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Negotiating on a Seesaw

**The Decentralisation of Education and Health Services in Uganda and Tanzania
from a Local Perspective and in a Historical Context**

A dissertation presented in fulfilment of the requirements
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Abstract

Since the 1990s, development policies have favoured the decentralisation of education and health services in Africa. Between 1997 and 2001, central governments of Uganda and Tanzania overhauled the formal frameworks and expanded the managerial and financial responsibilities of the local management committees of schools and dispensaries. This thesis examines how these changes affect the way in which these management committees engage with central government and with the local polity in which they operate.

Field research in 2004 with 64 management committees in Uganda and Tanzania suggests that while central governments may appear to initiate decentralisation policies, they are essentially responding to developments in local polities. Similarly, central government may set regulations for management committees, but the diversity in local practices suggests that local circumstances and local agency are more likely determinants of how schools or dispensaries are actually managed.

An analysis of the personal profiles of committee members reveals they mostly belong to the same segment of the population in the local polity; government's (s)election criteria or sector-specific factors play no role. Committee members do not 'capture' committees as their personal fiefdom, but within a local polity it is likely that most functions in boards or committees are occupied on a rotational basis by a small group of individuals because more than half of the committee members simultaneously hold three or four positions.

When taking a historical perspective, dominance in the institutional framework between local management committees and central government seesaws over periods of 15-30 years. If the wider institutional framework between local polities and central government since the late 19th century is studied, it becomes clear that the local resources flowing to government have varied in time – ivory, coffee, votes – but typically had limited local value, while commanding high prices on the international market. This secured cash income for central government, but also a negotiating lever for local polities. Throughout time, local polities have thus actively negotiated – from engagement to evasion – their institutional framework with central governments. The contemporary dynamic around school and dispensary committees is exemplary of that historical seesaw.

For Gerry and the places we take each other.

The places where
the earth undresses,
the time lies down,
and the gods come to pray.

Mia Couto

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Acknowledgements are not a formal requirement when presenting a doctoral thesis. And yet, virtually all students acknowledge the contribution that particular persons have made to the realisation of a thesis. Arguably, these informal personal networks make a critical contribution in developing a thesis that meets the formal requirements. One important aspect of this thesis is exploring the relationship between society's formal frameworks and people's direct and indirect personal networks – and I would like to use these acknowledgements as a first illustration of that aspect.

My thesis would never have materialised without the personal assistance of quite a number of people. I would like to begin by thanking Patrick Chabal at King's College in London. Patrick wrote *Africa Works. Disorder as Political Instrument*, which I picked up in 2000 when I was working in Mozambique as director for SNV Netherlands Development Organisation. I almost did not buy Patrick's book, because it opened by saying it was the outcome of “a particularly auspicious collaboration between two scholars”. At the time, I thought that did not augur well for me as a practitioner. However, headings like “the informalisation of politics” seemed to address some of the questions I was struggling with when working with programmes for capacity building for local government. Patrick's book opened new windows for me. I contacted him. Three years later I had quit my job and started the journey that produced this thesis and led me from being a practitioner to a scholar, with Patrick as one of my supervisors. Patrick – from his side – eventually signed up to be a member of SNV's International Advisory Board, alongside Angélique Kidjo, John Kufuor, Jeffrey Sachs, Amartya Sen and Muhammad Yunus. This Board assists SNV, “to achieve poverty reduction through local capacity building and the promotion of good governance”. Personal networks must help too. And in this respect SNV and school committees in Tanzania have something in common – as I will show.

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After the field research, I returned to New Zealand and soon found myself teaching Development Studies on a part-time basis at Massey and Victoria Universities. I thank my colleagues for being flexible when classes needed to be swapped to accommodate my research, occasional other jobs, or my political activities. I thank my students for bearing with me when I was using the classes to try out ideas emanating from my research. If you read these words of thanks you may have picked up this thesis because you think it might address some of the questions you face as scholars or practitioners. Let’s talk some more and expand the personal networks that connect formal institutions and communities of people across the globe.

Finally, I want to thank John Overton, Donovan Storey and Regina Scheyvens for being my patient New Zealand supervisors, supportive colleagues and ever-willing signatories to yet another retrospective suspension of my formal enrolment as a PhD student. Your reading of this vote of thanks means I eventually got to the end. I look forward to repaying everything that you have given me so generously.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

Since the late 1990s, international and national development discourse and policies have favoured decentralisation and a decentralised management of education and health services in Africa. Between 1997 and 2001, the central governments of Uganda and Tanzania overhauled the formal frameworks for the management committees of schools and dispensaries, significantly expanding these committees' managerial and financial responsibilities. School committees in Tanzania, for example, opened bank accounts, started to receive grants directly from central government, and were charged with responsibilities that ranged from school development plans to the purchase of books and contracting for building new classrooms.

