understand institutional change processes, especially their initiation, which includes the creation of legitimacy, we need to investigate the phenomenon on a network level. For instance, observations or conversations with informants need to be viewed in relation to the context that the informants are part of and in relation to other involved actors, given that their temporal and relational embeddedness becomes only in collectives. Therefore, overly voluntarist and extreme forms of determinist inferences can be avoided and a rich and context-sensitive understanding of institutional change processes created.

Another methodological contribution lies in the method by which the fragments of legitimation processes can be investigated. With regard to their identification and delineation, I made use of ‘episodes’ as fragments of wider processes (cf. Herbst et al. 2011) of legitimacy creation in my second empirical paper (see publication 3). Delineating complete legitimation processes is difficult due to their often implicit and tedious nature. Specifically, in retrospective studies about (entrepreneurial) processes, the development of a legitimate perception of an actor can hardly be portrayed in its entirety.

Based on Ruef and Scott’s (1998) analytical framework and Suchman’s (1995) legitimacy typology, I suggest five elements according to which legitimacy episodes can be analyzed. These are the contextual environment of the legitimation, its source, target and type, in addition to the level on which it operates. While deconstructing the episode for the purposes of analysis, episodes must always be viewed within their context. That is, episodic elements should not be regarded as meaningful without their contextualizing environment. The analysis of legitimation
episodes, I argue, helps identify, analyze and understand larger legitimation processes through contextual fragments.

5.4 Practical implications for peace-builders

This study draws on conversations, observations, and impressions from peace-building networks in Myanmar/Burma. My understanding of the role of governmental, non-governmental and private sector actors in and their acting for the country’s peace-building forms the basis for practical inferences. As argued above, all of the implications of this study must be understood as contextually bound. Hence, any practical contribution must be evaluated against the backdrop of its origin.

In my thesis, I focus on the instigation of collaboration for institution-changing networks in particular, but I also create an understanding of entrepreneurial acting generally in turbulent environments. General practical conclusions regarding peace-building actors in Myanmar/Burma concern the unpredictability of economic and social environments. The turbulence requires any actor, both incumbent and novice, to refrain from long-term planned and stability- and causality-based involvements. Instead, actors need to understand that they are, or become part of, an environment that is inherently uncertain and that demands alternative approaches to performing their envisioned activities. Becoming part of Myanmar/Burma’s peace-building community requires actors to create legitimacy as perceived by other peace-building community members. Doing so can be achieved only through repetitive involvement in ad-hoc networks that are formed around a specific immediate issue. Actors also need to consider that the expansion of networks can lead to segregations within them.

For private sector actors, the implication is that any involvement targeted at conducting business is inevitably related to peace-building, as well. Business activities that are geographically widespread or require special licenses for operation especially imply relationships with a large variety of domestic governmental actors. The lack of a formal, i.e., regulative, administrational, legal, etc., structure necessitates negotiations with many different stakeholders who are often involved in the ethnic conflict, as well. Oftentimes, foreign companies lack the resources and insights to prepare for such an endeavor. As my study shows, there exist networks of experts, i.e., consulting non-governmental organizations, governmental actors and other private consultancy actors, who provide support for the involvement in turbulent environments. Non-governmental actors focusing on
private sector engagement in conflict regions, in particular, often constitute impartial sources of advice and contacts.

Entering into these communities is a delicate balancing act. More generally, private sector actors must be aware of their society-shaping role. The involvement of large companies particularly influences how business will be conducted in the future. Private sector actors bear responsibility in the form of being a role model for the nascent Burmese business sector. They set standards for future business behavior in general and have the potential to break with vicious circles of corruption.

In some instances, certain nationalities have gained a reputation through their involvement in peace-building. In my study, I reported Norway’s assuming an active role as a peace-builder on a national level. Norwegian phenomena, including Norwegian companies, seem to have gained a positive, responsible reputation based on Norway’s philanthropic activities. I refer to this phenomenon as spillover effects. For the most part, they are beyond the control of individual private sector actors, but they play an important role in, for instance, contracting international companies in Myanmar/Burma.

Governmental actors, however, have the possibility of influencing their country’s reputation in a conflict region. Development aid, mediation services and other activities contributing to the stabilization of a conflict region pave the way for long-term bilateral partnerships, including the placement of business activities. Therefore, governmental actors can and should influence the involvement of private sector actors in conflict regions. Through connecting, instructing and monitoring their involvement, they contribute to a sustainable way of (re-) building an economy and its society.

The turbulence of Myanmar/Burma’s environment also showed that governmental funding for non-governmental peace-building activities must become less outcome-oriented and instead be more flexible to accommodate changing circumstances. Governmental actors, typically do not need to prove the efficiency of their used funds to a similar degree as other (private) funding or donating actors do. Hence, they should accept that non-governmental actors may require several somewhat fortuitous projects before they become legitimate peace-builders in a community and can plan and perform projects with more pre-defined goals, if applicable.

