The Dynamics of Social Capital and Community Associations in Uganda: Linking Capital and its Consequences

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Summary. — Social capital does not always promote democratic practices, but has different effects at different points. This dynamic is well characterized by a distinction between bonding, bridging, and linking social capital. This is analyzed through an examination of three community associations in Uganda. In particular, it is shown how linking social capital can negatively impact the association in general, and democratic governance in particular, if not accompanied by sufficient bonding, and bridging social capital.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social capital refers to the networks, and norms that enable people to act collectively. Proponents of social capital theory have argued that the accumulation of social capital is the missing link to understanding democratic governance, and economic development. The distinction between bonding, bridging, and linking social capital has brought the analysis of social capital, and these expected outcomes a step further. While bonding social capital is based on exclusive solidarity between “people like us,” the bridging form of social capital refers to more inclusive solidarity between people of different backgrounds. Bonding social capital is more, or less labeled as “the first step” in the process of creating social capital, but it is the bridging form of social capital that is highly relevant in relation to the outcomes of democratic governance, and economic progress. More recently, emphasis has been made on the linking form of social capital, that is the accumulation of linking ties with formal institutions, and individuals in positions of power. The underlying idea is that “there is an optimal dynamic balance of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital, which simultaneously facilitates democratic governance, economic efficiency, and widely-dispersed human welfare, capabilities, and functionings” (Szreter 2002, p. 580). Community organizations take a central role in this discussion, as they are labeled the main “building blocks” to creating new stocks of social capital. This article challenges the assumptions about the positive outcomes of linking social capital through an examination of Ugandan community associations.

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associations. It argues that linking social capital can negatively impact the association in general, and democratic governance in particular, if not accompanied by bonding, and bridging social capital. Rather than automatically leading to positive outcomes, linking social capital can also lead to the disorganization of the groups.

The first part of this article elaborates a theoretical framework on social capital, and community associations. It is argued how community associations are characterized by different, and dynamic combinations of different forms of social capital which impact the democratic character of these associations. The second part of this paper analyzes these theoretical premises through three ethnographic case studies of community associations in Arua, Uganda. In the final section, we draw some conclusions regarding the impact of linking capital on democratic practices in community associations. On a more general level, it offers conclusions on the role of external interventions in the creation of social capital.

2. COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS, DEMOCRACY, AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

(a) Social capital, and community associations

One of the consequences of the rise of the social capital debate in the middle of the nineties was the increased interest in community organizations. This was in particular in response to the work of Robert Putnam, who defines social capital as “the features of social life—networks, norms, and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives” (1995, p. 664–665). Putnam equates social capital with horizontal organizations, or more specific with “networks of civic engagement,” hence the link between the social capital, and civil society debate. These organizations are labeled as the main “building blocks” in which new stocks of social capital occur. Grassroots involvement in community organizations with face-to-face relationships lead above all to the “real” social capital (Sztter, 2002). Even Putnam himself admits that social capital, and these community associations are so interconnected that it is sometimes difficult to see which is the chicken, and which the is egg (Putnam, 2000: 152). Community organizations are therefore defined as an excellent playground for democracy, through the social capital they embody, and the democratic values they promote (Putnam, 1993).

This social capital debate has led to the promotion of community associations in the implementation of development activities in developing countries. The World Bank’s Social Capital Initiative has highlighted the importance of this debate for developing countries (Grootaert & van Bastelaer, 2001). The papers produced through this initiative consider the relevance of community organizations, and the social capital they represent for a broad spectrum of development interventions such as access to credit, service delivery, natural resource management, and community-based development (Bebbington & Carrol, 2000; Isham & Kähkönen, 1999; Kähkönen, 1999; Krishna & Uphoff, 1999; Pantoja, 2000; Pargal et al., 1999; Reid & Salmen, 2000; Sørensen, 2000; van Bastelaer, 2000). What is common for this broad field of development interventions is the assumption that these organizations facilitate democratic governance at the local level. Members learn to create, change, bargain, and control the institutional settings of their organization. These internal institutions are necessary to deter free riders, to cut the costs of membership, and more in general, to increase organizational efficiency (Ostrom, 1990; Patterson, 2003). This process of developing the internal “rules of the game” also facilitates participation, and accountability, and as such creates local institutions in which democratic governance is practiced (Esman & Uphoff, 1984; Putnam, 1993).

(b) Bonding, bridging, and linking capital

In the past ten years, the distinction between bonding, bridging, and linking social capital has brought the analysis of social capital a step further by questioning “how social networks differ from one another in ways that are relevant to their consequences” (Putnam 2004, p. 668–669). Gittell and Vidal (1998) were the first to explicitly use the concepts of bonding, and bridging social capital. While bonding social capital is based on exclusive solidarity between “people like us,” and only helps people to “get by,” the bridging form of social capital refers to more inclusive solidarity between people of different backgrounds, and helps people to “get ahead” (Briggs, 1998).

In terms of democratic governance, the bridging form is more productive than the
bonding form of social capital. Bonding social capital has an important downside, as it can lead to more exclusive forms of solidarity based on kinship, class, ethnicity, religion, and so on (Portes & Landolt, 1996, 2000; Portes, 1998). High stocks of bonding social capital can therefore, lead to the exclusion of several groups in society, and even to conflicts between these groups (Colletta & Cullen, 2000). As bridging social capital connects people with different social backgrounds it has the capacity to span these social gaps, and enhance more inclusive forms of solidarity (Putnam, 1995, 2000). These cross-cutting networks traverse social gaps, and therefore, increase contact with various other people, supporting tolerance, and preventing groups from becoming inward focused (Paxton, 2002).

More recently, the work of Woolcock (1998), and Szreter (2002) introduced the concept of linking social capital to further refine the conceptual framework. Where bridging, and bonding social capital are mainly horizontal metaphors, the linking form refers to networks that connect people across explicit vertical power differentials. Szreter and Woolcock (2004, p. 6) gave the following explanation: “We would define linking social capital as norms of respect, and networks of trusting relationships between people who are interacting across explicit, formal or institutionalized power, or authority gradients in society.” According to the authors, examples of linking social capital are in the first place related to accessing bankers, law enforcement officers, social workers, health care providers, NGO officials, politicians, and the public administration in general. As such, the key function of this linking form of social capital is the capacity to leverage resources, information, and ideas from these formal institutions (Woolcock, 2002).