This Development Studies thesis investigates how these changes have affected the way in which local school and dispensary committees engage with central government and with the local polity in which they operate. The overall purpose of this research, however, lies beyond these committees. This research into these local management committees aims to contribute to understanding the more general dynamics that influence contemporary policies for the decentralisation of the public administration. Prior to this research I worked for aid agencies in several functions and countries in East and Southern Africa and most of my work revolved around the decentralisation programmes as they emerged in the 1990s. I was often unsure why some activities generated keen engagement from local organisations and other activities fell flat. Ultimately, I hope a better understanding of the more general dynamics of the relationship between central government and local polities contributes to today's development programmes for 'capacity building of local organisations'.

Perspective

If the ultimate purpose of the thesis is to contribute to work with and of local organisations, then the research must also include a local perspective. Such a local perspective, however, does more than contribute to local organisations' development. It can also contribute to an understanding of the intrinsic position of, and opportunities for, international development organisations when they engage with organisations in local polities. An almost casual

conversation I had in 2003 with a local tax collector in Mozambique was an exemplary illustration to me. We had worked together for some time and one afternoon during a lunch the tax collector bent over the table and confided: “There is something I want to ask you, but it is a bit difficult.” I nodded encouragingly. He continued: “Of late, there's all this talk about civil society... what is it?” Happy to oblige, I started to talk about the realm of government and the realm of people in saving groups, mosques, or dancing troupes. After about ten minutes he interrupted me, saying: “Ah, that's good. I thought it was something new.” It was my turn to look puzzled. He looked at me and explained:

Look, it's simple.

When the first Arabs came to this coast, they called us Kafir.

Then, Portuguese traders came and they named us the Moors.

Portuguese settlers arrived, and they called us the Blacks.

Later, the colonial government started to talk about us as the Natives.

At independence, the new government said we were the People.

Now, you development workers come, and you call us Civil Society.

That's fine... You are all *Hakunya* to us.

By using the Makua word *hakunya* (foreigner, outsider) to indicate every single actor beyond the sphere of his local polity, the tax collector showed me that from a local perspective many of the identities and many discourses that ‘foreigners’ feel are important are not really important to local organisations. Additionally, his almost off-handed reference to the arrival of the first *hakunya* 700 years earlier showed the depth of his association with his local polity.

Focus

I have focused my research mostly on the visible and most accessible demonstration of the relationship between local management committees and central government: the formal structures and regulations of the public administration. These structures and regulations express the relationship between local management committees and central government at a given point in time. They lay down in detail the formal processes and rules that guide the interaction – particularly the control over the flow of resources between the two. Effective changes in the flow of resources or control over the flow of resources – the balance of power – between local management committees or local polities and central government are likely to be expressed as changes in the formal structures and regulations of their

institutional framework and can then be studied or become a topic for an inquisitive conversation with the people involved.

However, the flow of resources between local management committees and central government will only be one of the two particular points of attention. Acknowledging that the relationship between management committees and central government is not only guided by formal processes, I will also endeavour to study the informal personal networks in the institutional framework as a second point of attention. Researching these personal networks is obviously more difficult, because they are mostly unrecorded and operate behind the façade those formal institutions can be. However, insights into the role of personal networks in the institutional framework can be obtained by inference, reading between the lines of formal records or careful design of field research methods.

Research questions

Against the backdrop of the overall purpose of the research, the first specific research question investigates the particular context of school and dispensaries committees:

How are central government and local management committees in Uganda and Tanzania developing the institutional framework for the decentralised management of schools and dispensaries?

This specific research question was at the centre of the field research in Uganda and Tanzania in 2004. This field research consisted in large part of interviewing school and dispensary committees. Mindful of the two particular points of focus presented earlier, I collected and analysed data and information in three different spheres. First, I looked at the overall institutional framework between central government and local management committees operating in local polities. Second, I studied the flow of resources between the two parties and related processes of accountability – a concept at the heart of the debate about decentralisation and governance. Third, I endeavoured to develop a map of the personal networks around local management committees, this included a closer look at the question of ‘elite capture’ – another concept often associated with governance.

To contextualise the specific findings from the field research into local management committees within the wider and more general dynamics of decentralisation and the public administration, I studied primary and secondary texts about the public administration in Uganda and Tanzania with a second specific research question in mind:

How have central government and local polities in Uganda been developing their institutional framework over time and from local polities' perspective?¹

Analogous to the first specific question, the answers to this second question were also collected and analysed in three spheres: the overall institutional framework, the flow of resources and the personal networks.