From the perspective of non-governmental actors, this study concretizes the catch-22 that they are often caught in. Despite their importance as grassroots and second-tier actors, non-governmental organizations often find themselves in
contradictory situations regarding the acquisition of funding and on-site operations. Some operations require undisclosed acting, i.e., involved organizations cannot officially advertise their engagement or the outcomes thereof to attract external funding. Certain independent organizations can help overcome this visibility paradox through funding other organizations without demanding visible results. For many types of peace-building tasks, non-governmental organizations are expected to be ideologically impartial. Their need for external funding, however, creates partiality through financial dependencies on donor organizations that are often driven by vested interests. Here, too, independent donor organizations may provide the necessary unconditional means to perform peace-building operations.

5.5 Reflections on Myanmar/Burma’s peace-building process

Personal note about what I see needs to happen in the future.

As a result of the national parliamentary elections, held on 8 November 2015, Myanmar/Burma’s largest opposition party NLD (National League for Democracy) under the leadership of Aung San Suu Kyi won the majority of available seats in the House of Nationalities and the House of Representatives. While I do not intend to judge whether what the people of Myanmar/Burma have spoken is conducive to the country’s future or not I maintain that the possibility of quasi-democratic elections are a positive and important step forward.

The political and, hence, social and economic, environment remains somewhat uncertain, however. The country’s national military have put in place a number of safeguards in the constitution which are supposed to sustain their influence on the country’s institutional environment. For example the ministries of defense, home affairs and border affairs will also in the future be selected by the military command. Moreover, any constitutional changes, such as the one required to enable Aung San Suu Kyi becoming president, cannot be made without the approval of the military (Fisher 2015b). If, when and how the military will transfer powers to democratically elected authorities remains unclear for the time being.

Meanwhile, peace-builders can and should continue their work efforts to support the country’s development toward a peaceful and more transparent and stable society. Peace-builders and, in particular, private sector actors can do so through showing how, at the micro level, single business transactions have the potential to be of benefit to all parties involved in making business. As mentioned in the previous sub-section, business opportunities may serve soldiers as exit point for fighting and entry point to a civilian live which provides for their living in a
civilian, non-armed manner. Through encouraging and showing how transparent and non-harmful business can be a solid basis for a community to develop, peace can be supported and corrupted structures fought. In addition, the increasing of monetary wealth of Myanmar/Burma’s population may lead to improved infrastructure in rural regions, too, as well as increasingly higher and more evenly spread levels of education.

This process remains fragile with many individual actors benefiting from its failure. It hence is of vital importance that incumbent and new actors in governmental, non-governmental and private sector functions support a just and transparent social and economic development and thus oppose any counterproductive changes within or from outside the country as well as act themselves accordingly.

5.6 Evaluation of the study

The publications included in this dissertation were written during a period of several years. I dare to claim that my reading of the literature, attendance at scientific conferences and doctoral tutorials, and discussions with colleagues and peers, among other things, have broadened my horizon throughout the course of the four years of my doctoral training. My understanding of different theoretical concepts, their roots and interconnection, and methodological choices and consequences has developed during this time. Due to my changing thinking and argumentation, there exist incoherencies that become visible when juxtaposing the three publications.

For instance, I initially used the term ‘erratic’ to refer to the fluctuation and unpredictability of institutional environments. Subsequently, I utilized the term ‘turbulent’, assuming the same characteristics. The usage of ‘behavior’ and ‘acting’ is another example of conceptual incoherence. I began by referring to what entrepreneurs do as ‘behavior’ until I understood that the term has a deterministic connotation and may be misleading. Afterwards, I started using ‘acting’, which admittedly may be interpreted as overly voluntaristic, as well; I am convinced, however, that ‘acting’ materializes what institutional entrepreneurs do as part of a struggle between voluntarist and determinist influences. Moreover, the term helps delineate that type of doing from ‘behavior’, given that it is viewed as a product of humans’ environment in psychological behaviorism (Skinner 1953; cited in Burrell & Morgan 1979). To avoid misunderstandings in both cases, I should have initially chosen one of the two respective terms.
In my first, conceptual publication, I started to identify entrepreneurial behaviors (i.e., ways of acting), namely pluralism, non-linearity and non-teleology. Strictly speaking, these are characteristics of behaviors. Actual behaviors were identified and described in the second paper. The pluralist characteristic led me to ask how collectives in the form of a network come into existence. In my second publication, I assumed the perspective of someone instigating the collective creation process, i.e., mobilizing a network. In the third publication, in turn, I contemplated the legitimacy needed to join a network. Although related to the same process, I should have been more explicit with regard to these two perspectives.