By focusing on bonding, and bridging social capital as horizontal metaphors, it must not be forgotten that poverty also has a vertical dimension. It has been widely shown that poverty is about powerlessness and social exclusion: a lack of ties with political elites, and people in power to influence those formal institutions, and policies which influence, and enhance the lives of the poor (Bebbington, 1999; Cleaver, 2005; Fox, 1996; Heller, 1996; Prakash, 2002; World Bank, 2000). Linking social capital refers to this specific capacity of engaging power structures. Linking social capital is therefore clearly linked with democratic governance, as it brings in issues of power, and politics, and refers in, particular, to the quality of the relationship between communities, and their representatives (Szreter, 2002).

(c) Bonding, bridging, and linking social capital in community associations: basic arguments

This literature on bonding, bridging, and linking social capital formulates some basic arguments with regard to which community associations will succeed in becoming local democratic institutions, and which not. By focussing on these arguments, we shift our focus from the community to the associational level as our level of analysis.

Firstly, bonding social capital is labeled as “the first step,” as all community organizations start within their own community. Strong bonding ties provide the foundation for trusting, and reciprocal relationships between the members, and as such, facilitate cooperation, and coordination within the organization (Saegert, Thompson, & Warren, 2001). Secondly, without additional bridging ties, these community organizations can create local institutions that are closed, hostile to others, or even corrupt (Portes, 1998). Building networks between a diversity of local institutions within the same community, and enhancing links with other communities will lead toward more open, and democratic local institutions which can speak for the whole community, as it can bring together neighboring communities which in the past were divided because of different interests, and identities (Saegert et al., 2001). Finally, these organizations need to create linking social capital. As such, they will learn to promote community interests in formal institutions, to participate in policy, and to hold accountable their officials. Szreter (2002) referred back to the British trade unions of the 19th century, which evolved from sectional, and apolitical (bonding) toward more inclusive (bridging) organizations before finally receiving the linking social capital that turned them into an accepted partner of the formal institutions. On a general level, these different steps overlap with the three roles that Browns (1991) pointed out when looking at the efficacy of organizations in sustainable development: the ability to maintain local effort, the ability to create bridging ties to other organizations, and the ability to influence politics through vertical ties. To summarize, the social capital literature argues that community organizations
need to transform bonding into bridging ties as to “reach out,” and create linking ties as to “scale up” the impact of the organization (Woolcock, 2002). This view therefore entails the implicit assumptions that firstly, groups or organizations should have all three types of social capital, and secondly, that there is a linear progression from bonding to bridging to linking social capital. Only in these circumstances will organizations reach the optimal dynamic balance of bonding, bridging, and linking social capital, and contribute to democracy, and development.

In the past, considerable efforts have been made to nuance the positive outcomes of social capital by pointing out its downsides (Colletta & Cullen, 2000; Portes & Landolt, 1996, 2000; Portes, 1998). As already mentioned, this critique was in the first place a critique of the downside of bonding social capital, redefining the positive outcomes of social capital more specifically as the outcomes of bridging social capital (Putnam, 1995, 2000). Much less is known about the possible negative aspects of the linking form of social capital, which is what this article aims to address. It specifically seeks to analyse how linking social capital can negatively affect the functioning of community organizations in developing countries. In another context, Putnam (1993) has made considerable efforts to explain the difference between “bad” vertical patron–client networks that are integrated in the “amoral familism” present in the south of Italy, and “good” horizontal civic networks which, according to Putnam, explain the working of democracy in northern Italy. In general, vertical networks spanning power disparities are mainly used by the powerful to control the powerless. Therefore, Putnam (2004) proposes to distinguish between “responsive,” and “unresponsive” linking social capital. The “unresponsive” form can lead toward nepotism, corruption, and suppression, while responsive linking social capital has the potential to nourish respectful, and trusting ties between communities, and their representatives within formal institutions (Szreter & Woolcock, 2004).

This article aims to spark this debate by challenging assumptions about the positive outcomes of “linking social capital” through an examination of Ugandan community associations. In particular, it argues how linking social capital can negatively impact the democratic character of these organizations, if not accompanied by bonding, and bridging social capital. We define democracy procedurally, as a decision-making process in which participation, and accountability are two key aspects (Patterson, 1998). The internal democratic character of the organization refers to the effective participation of the members in the internal decision-making process, and if, and how they can hold their leaders accountable, while the external democratic spill-over effects refer to the extent to which the association is participating in broader community policies, and discussions, and the extent to which the association is playing a role in holding community leaders accountable. In this sense, both the private, and public side of social capital are being analyzed.

Both community associations, and social capital are defined as context specific, and dynamic, in that the contribution which different organizations make to different forms of social capital varies by context, and over time (De Silva, Harpham, Huttly, Bartolini, & Penny, 2007). Consequently, the democratic character of these community organizations cannot be explained by one particular form of social capital at one particular moment, but rather by the optimal, and dynamic combinations of different forms of social capital that change by context, and over time (Prakash, 2002; Szreter, 2002; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000).

To capture these different combinations, and their dynamic character we present detailed accounts of three community associations in the West Nile region in northern Uganda. Through their life histories we show how they built bonding, bridging, and linking social capital, and highlight the role linking social capital plays in the functioning of these organizations. We stress that social capital is a process issue, and that before measuring its impact one has to understand the causes, and mechanisms of how social capital is created (Dudwick, Kuehnast, Nyhan Jones, & Woolcock, 2006). These case studies are therefore an ethnographic supplement leading to a deeper understanding of what the abundance of quantitative surveys on social capital try to measure. The distinction between bonding, bridging, and linking social capital proves to be a relevant framework for guiding research on social capital, and community organizations. In particular, it is shown how linking social capital can negatively impact the association in general, and democratic governance in particular, if not accompanied by sufficient bonding, and bridging social capital.
3. CASE STUDIES

These findings are based on three case studies of community associations in the direct vicinity of Arua town in Arua district in Uganda. Arua is situated in the West Nile region in North Western Uganda. The town, and its surrounding peri-urban centers have about 85,000 inhabitants. Ethnographic data in the community associations were gathered through formal, and informal interviews, and observations. The case of the OPEC boys demonstrates how strong bonding, and bridging social capital can lead to a democratic, and powerful form of linking capital, whereas the cases of VUPEG, and CARYM show how linking capital can have detrimental effects on the democratic practices of the organization.