Methodology

Designing and applying a research methodology for each of the two research questions presented specific sets of challenges. Answers to the first research question were to be found in the fieldwork, mostly – but not exclusively – by interviewing committee members as groups and by completing individual questionnaires. However, because I ultimately wanted to get a better understanding of the wider context of the relationship between central government and local polities – and make comparisons between the dynamics in Uganda and Tanzania as well as comparisons between the education and the health sectors – I designed a research that investigated breadth rather than depth. I endeavoured to interview a sufficiently large number of local management committees to have some confidence that findings would be generalisable. This presented some logistical challenges, such as reliable data that would allow adequate sampling of committees and finding enough petrol to send around messengers with timely invitations for group interviews. But the breadth-rather-than-depth research design primarily presented some methodological challenges.

¹ This thesis presents findings regarding this question only for Uganda. I have written a draft of a chapter of about 40,000 words analysing the development of the institutional framework between central government and local polities in Tanzania. However, these analyses for Tanzania have not been included to keep the thesis' volume within required limits and to allow depth in the presentation of findings for Uganda – the local perspective or agency of local polities appears best after I first sketch the backdrop of the general picture or better recorded agency of central government. Fortunately, the editor of the peer-reviewed Working Papers Series of Development Studies at Massey University has agreed “in principle” to publish the text of the chapter about Tanzania as an ‘Occasional Paper’. This will ensure the analyses for Tanzania are also available.

From the start, I had to address the challenges related to my own personal position. Being a typical *hakunya* I had to be critically aware of my biases in designing the research and in perceiving and recording information. However, I endeavoured to mitigate the risks associated with my biases by acknowledging and seeking agency on the part of people in local polities because there is enough evidence to suggest that throughout time, people in local polities have actively used encounters with outsiders to present information in a manner that suited their local interests. Irrespective of the fact that I explicitly disassociated myself from central government or international agencies, I was inevitably perceived by committee members as an associate of these *hakunya* and was quite likely being informed accordingly. In this sense, the representation of reality is not only affected by my positionality, but also by the agency of local people; it is a contested reality.

In a further response to these methodological challenges, I adapted two participatory research methods – Venn diagrams and pairwise ranking exercises – to maximise the qualitative space and opportunities for local committee members to present their local perspective on matters, yet also allow me to compare their views, practices and experiences in a quantitative fashion with those of dozens of other committees. These two techniques carry low risks of interviewer bias, and can be facilitated in such a way that a group’s consensus or conclusion is recorded in writing and detail by themselves. As a researcher, I merely – if meticulously – collected these recordings and later carefully categorised them to allow comparisons with other group interviews. Additionally, the mostly closed questionnaire for individual committee members not only provided data, but also enabled further cross-checking and filtering of results from the group interviews.

Answers to the second research question – looking at the development of the institutional framework between central government and local polities over time and from a local perspective – were found by studying historical primary and secondary texts. This presents its own methodological and epistemological challenges. As indicated above, I believe ‘history’ is a socially constructed concept – as much a ‘reality’ in the field research – and therefore tinted by partiality, subjectivity and a contested character. When reading and interpreting archival and contemporary texts, I have tried to be critically aware of these limitations. There is a risk that my position and perspective could lead to ‘just another’ interpretation of reality or history. Nonetheless, I think that there is inter-subjective value

in research like mine that tries to ‘re-read’ existing records, ‘read between the lines’ or asks, ‘what is not recorded?’

In the case of my research, I was going to use texts that were produced by authors who, to begin with, generally did not have a local perspective: colonial administrators, European researchers or Africans recording for central government. But historical records in East Africa present additional challenges. First, these records are not simply ‘history written by the winner’. In an East African context it doesn’t really matter whether central government was ‘winner’ or ‘loser’ in a tug-of-war with local polities, it was simply the only one leaving a paper record. Second, central governments in East Africa produced and produce records not so much to impose their version of events onto the minds in local polities, but mostly to portray a desirable image to administrative authorities in overseas capitals. Third, I will show that actors in local polities often astutely manoeuvre to obscure or distort events in the records written by or for central government. I have tried to address these challenges by being expressly aware of them, as well as my own positionality when ‘re-reading’ texts.

Structure

In this introductory first chapter I have contextualised the research of this thesis by presenting the overall purpose, perspective and focus of the two research questions, as well as the principal methodological considerations. It is also the only chapter in which I have used the first person narrative in the main body of the text. In the next chapters I have adhered to the conventional style of using the third person narrative. Only in the last section of the thesis – when I return to my personal story – will I resume a first person narrative. However, in the footnotes, I do use a first person narrative. The extensive footnotes are integral to the structure of this thesis because they not only present additional data and further references, but also because they reveal my reflections on possible contradictions, omissions or more speculative conclusions. The use of a first person narrative in the footnotes seemed therefore appropriate. The footnotes also have another function. Because this research includes attention for historical developments, I have included several reflections on “historical continuity” – anecdotal evidence of a *plus ça change* that stings. If we take a historical and a local polity’s perspective, how much has changed, for example, between a British diplomat making a lofty declaration in 1905 about

the “cordial spirit of cooperation” with the German and Italian authorities in East Africa (Eliot, 1905: 185) and the Paris Declaration on ‘the spirit of harmonisation’ among European donors – exactly one hundred years later?