With regard to the data creation for this study, Langley and her colleagues (2013: 7) argue that the number of temporal observations in process research can be of substantial importance. To create a richer understanding of a process, several participations in or observations of the phenomenon are desirable. I subscribe to that argument; nevertheless, a historical view, such as that chosen in this study, also makes it possible to understand the development of processes over time. During the conversations for this study, I often wondered why my conversation partners said what they said. Oftentimes, the topics they talked about were politically sensitive and were related to the ongoing peace negotiations or future business activities. I wondered whether my conversation partners attempted to create a particular image of the situation that they described. Perhaps they were forced to tell things in that way? I do not assume that I am in any position to judge the correctness of what they told me because, on one hand, I am not an insider in the local processes and, on the other hand, a social constructionist view of reality does not seek to find ‘the’ truth but instead seeks to understand local consensus. This issue, I argue, comes up in my research through analyzing and theorizing from the conversations in relation to each other.

The validity and credibility of qualitative studies (cf. Creswell & Miller 2000) is oftentimes connected to the methodological concept of saturation which has become “the gold standard by which purposive sample sizes are determined” (Guest et al. 2006: 60). Stemming from grounded theory, saturation is commonly referred to as theoretical saturation; it defines a point in data analysis at which no additional themes or codes are identified (see Glaser & Strauss 1967). However, the definition of new or existing themes and codes is inherently connected to the researcher’s qualities and, hence, has only vaguely defined boundaries (Guest et al. 2006). In following a social constructionist approach, I maintain that the validity of a study, seen from the perspective of people external to the study, lies in the thickness of provided descriptions.
The amount of data utilized in this study corresponds to recommended sample sizes in interpretivist-oriented social science research. If the purpose of a study is to describe shared perceptions, beliefs or acting within a community, as is the case in this study, Guest and his colleagues (2006: 76) argued that rather small sample sizes (starting from six) will be sufficient to enable the development of meaningful themes and useful interpretations provided the sample is homogenous. While sample homogeneity is a relative concept, purposive samples, such as the interviewed peace-building actors, are chosen according to common criteria, i.e. in this case their involvement and expertise in the peace-building community in Myanmar/Burma. Hence, the participants can be seen as similar in terms of their experiences in the research domain. The shared expertise of respondents in a study has been used by Romney et al. (1986) to argue for the suitability of small sample sizes (in their case: four) to produce accurate information. At the heart of this ‘consensus theory’ called approach is the idea that a community-based truth exists in the domain under investigation (Guest et al. 2006). This approach corresponds to social constructivist thinking as philosophical tenet in my research.

The manner in which I express the theorizations made in publications 2 and 3 is to some degree more universally built than locally placed. Although I draw attention to the contextual boundedness in both papers, the reader could easily be led to assume that the underlying mechanisms found in analyzing the phenomena are at least analytically generalizable, as is the case in a critical realist ontology. Indeed, the border, if one exists, between social constructionism and critical realism is marginal. This study could also very well have been organized as critical realist-informed research, producing more analytically generalizable concepts. The aim of my study, however, was to create a rich and deep understanding of individuals’ acting within a process, which inevitably means viewing and interpreting the phenomenon situated in its context. Hence, I chose social constructionism.

The type of entrepreneurial acting for institutional change, i.e., institutional entrepreneuring, that I suggest in this study closely approaches the idea of institutional work (see, for example, Lawrence et al. 2009; Lawrence et al. 2011; Lawrence & Suddaby 2006; Battilana et al. 2009). Institutional work concerns the everyday actions of institutional entrepreneurs, i.e., it shifts the focus from the person to his or her action, as expressed in his or her everyday work. Institutional work differs from institutional entrepreneuring in that it is less purposeful with regard to individual activities (cf. Lawrence et al. 2009). (Creative) entrepreneuring, as I maintain, allows purposefulness to emerge only while an activity is being performed, or even afterwards.
5.7 Limitations and future research avenues

The main limitation of this study lies in the bounded generalizability of its findings. For ontological reasons, the presented ways of entrepreneurial acting for instigating networks for institutional change remain the reality of the people with whom I conversed about peace-building in Myanmar/Burma. Certain elements of my findings may be applicable to similar contexts, such as the reticence and perseverance necessary for creating legitimacy as a peace-builder among the members of a peace-building community. However, it is the deep contextuality of my approach to research generally and to creating the data for this study specifically that prevents a wider generalizability. This issue is a limitation, but not a flaw, of this study, given that I deliberately chose to create a local understanding.