(a) The OPEC boys

The OPEC boys are a group of men who started their activities by smuggling fuel from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to Arua town in Uganda, where they sell it. They are named after the coalition of oil-producing countries, and are about 300–400 men strong. The origins of the OPEC boys can be traced to the period in exile during the first half of the eighties. With the overthrow of the brutal dictatorship of Idi Amin, Obote’s Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) occupied the West Nile region, and committed many brutalities in revenge for the atrocities of the Amin regime. Most of the population fled into exile in Congo, and Sudan in late 1979, and the early 1980s. During this period in exile, a few young men had started selling transit fuel from Kinshasa, and Kampala. When they returned to their home areas, they had no education, or assets. Because of the strategic location near to the Congo, and Sudan, they became active in the illegal transborder fuel trade, which was tapped from transit tankers, or bought in the DRC. This was especially the case for the Aringa, a Muslim sub-group of the Lugbara. When they came back from exile (from 1983 onwards), their home area, Aringa county, was still plagued by armed conflicts. As a result, many Aringa came to settle within Arua town. Many were uneducated, unskilled, and without any assets. This group of “unanchored” Aringa youth became the core group of the OPEC boys: numerous Aringa young men were drawn into the transborder fuel trade. As there was much demand for fuel, they soon became very successful. There was also no petrol station in the area, which made the local government authorities tolerate them. Moreover, rebel groups were still plaguing West Nile, drawing on the same “unanchored, uneducated, and disaffected former soldiers, and youth” (Gersony 1997: 77) as the OPEC boys: if these young men had not been active in the fuel trade, they could easily have been drawn into criminal activities, or even another rebel movement.

Because of their success, they were soon joined by young men from neighboring districts, and other ethnic groups, such as the Aivu, or the Terrego. Moreover, they soon expanded into other activities, and even started their own construction firm. Some OPEC boys stopped selling fuel and started working in this construction firm, which was headed by engineers who were unemployed but educated brothers of the OPEC boys. Because of this rapid growth, the organization became divided in several sub-groups (both within town, and the surrounding villages), but remained with an overall OPEC boys structure (“OPEC Arua”). All of these groups (both the overarching organization, and the sub-groups) have a formal structure with a chairperson, assisted by a vice-chairperson, treasurer, etc., which conduct meetings on a regular basis. This formal structure was one of the factors contributing to greater trust among the different members, and member groups: these meetings were not only used to take “formal” business decisions, but also to solve conflicts among the different members, organize community work, and so on. Moreover, through these meetings, intangible benefits were provided to the members such as support for members with financial problems (e.g., contributing to hospital costs, or school fees) or assisting members with deaths in their family.

The OPEC boys are therefore not only seen as economic actors, they are also seen as social actors which are respected by the wider local population. Much of this has to do with the fact that the OPEC boys regularly represent issues of the wider community to the local government. For example, when the market authorities decided to introduce a tax for small restaurants at the market ground, the OPEC boys played a crucial role in representing the interests of the women running these restaurants. These women felt the tax was far too high, but the district threatened to confiscate their utilities if they refused to pay. The women informed the overall OPEC boys’ leadership
about their problem. The OPEC boys held a general meeting (with all the sub-groups) to discuss the issue, after which it was decided to be a genuine complaint, as it was seen as a deliberate attempt by the government to “strangle people’s livelihood, and push them into poverty.”

The OPEC boys leadership went to the market authorities, who in turn refused to talk with them. After this, the OPEC boys went to the district authorities, where they presented their complaint, and threatened further action such as creating chaos in town, or stopping fuel sales. The tax was subsequently abolished. This example illustrates how the OPEC boys represent the interests of other groups, and thus form bridging capital with other groups within society, through which they are able to influence the local government. On their own, without the support of the OPEC boys, these market women do not have much impact on the local government. The government is not dependent on them (as they are on the fuel of the OPEC boys), and they are not organized into groups with a strict leadership structure. This latter factor proved to be crucial in linking up with the district, as the leaders of the OPEC boys have always been in close contact with the district authorities. As a result, the district leadership does listen to these women with the support of the OPEC boys. Also in other cases, the OPEC boys acted as intermediary between urban groups (such as the motorcycle, or bicycle taxi groups, the carwash groups, and other small businesses), and the local government. This did not only happen when these groups’ interests overlapped with their own interests. It rather reflects the strong feelings of solidarity between all the urban marginalized groups, including the OPEC boys, who all regard themselves as “survivors.” It can therefore be argued that the OPEC boys are representing the interests of marginalized sections of society, and inducing political participation, as the local government, and the urban community negotiate about certain issues.

The OPEC boys started out of bonding social capital between a group of Aringa young men who were trying to survive in exile, and in the difficult circumstances of their return. As their activities proved to be very successful, they were joined by many other unemployed young men from other ethnic groups, who even came from surrounding districts. As these unemployed young men had little other possibilities for employment and were making a good income with the OPEC boys, it was very much in their interest to make the group function well. To deal with this expansion in members, and activities, formal structures were introduced to facilitate the cooperation between the different sub-groups, and individual members. This entailed an increased participation through regular meetings, in which representatives of the sub-groups attended the general meetings of OPEC Arua. Through these meetings, decisions were made about the conduct of individual members, the allocation of resources, and the representation of wider community interests to the local government. The effect of this expanding bridging capital for the OPEC boys was what Putnam it envisaged it to be: networks of trust, and reciprocity were built in the wider community, in which the local authorities were held accountable (Putnam, 1993). Crucial in this evolution of the organization was their charismatic leader, Kaku. Kaku already started smuggling goods at young age while being in exile, and back in Arua, he was among the first to start smuggling fuel. Through his expertise, contacts, and charisma, he was strongly respected, and soon became the founder of the actual OPEC boys. He was the most important factor in introducing a strong discipline among the members, setting up the organizational structure, expanding to the other businesses, and attracting members from other ethnic groups (Kaku himself is a Terrego, a non-Aringa), and districts. Under his leadership, the OPEC boys were also providing different services to the wider urban community: on a regular basis, they were cleaning the streets, providing transport for funerals, and acting as a community vigilante. Because of these community services, Kaku, and the OPEC boys were highly respected among the wider population. In other words, Kaku proved to be an important factor in building both the bonding, and bridging capital of the OPEC boys.

An additional factor facilitating the formation of social capital are the general feelings of marginalization in West Nile (Leopold, 2005). The local population feels they are being betrayed, and neglected by the current Museveni government, and see the OPEC boys as “sons of the soil” who are taking their rights into their own hands by creating employment in the face of strong neglect by the national government (Titeca, 2006). This does not only create a feeling of reciprocity, and solidarity within the wider population in the West Nile, but also within the OPEC boys, who strongly
identify with “being an OPEC boy while being neglected by the government.” These already existing feelings of trust among the OPEC boys are further enhanced by the illegal nature of the OPEC boys’ activities, for the simple reason that their illicit smuggling activities (including the income derived from these activities) need higher degrees of trust, and reciprocity than legal activities (Skaperdas 2001, p. 184–187).

This is both the case internally among the OPEC boys, and externally in their relationship with the wider population, which informs them about the movement of the government authorities, and helps them hiding.

This bridging capital—in the sense that relationships are established with other urban marginalized groups, and the wider population, but especially the fact that the OPEC boys provide employment to a vast group of “unanchored, and uneducated young men”—in turn gives the OPEC boys linking social capital. The local government realizes that, although the OPEC boys perform illicit activities, they provide employment to a large group of unemployed marginalized, and therefore potentially dangerous, young men. In the recent history of rebel movements in Northern Uganda in general, and West Nile in particular (cf. Leopold, 2005), they could easily be drawn into criminality, or even rebellion. The OPEC boys even provide order to this marginalized group, as they use their structures to regulate the (mis)behavior of their members: misconduct is punished after consultation among the subgroup executive, which decides on the specific penalty. For example, during the field research cases of fighting were penalized either through financial, or physical punishments (with strokes of the cane). Alternatively, in case of any complaints, the local government contacts the overall OPEC boys leadership, who in turn contacts the sub-group leadership, who discipline the culprit.

The local government therefore prefers to tolerate, and even support the OPEC boys, and their illicit smuggling activities. It provides them with financial incentives, or state-sponsored development initiatives: they helped several OPEC boys sub-groups to officially register as a Community-Based Organization, which enabled them to access the World Bank sponsored Northern Ugandan Social Action Fund (which essentially aims to build social capital). With these funds, some of the sub-groups have started small-scale projects such as poultry farming. The local government also helped them to win tenders, for example, to clean the market, or hospital, and politicians have negotiated jobs for them with major infrastructure works in the area. Moreover, in this privileged position, the OPEC boys act as an intermediary between urban marginalized groups, and the local government (as demonstrated above in the case of the market women).

The specific bridging capital of the OPEC boys enabled them access to the local government authorities, in the sense that the local government authorities tolerated them, and had an advantage in supporting them. In this context, the synergy (Evans, 1996a, 1996b) between local government and the OPEC boys enabled the latter to further “scale up” their association: it helped them to diversify their activities, and register as a Community-Based Organization, as well as gaining access to the World Bank (NUSAF) funding.

(b) Vurra patriotic entertainers group (VUPEG)

“Vurra patriotic entertainers group,” or VUPEG is an association registered as a Community Based Organization (CBO), Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), and cooperative alliance, based in Vurra sub-county in Arua district (specifically in Adravu East Village, Izuki parish). At the start, its objectives were purely political: it was founded by the Minister for housing, and urban development Dr. Eric T.S. Adriko in support of his 1996 (national) elections campaign. Under the clear chairmanship of the Reverend William Avuoye (hereafter referred to as “the reverend”) the association, consisting of twenty-two (male) of his staunchest supporters, was doing entertainment throughout Vurra county in support of the candidature of Dr. Adriko, who had been a Minister since 1991. Dr. Adiko was clearly encouraging this, as he was providing the association with financial assistance. As the Constitution puts it “VUPEG was founded at the start of the 1996 electoral process for the purpose of giving Patriotic Education to the people of VURA through traditional media-songs, plays, folk stories, and dance. It was blessed, and supported straight at the start by (...) Hon. Dr. Eric. T.S. Adiko.” After the appointment of Dr. Eric Adiko as a second Deputy Prime Minister, VUPEG expected the minister to further contribute to the association: their keen support in organizing entertainment activities for the Minister can for the most
part be explained out of the hope to receive some benefits from the Minister, to get a “share of the cake.” If not direct material, or logistical benefits, at least some indirect benefits in linking them up with national or international donors. None of these proved the case. Instead the Minister mainly encouraged them to go their own way in becoming a development organization, and to write project proposals to this extent.

In other words, the organization did not start out of bonding social capital, but out of linking social capital: there was no associational form of solidarity, and cooperation to “get by,” but rather an association (under the clear leadership of one-man) which wanted to develop itself through linking up to the “local big man.” This linking social capital did, however, not bring them much benefit, as the VUPEG members were disappointed in the limited support of the Minister. At this point, many of the original members left the organization, because they had expected clear material benefits, and were not really interested in the new developmental orientation of the association. They were, however, replaced by new members from the wider community, who were more interested in the developmental activities of the organization.

With the help of a few educated members who joined the organization, a democratic structure was set up (with a board, general meeting, elections, etc.) and the organization registered itself as a Community Based Organization, and Non-Governmental Organization. Also development proposals were written, which proved to be successful. From 1999 to 2001, VUPEG received funds from the poverty alleviation program (PAP), a governmental poverty-reduction program for a microfinance scheme. The organization further expanded, and soon became an umbrella organization under which many Community-Based Organizations registered, and participated in the activities. Its principal activity became a cassava-multiplication program, supported by local intermediary organizations (which in turn receive funding from a range of international donors such as GTZ). This cassava-multiplication proved very successful, to the extent that VUPEG staff became hired by certain local government authorities to act as an agricultural trainer. In other words, “reaching out” to new members with other, developmental, and non-political, motivations reduced the exclusive political character of the organization. Also the fact that VUPEG became an umbrella organization increased the inclusion of other groups in society. This brought bridging capital with strong positive effects: development partners were found, democratic structures were installed, and other organizations within the wider community shared in the benefits.

After its first attempt to create linking capital during the 1996 elections, the association tried this again during the 2001 parliamentary elections in which they started supporting another candidate, Simon Ejua. This support was the individual (undemocratic) decision of the Reverend, who decided this candidate would be the most beneficial option for the association. The Reverend, and some other key members started acting as his local campaign agent, once more hoping on direct benefits for the association. It was however another candidate, Andrale Avuzu, who was elected. As VUPEG had been openly campaigning against him, the relations between Avuzu, who was appointed as a Minister of state for Transport, and Communications, and VUPEG were not really amicable. This also affected the relationship with the sub-county authorities; as the majority of the sub-county authorities (as the LCIII chairman, and councillors) were strong supporters of Avuzu, they had a negative attitude toward VUPEG, which they perceived to be connected with opposition politics, with no other motive as obstructing the work of the sub-county, and Minister Avuzu. According to VUPEG, “Avuzu has no other objective than to fulfill the personal needs of the sub-county councilors,” while the sub-county authorities claim the accusations of VUPEG are a simple result of their powerlessness, frustration, and low level of education.