This study focused on the becoming of networks for institutional change; it did not investigate the complete process of institutional change from the instigation to the institutionalization of, for example, a new practice. Additionally, I focused on governmental, non-governmental and private sector actors only; the peace-building process also includes other stakeholders, such as the civil population, the media and intergovernmental organizations. Hence, I cannot make assumptions about how institutions were changed in Myanmar/Burma. The previous research in this field suggests that the mobilization of support for an institutional change project influences both the speed of institutionalization and its cultural stability (cf. Lawrence et al. 2001). Therefore, future research along the lines of institutional entrepreneuring may include other types of actors and focus on the implementation of institutional change projects, thus, creating a wider understanding of “complete” institutional change processes. As conceptualized in my second publication, the change of institutional settings affects the conditions for new institutional change.

The study showed the destructive effects on networks of an initially constructive process. Hence, network segmentation as a consequence of actor legitimation for network entry opens up another field of future research. Exploring the nuances of the legitimation of actors may help better understand how relationships are disrupted and networks fall apart. A focus on such destruction ‘stories’ may contribute to a wider understanding of network dynamics (cf. Halinen et al. 1999; Halinen & Törnroos 2005; Bizzi & Langley 2012).

Methodologically, a rich understanding of institutional change processes requires a deeper insight in the form of, for example, extended real-time participation. In this manner, communal realities and the acting of involved actors,
including the above-mentioned process nuances, become more apparent in their historical and relational embeddedness.

The focus of future research on institutional entrepreneuring may also focus on the role of discourse, as I noted conceptually but excluded from the empirical analysis of my study. A turn to the rhetoric in turbulent institutional change processes (for an example of a discursive perspective on legitimation strategies, see Vaara & Tienar 2008) may also provide new insights into the forming of networks. For instance, Hjorth (2013) maintains that the concept of public entrepreneurship emphasizes stories to create images of future scenarios about societies with greater possibilities for living for mature citizens.

Lastly, the inclusion of theoretical insights from other context-related disciplines, such as peace-building sociology (e.g., Goodhand 1999; Oberschall 2007), may provide opportunities to enrich the discussion and understanding of institutional entrepreneuring.
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Appendix 1 Interview script for 1st interview series

Opening
- business cards, appreciation of efforts
- no “right” or “wrong” answers exist; only experience is of interest
- confidentiality issue, possibility to review interview afterwards

Q1: Please tell about your background!
- [secondary data]
- education
- professional experience, previous work-places
- reason for involvement in crisis management efforts

Q2: Please tell about your organization!
- [secondary data]
- areas / fields of involvement
- what is your organization there for?

Q3: Upon entering a crisis case/project, what do you see?
- what happens there (examples)?
- how do you identify the need for involvement?
- what do you want to achieve?
- how do you want to achieve your goal?
- who do you talk to?
- who are your partners?
- what is your (your organization’s) role?
- what role does the crisis-afflicted population play before and during your involvement?

Closure
- names of other actors
- possibility to contact again
- appreciation of efforts
Appendix 2 Interview script for 2nd interview series

Opening
- business cards, appreciation of efforts
- no “right” or “wrong” answers exist; only experience is of interest
- confidentiality of information, possibility to review interview afterwards

Q1: Please tell about your own background!
- [secondary data]
- education?
- professional experience, previous work-places?
- reason for involvement in crisis management efforts?

Q2: Please tell about your organization!
- [secondary data]
- areas / fields of involvement?
- what is your organization’s mission?

Q3: What did you see when you entered the peace process in Burma/Myanmar?
- what happens there?
- how have things changed since the democratic reforms began?
- how did you identify the need for involvement?
- what do you want to achieve?
- how do you want to achieve your goals?
- what problems have you faced in achieving your goals? / what makes your work difficult?

Q4: Please tell about your network of collaborators!
- who do you talk to / collaborate with?
- what is your (your organization’s) role in the collaboration?
- what role does the crisis-afflicted population, companies, NGOs, GOs play in the peace process?
- how will you continue from here and now? / what are your next steps?

Closure
- names of other actors
- possibility to contact again
- appreciation of efforts
- confidentiality of information
Appendix 3 Burmese numerary on scrape paper
### Original publications


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Original publications are not included in the electronic version of the dissertation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Publication title</th>
<th>Main research question</th>
<th>Author’s contribution</th>
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67. Tolonen, Pekka (2014) Three essays on hedge fund performance
70. Ojansivu, Ilkka (2014) Exploring the underlying dynamics of buyer-seller interaction in project afterlife
73. Sipola, Sakari (2015) Understanding growth and non-growth in entrepreneurial economies: analysis of startup industries and experimental winner generation in Finland, Israel and Silicon Valley
76. Musial, Monika (2015) Exploring the organizing of work for creative individuals: the paradox of art and business in creative industries
79. Keränen, Anne (2015) Business leaders’ narratives about responsibility in leadership work
80. Ruopala, Leena (2016) Kerrottu identiteetti organisaatioumutoksen kontekstissa

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Jan Hermes

RENOEUVS IN TURBULENT TIMES

ABOUT THE BECOMING OF INSTITUTION-CHANGING NETWORKS IN MYANMAR/BURMA