As a result of this generally bad relationship, VUPEG claims that the sub-county authorities consistently try to sabotage their activities by not giving out information about programs they could access, and ignoring their capacities as agricultural trainers. While VUPEG staff were at one point being hired as agricultural experts by the district offices, they are not currently being hired, or approached by their own sub-county, which instead is hiring trainers from other sub-counties.

Throughout its history, VUPEG has continuously been trying to link itself to local politicians, in the hope of attracting certain benefits. This was particularly the initiative of the Reverend, who argued that “the organiza-
tion has a political background. And therefore, we will never leave our engagement in politics.”

This linking capital did not prove very productive, as the particular politicians either did not get elected, or lost interest in the association. Instead of bringing material benefits, it led to negative relations with the local sub-county authorities with harmful effects for the development of the organization. From a social capital perspective, it does not really matter if the sub-county authorities were really “boycotting” the organization, or not; what does matter is that there was definitely no synergetic effects taking place between the organization, and the local government. This linking capital also negatively affected the internal democracy in the association: As the Reverend was both the founding member, and above all the person responsible for connecting VUPEG with the outside world, linking the association with politicians, and donor organizations, this gradually led to a situation where he was considered the principal owner of the association, both by himself, and the majority of the members. This led to several instances where he was misusing his power position. One problem was that he occasionally took money from the organization’s account without informing the treasurer. Although financial issues should be handled by the treasurer, the Reverend refused to accept this. For example, at one point, money was taken to buy stationary for the association, but only a limited amount of money was accounted for. There were also other problems on an organizational level: According to the constitution of the organization, the general assembly has to meet every year. During this meeting, general elections are held, in which the board, and executive committee members are re-elected. However, the Reverend—as the chairman of the board—resisted a general assembly; as he did not want his power position to be challenged. Most of the members did not want to challenge the Reverend about this. On the one hand, he refused to respond to these allegations, as “he just starts shouting at people demanding accountability!”

On the other hand, members did not want to challenge his position, as he was the initiator of the organization, and as he was controlling access to the outside contacts (donors, and politicians).

The transformation of VUPEG into a dictatorial one-man organization had a double effect: on the one hand, it meant that certain members became less interested in the organization. The accountant, for example, refused to work any longer directly with the Reverend. On the other hand, it led to a polarization within the organization. The Reverend had certain members on his side, who often accompany him on his field trips; while a few other—more educated—members allied themselves around Dr. Charles. Dr. Charles is the most educated member of the organization—he is a veterinarian—and most often consulted whenever a “difficult” issue arises. The whole situation led to strong tensions between Dr. Charles, and the Reverend. For example, when Dr. Charles was writing project proposals (he was the only member with a university degree), the other members felt left out, and had the feeling he was using project proposals in order to plot against them. Dr. Charles however took the forefront in leading the opposition against the dictatorial behavior of the Reverend. After the Reverend had misappropriated 60,000 Ugandan Shillings, Dr. Charles forced the Reverend to hold a general meeting, where finally a vote of no confidence was cast. In the meeting, the Reverend was downgraded to vice-chairperson. Nevertheless, when the newly elected chairperson had to move to another district two months later (for professional reasons), the Reverend became chairperson again. The members unanimously judged that the Reverend had been punished enough by being a vice-chairperson; and could therefore take up his older position again. In other words, even if he had been acting wrongly, he is still seen as the only legitimate leader of the organization. As a member comments “He might have acted wrongly, but he is providing the organization with funds!”

In other words, linking capital gave one personality the power to dominate the organization, leading to a general malfunctioning of the organization. Although formal democratic structures were introduced, it became no “playground for democracy,” rather a playground for the “gatekeeper” (Bierschenk, Chauveau, & De Sardan, 2000) to the higher-level institutions, negatively affecting general accountability, participation, and transparency. This particular relation between VUPEG and the higher-level institutions is therefore in line with Putnam’s “unresponsive” form of linking capital, fostering corruption, and nepotism rather than “scaling up” the impact of the organization (Putnam, 2004; Szreter & Woolcock, 2004).
The Catholic, Agricultural, and Rural Youth Movement (CARYM) is a Catholic Church founded lay people's organization. Its activities are embedded in the structures of the Catholic Dioceses, and its main aim is "to develop the abilities of rural youth for self-reliance, and the improvement of the living conditions in the villages," and its main target-group the non-school going youth. Its main office is in Kampala, and it has 15 local branches over Uganda. CARYM Arua started in July 2002. This was mainly in cooperation with the young, and dynamic manager of the Dioceses youth center, Jackson, who had been very active in the local Dioceses structures: he started as a chapel youth leader, had several other functions in the Dioceses, and was finally appointed youth center coordinator. In this position, he is the person with overall responsibility for the youth center, and of all organizations working in the youth center, among which CARYM is the most important.

Twenty-six motivated members were selected among the catholic youth from the different Diocesan parishes. (In fact, no selection had to take place as there was space for 30 members, and only 26 candidates turned up.) Also an executive was elected, along with a coordinator. The coordinator, which is the only paid position in the organization, runs the daily activities of the organization; while Jackson (as the youth center coordinator) remains financially responsible for the organization, and reports back to the local Dioceses, and the national CARYM offices in Kampala. All these rules were laid down in a detailed constitution.

CARYM’s main activities are twofold: on the one hand projects, and training in the field of sustainable agriculture, and on the other hand a "diary cow" project, in which cows are passed on to the different members through a rotational scheme. To this extent, CARYM Kampala gave the individual members of CARYM Arua a training course in sustainable agriculture, a diary cow, a bicycle, and farm tools. In return, the individual members had to pass on knowledge from their training on sustainable agriculture to the members of their community. According to the Constitution, and the rules of agreement with CARYM Kampala, the CARYM Arua coordinator has to monitor the activities of the individual members in their local communities, and report back to the national CARYM office. In this sense, the CARYM project aims at introducing a culture of participant, and responsible citizens, not only within the organization, but also in the wider community, through passing on the training.

As the support of CARYM Kampala is only temporary (four years), it strongly encourages its member organizations to look for other donors in support of their activities. CARYM Arua proved to be fairly successful in this. It has been contracted by GTZ (German development agency) as trainers in food, and nutrition schemes in the refugee camps in the area; and World Vision donated a carpentry workshop to the organization. Within CARYM, these successes are mainly attributed to Jackson, who has been active in the church structures for a long time, and has many contacts through his position as a youth center coordinator. Moreover, he was the one who established the links with CARYM Kampala, and the other donor organizations. This linking social capital gave Jackson strong respect within the organization, but inversely affected participation, accountability, and general group communication: for example, CARYM has to submit a monthly report to the national CARYM office, in which they describe their monthly activities. The coordinator has to submit these to Jackson, who has to forward them to CARYM Kampala. The problem is not in the writing of the report, but in the fact that the report is forwarded to Jackson, who does not forward it to the national office. As the coordinator explains

"Communication with the national office is quite difficult for us. There is a gap for us members. We do not communicate many times. We communicate through Jackson. But me, as a coordinator, I do not. Because we need to respect the hierarchy! (...) We are supposed to report monthly to the national office. But it is a bit difficult internally. We as members sit, and handwrite these reports. We then give it to Jackson, who should type it, and send it to the national office. But we do not get feedback from him if it is sent, or not. Jackson should send our report together with a financial report that he writes. But he forgets. We ask him, but no clear answer is given. He will say the youth secretary is too busy. No one else can assist us. We are yet to find a proper solution for this." 23

Because of the strong respect for Jackson, members do not dare to confront him, nor do they have the capacity to consult anyone else on this, because Jackson is controlling all the
outside contacts of the organization. Even when the national CARYM coordinator came to monitor CARYM Arua’s activities, and urgently requested them to send monthly reports, this did not change this attitude. “As Jackson was in contact with the national office, he must be knowing what is best for us,” 24 was the comment of the secretary.

As a result, reports were never sent. Moreover, the CARYM coordinator stopped monitoring the activities of the individual members in the different parishes, and individual members stopped reporting on their activities. In this general context, members did not feel obliged to give further training to their community members. Throughout the interviews, members emphasized how they no longer felt encouraged to organize the time-consuming training courses without the direct support and knowledge of the executive. It was found that the 26 members on average trained three people from their community, while at least 10 people per person was the figure agreed with the national office.

The CARYM executive also proved to be unaware of the financial status of CARYM: no one knew the actual budget of CARYM, how much money was, and could still be spent. As the coordinator comments

“We do not know where the money comes from, if it is money from the national office, or where. Jackson gives us a broad figure, but we have no clue of what it is spent on. Last time I asked, but he told me that he first was going to update the old data, and then give accountability to me. But up to today, he has not done this.” 25

In other words, the members do not dare to confront Jackson. Also meetings proved to be problematic. Although they initially were having a monthly executive CARYM meeting, and a general CARYM meeting every two months—as was laid out in the constitution—CARYM meetings soon proved to be very rare. 26 According to the CARYM members, this is mainly because Jackson hardly has time left for meetings: through his status as educated “gatekeeper,” linking the organization to external actor, Jackson not only obtained political power within the organization, but also in the wider local political field: he was elected as a village chairman, an elected member of the local School Management Committee, and a frequently asked master of ceremony for fundraising activities. In other words, Jackson had been accumulating more, and more power through his outside contacts (“linking capital”), which allowed him to increasingly neglect formal rules within the association regarding democratic procedures, participation, and accountability. This also had an effect on the bonding capital of the association. Whereas members initially had some form of bonding capital through the meetings, and trainings, they started becoming less, and less involved with the organization as a whole: members no longer met as an “organization,” had no impact, or input in it, and therefore slowly lost contact with the association. The organization became more, and more a collection of individuals (instead of an association united by social capital), being only left with the material aspects of their membership, such as the dairy cows. They no longer felt involved with the association.

Although this process reduced the function of the executive to almost purely ceremonial, this was nevertheless perceived as legitimate by both the executive, and the individual members. During many interviews, and observations, it was emphasized how the development of CARYM would not be possible without the involvement of Jackson, who was often described as the “father” 27 of the association. He had been involved with the Dioceses for a long time; he had a higher educational level; but most importantly, he has been linking them to the different developmental actors. Thanks to his efforts, they had received several benefits from CARYM, a carpentry workshop from World Vision, and some extra employment from CARYM, which formed the association. As such, the association is in a continuous relationship with higher-level CARYM offices, and has to provide reports, attend training courses, write proposals, etc. Through this relationship “resources, information, and ideas” (Woolcock, 2002) are received, which indeed have positive effects on the organization: knowledge was received, and (in the initial stages of the association) passed on to the wider community. No “synergy” was formed with the local government, but a good cooperation was in place with the international donors which were
present in the area. However, the fact that linking capital was the only source of social capital soon proved to be problematic for the organization: the leader, Jackson, bases his authority on his links with higher-level formal institutions, and is effectively controlling all access, both to the national CARYM authorities, the local church authorities, and other donors (GTZ, and World Vision). Just as with VUPEG, this authority proved detrimental to the democratic development of the organization.

These findings strongly contradict earlier research on faith-based organizations (FBOs) (Cnaan, Boddie, Handy, Yancey, & Schneider, 2002; Greely, 1997), which argues how strong social ties are developed through religious participation, and that religion as a basis for bonding creates “deeper, broader, and more sustaining relationships” (Lockhart 2005: 57). Through the creation of this religiously based bonding capital, FBOs are considered less corrupt, more participatory, more transparent, and so on. They are considered true “agents of transformation” (Clark, 2007: 77), which are more effective, and trustworthy (Silverman, 2002) than secular organizations. The case of CARYM, however, shows that these “stronger” bonding ties never came into existence, and how CARYM is not less corrupt, participatory, and transparent. On the contrary: from the beginning of the association, the important status of Jackson within the local church hierarchy proved to be an important factor in hindering democratic processes within the organization. Jackson’s lack of transparency, and authoritarian tendencies were easily accepted as he had always been strongly embedded within the local religious structures, and negatively affected the initial processes of participation, and accountability (e.g., the organization of meetings). This process is similar to the conclusions from other empirical studies of African civil society groups (Barkan, McNulty, & Ayeni, 1991; Bierschenk et al., 2000; Fatton, 1995; Mohan, 2002; Patterson, 1998, 2003; Platteau & Gaspart, 2003), which describe how the links of certain leading members with powerful outside actors such as the state, or donors negatively affect the internal dynamics of groups. As Patterson (1998, p. 427) states, this “results in limited participation, skewed communication between members, and leaders, and leaders who are not accountable for their actions,” which is exactly what happened with CARYM.

The case of CARYM also contradicts earlier findings on the more holistic approach of faith-based programs. As Cnaan et al. argue: “The congregational approach to service differs from that of the professional care in that it is holistic: contact with those being served does not end when the problem disappears” (2002: 291). In other words, through their holistic approach, faith-based programs have a more long-term commitment to their clients than secular programs (Monsma & Soper 2003, p. 25). This was definitely not the case for CARYM: in a follow-up visit in early, 2007, the association had virtually collapsed. As the funding from the national office had ended, the association’s activities had totally stopped - CARYM Arua only existed on paper.

4. CONCLUSION

Social capital does not always promote democratic practices, but has different effects at different points. This dynamic is well characterized by a distinction between bonding, bridging, and linking social capital. In this article, three associations were described which throughout their history have developed different kinds of social capital. Three conclusions can be drawn from these case studies. Firstly, linking capital can result in a centralization of power in the hands of the gatekeeper, negatively affecting the internal, and external democratic character of the organization. VUPEG, and CARYM came into existence because of links to higher-level institutions, respectively, politicians, and church institutions. In both organizations, a “development broker,” or “gatekeeper” was regulating access to flows of information, and resources. This gatekeeper neglected all democratic procedures, but he was seen as legitimate by the individual members. This is similar to what Platteau writes about elite capture in a community-based association in West Africa

“In a context where the ability to deal with external resources of funding is concentrated in a small elite group, the bargaining strength of common people is inevitable limited, hence their ready acceptance of highly asymmetric patterns of the distribution of program benefits. If the intervention of the elite results in an improvement in the predicament of the poor, however small that improvement, the latter tend to be thankful to their leaders: the outcome represents a Pareto improvement over the previous situation, and this is what matters after all.” (Platteau 2004: 227).
Even in the instances where individuals, and groups from the wider community joined the association—and therefore introduce bridging capital—this was molded into undemocratic patterns of power, and legitimacy. For instance, VUPEG attracted individual educated members from the wider community, and became an umbrella organization with many community associations. It soon became clear that there was an embezzlement of funds by the Reverend, and neglect of other democratic practices. In spite of the bridging capital, it took a long time for any action to be taken, which did not prove very effective, as the Reverend soon regained his old position. In spite of his undemocratic, and corrupt practices, the Reverend therefore never lost his legitimacy.

Secondly, this first point brings us to a much larger conclusion, namely that the larger context in which CBOs operate has a profound impact on their internal dynamics. This stands in stark contrast with much of the reasoning of the social capital literature, which seems to assume that CBOs operate within a vacuum. Our case studies demonstrate how CBOs are bound by institutions, and norms in their environment, which have a strong impact on organizational outcomes, and the behavior of individuals within the organization (North, 1990). This corresponds with insights from the literature on new institutionalism, which emphasise the examination of rules, norms, and processes in analyzing organizations: any attempt at understanding organizations has to be understood in the larger context, as formal, or informal procedures, routines, norms, and conventions do have an impact on the internal dynamics of associations (Powell & Di Maggio, 1991). These institutions are not always functional with regard to achieving the organization’s goals, which Campbell (1998) (quoted in: Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 949) described as a “logic of social appropriateness” instead of a “logic of instrumentality.”

The same can be argued with regard to social capital, as larger norms and institutions do shape the building of social capital in these associations. This is well reflected in our discussion on the role of the gatekeeper in CBOs, a position which is to a great extent influenced by larger norms, and institutions.

Within CARYM, Jackson’s privileged position is to a great extent embedded in larger social hierarchies, but in particular in his role within a respected local organization, that is, the church. This religious role acts as a strong basis of power, and legitimacy, which allows asymmetric patterns of distribution to occur within the organization. Our findings therefore provide an important correction with regard to the assumptions about faith-based organizations, and development, as they point out how embeddedness into wider religious structures can act as a legitimating force for corruption, and undemocratic practices. A similar dynamic can be seen within VUPEG: the Reverend also bases his authority on his role in the local religious structures, but even more so on his connection to the local political sphere. This provides him with the necessary power, and legitimacy within the organization (or at least a substantial part of this organization).

Similarly, the specific context of a lack of access to resources has a profound impact on the formation of social capital in all three of the associations. Within VUPEG, and CARYM, this poverty, and underdevelopment makes the member rely on linking capital at all costs—even if it involves corruption on the part of the gatekeepers. Members do not necessarily care much about bonding capital, as their main preoccupation is access to resources. The OPEC boys have the same concern, but in slightly different circumstances, and with the opposite effect: in their specific situation, linking capital was initially absent. Members therefore had all advantage in making the organization effective, that is, they had to have strong bonding capital in order to gain access to resources. This factor, in combination with their larger social, and political circumstances (e.g., feelings of political, and social marginalization), also had a profound impact on the efficient formation of bridging, and linking capital, something which has been described in detail above.

This brings us at our third conclusion: the case of the OPEC boys shows how linking capital can produce positive results when firmly embedded in bonding, and bridging capital. Whereas VUPEG, and CARYM came into existence through higher-level initiatives, the OPEC boys originated as a community initiative to “get by.” This bonding social capital gradually expanded through bridging ties with the wider community, in which many young men joined their association, and in which the OPEC boys represented the interests of other groups. The combination of bonding and bridging finally led to linking ties with the local government, in which this particular synergy
further helped the organization to develop itself. In this sense, bonding, and bridging capital guides the behavior of the association in linking up with higher-level institutions, and can act as a break on potentially undemocratic practices. For example, a chairperson of one of the OPEC sub-groups (OPEC Ediofe) was, in 2004 immediately fined, and sacked from his position when he was found to be embezzling funds from the association’s account. In this process of transforming from a small-scale survival initiative to a larger-scale association, democratic practices became part of the organization. Instead of being imposed by a higher-level institution, these participatory, and accountable structures arose out of need, and are embedded in the practices of the organization.

From a theoretical point of view, these conclusions provide empirical insights with regard to the two assumptions that organizations follow a linear progression from bonding to bridging to linking social capital; and that the optimal balance in the end should include all three forms of social capital.

First of all, our cases question the progression assumption. As the cases of CARYM, and VUPEG clearly demonstrate, it is implausible that all community-based organizations always progress from bonding to bridging to linking social capital. On the contrary, it is shown how community-based organizations can be heavily dependent on linking capital for their development: from the beginning, they are created through higher-level institutions as the church, political parties, NGOs, international donors, and so on. However, our case studies do support the fact that only a progression from bonding to bridging to linking social capital seems to give the expected positive results of furthering development, and democracy. At least it is clear that community-based organizations need to be embedded in locally produced bonding, and afterwards bridging social capital, as was the case with the OPEC boys. Only then the effects of linking social capital were positive and some form of democratic governance was achieved within the organization. This was not the case for VUPEG, and CARYM, which followed another path of social capital formation.

Secondly, our conclusions also question the normative assumption that associations should have all types of social capital in the end. An interesting question in this regard is if organizations can specialize in one type of social capital over another. The CARYM members, for example, do not care much about the association’s lack of bonding capital, as the linking capital provides them with strong benefits. Then, the question is, if bonding, or bridging social capital is really needed? In the short term they do not, as the members receive their benefits anyhow through the “gatekeeper.” However, in the long-term, the absence of bonding, and/or bridging capital gives the association many difficulties such as authoritarian tendencies, and corruption. The rich literature on empirical studies of African civil society groups (cf. Barkan et al., 1991; Bierschenk et al., 2000; Fatton, 1995; Mohan, 2002; Patterson, 1998, 2003; Platteau & Gaspart, 2003) demonstrates how links with the state, and donors have a strong impact on the internal dynamics of these groups. As our case studies demonstrate, strong bonding, and bridging capital is needed in order to have efficient linking capital within these community associations. Specialization in the linking type of social capital seems only plausible when organizations move away from the local level. Bebbington and Carrol (2000), for example, described how federations become specialized “gatekeepers” for the coffee producers toward external power structures such as the international coffee market, and the state. Such extra community organizations (De Silva et al., 2007) act as intermediaries, which connect communities with national organizations, government, and the broader civil society. As these organizations no longer have to take into consideration specific community issues, they can go beyond this community level, and focus on linking capital. This is not possible for community-based associations, as strong social bonds are the very “nature” of their organization. They should present specific community issues, and therefore need to be embedded in their communities. As the Opec Boys demonstrate, the bonding type of social capital has to be the very foundation of a community-based organization in order to allow the bridging, and linking types to effectively increase the impact of the organization.

This brings us to a more general policy conclusion about the role of external interventions in the creation of social capital. Social capital is seen as a missing link to development, and democratic governance, and external development interventions are requested to “create social capital that increases the voice, and economic opportunities of the poor” (World Bank 2000: 129–130). Supporting community
associations in order to build this social capital is therefore becoming a standard donor strategy. Our case studies suggest that external interventions can not only create, or “scale up” the impact of social capital (OPEC), but social capital can also be negatively affected by them (VUPEG, and especially CARYM). External interventions can confuse the optimal combination of different forms of social capital within an association, by abruptly creating a high stock of linking social capital, bringing new resources, ideas, and information to the association. Although this can be very useful, too often the association does not possess sufficient bonding, and bridging social capital to handle this externally induced linking social capital.

In their article on community-driven development, Platteau and Gaspart (2003) cited Tilly (1985) from whom they learnt that African states received their legitimacy from the outside world, not as a result of an endogenous bargaining process between rulers, and ruled. Platteau, and Gaspart point to a similar conclusion for many African rural communities. By disbursing considerable amounts of money, and resources, external development interventions enable local leaders to build up outside legitimacy, and as a consequence, prevent the autonomous evolution of community leadership on a total accountability vis-à-vis the community members (Platteau & Gaspart 2003: 1700). Our article argues that the same analysis is valid at the associational level. In terms of social capital dynamics, when externally induced linking social capital is not embedded in more locally produced dynamics of bonding, and bridging social capital, it can prevent the autonomous evolution of accountability between the leaders, and the members of the association. This indicates the importance of an autonomous organizational dynamic progress, characterized by an optimal combination of different forms of social capital that changes over time, and context. When linking social capital is introduced without sufficiently embedded bonding, and bridging social capital, this can negatively affect the development of the organization. External interventions in support of social capital formation should be aware of this dynamic process, in order to not negatively affect it.

NOTES

1. The conceptual history of social capital does not start in the middle of the nineties, but it was the work of Robert Putnam that brought the whole discussion to the forefront. For a conceptual history of social capital, see the useful article of Farr (2004).

2. The OPEC boys are located in the town, and on the outskirts of the town, while VUPEG, and CARYM are located in peri-urban centers outside of Arua town.

3. Fieldwork, funded by the Fund for Scientific Research-Flanders (FWO), was carried out during October–December 2005.

4. The three organizations were selected because they had strongly varying linkages with external actors when coming into being. They are therefore ideally suited for providing deeper insights in the key-theme of this article, that is, the effects of linking capital on the association.

5. For an elaborate description of the OPEC boys (in French) see Titeca (2006), and Lecoutere and Titeca (2007).


7. The OPEC boys were more effective with the district authorities than with the market authorities because the former are essentially responsible for the provision of peace, and security in the district, which makes them most vulnerable to the demands of this potentially dangerous group of unemployed young men. The fact that the OPEC boys are able to form a rebel group therefore is a reason for the district authorities to listen to the OPEC boys, not for the market authorities.


10. De Villers, Jewsewicki, and Monnier (2002) demonstrated how the informal economy in Kisangani is strongly regulated by many informal rules, in order to gain a certain credibility toward potential clients while at the same time facilitating reciprocity between them. A similar dynamic can be seen within the OPEC boys, who have strict guidelines on the behavior within the association. Similarly, information about suppliers, and smuggling routes is based on trust.

12. VUPEG is in this no exception, as this is a very common phenomenon in rural Uganda—many similar organizations were encountered during the field research.

13. In 2005, VUPEG had a total of 1,560 members, and 68 Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in 9 parishes.

14. Under Ugandan decentralization, a system of five “layers” of local government is introduced: district (LC V), county, sub-county (LCIII), parish, village (LC I).

15. Interview VUPEG staff member November 02, 2005.

16. Four staff members act as trainers of the NAADS offices of the district offices, and are hired by two other sub-county authorities, for example, to give trainings on bee-keeping.


18. Interview member October 17, 2005.

19. Although this affected the interest of the members, and the related level of activity of the organization, it did not affect the overall membership as such: none of the membership organizations pulled out.

20. Dr Charles originates from the village where VUPEG is based. He did not join from the beginning (as he was studying outside of Arua), but joined the association around 1998. He had started a business in animal drugs around that time, and he felt that the VUPEG membership might be beneficial for his business.


24. Interview CARYM secretary November 08, 2005.


26. Browsing through the minutes of the general CARYM meetings, the authors indeed saw this tendency reflected: in the initial six months of the movement, four meetings were held (July 01, 2004; October 03, 2004; November 06, 2004; December 23, 2004) whereas in the following 12 months only one meeting was held (October 29, 2005).

27. For example, interview with CARYM members on October 25, 2005, and November 21, 2005.


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