In the second chapter I review the literature coming from the main schools of thought about governance in Africa and the contemporary emphasis in international – and national – policy circles on the decentralisation of public services in Africa. Part of the literature review revolves around the mainstream proposition in public policymaking that decentralisation of the public administration is a wise strategy to improve governance, facilitating ‘good governance’ because it makes service providers more responsive to demand and, or, citizens more empowered. Another part of the literature review in this chapter takes a closer look at a more critical school of thought about governance in Africa, one that suggests that public administration is largely driven by informal dynamics and personal networks of clients and patrons in which elites have captured public resources for private purposes.

In the third chapter – Research Methods and Core Concepts – I expand on the methodological considerations sketched in this introductory chapter. I pay detailed attention to the way in which I have designed the group interviews and explain how I have collected and used information from open and qualitative research methods such as Venn diagrams and pairwise ranking to allow quantitative processing after all group interviews were completed. After that, I discuss some of the key concepts that guide and ground the research in this thesis, such as institutional framework, local polity, resources, and personal networks.

The fourth chapter is one of the two core chapters of this thesis. It contains the detailed presentation of the findings from the field research in Uganda and Tanzania and addresses the first research question – studying the contemporary institutional framework between central government and management committees for schools and dispensaries from a local perspective and with particular attention to the flow of resources and personal networks.

The fifth chapter is the second of the two core chapters. This chapter takes a step back from contemporary decentralised management of schools and dispensaries management

and looks into history and wider context, broaching the second research question: ‘How has the institutional framework for relations between central government and local polities in Uganda developed over time and from local polities’ perspective?’

I use the sixth chapter to draw overall conclusions from the two research questions with an eye on the overall purpose that triggered the research in this thesis.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature of the 1990s and 2000s with regard to decentralisation. It first considers the phenomenon of decentralisation in Africa as part of a wave that swept through most of the continent since late 1989, before providing a succinct typology of decentralisation models. The last section of this chapter reviews the literature around two principal schools of thought that promote decentralisation, each for its own motives. The chapter ends with a review of a school of thought that analyses African governance practices in general, which would include the decentralisation policies of the 1990s.

2.2 Decentralisation as a global trend

A wave of decentralisation in the 1990s

In November 1989 the Berlin Wall fell after a sudden outburst of public protests. In December 1989 the ruling party of Benin ceded to a similarly unexpected outburst of protest and announced an end of one-party rule and scheduled a multi-party election. Within a few years a majority of central governments in Africa would follow, promising political reforms. “Together they amounted to the most far-reaching shifts in African political life since the time of political independence 30 years earlier” (Bratton and Walle, 1997: 3). The connections between the fall of the East German government and the fall of the Benin government are seen as part of a ‘wave of democratic change’ in the early 1990s. Discussing the extent to which they are connected is beyond the scope of this thesis, but as a consequence of the wave of change, about 80% of the African countries were experimenting with decentralisation policies in one form or another. Some central governments presented it as a way to deepen democracy, others as a way to more efficient government – many argued both could be achieved (Manor, 1999: viii). This chapter will review the literature on both counts.

One important point to make from the outset is that the introduction of decentralisation policies in African countries in the 1990s was not the first wave. Ribot identifies at least three prior waves of decentralisation policies. The first in the 1920s, a second after 1945

and a third immediately after the independence period (2001: 3). Saito quotes extensively from a policy document that advocates decentralisation: “The key to resolving the problems of African administration lays in the development of an efficient and democratic system of local government ... I wish to emphasise the words: efficient, democratic and local” (2003: 25). The effect of the citation lies in its tail; this is a speech of Britain’s Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1947. Similarly, Mamdani provides revealing citations in his review of “comprehensive decentralisation” in Nigeria in the 1950s. “Powers were transferred to elected councils and local government created as an autonomous structure ... elected councillors ‘never lived up to expectations’; once control from the centre was relaxed, ‘councillors misused their powers’ ... ‘local government came to be associated with acts of widespread impropriety, inefficiency and corruption’.” There was a “public outrage” and “various commissions of inquiry” studied the issues. In the end, “central control was reintroduced everywhere” (Mamdani, 1996: 105).

However, the wave of decentralisation in the 1990s is – argue some analysts – different from the earlier waves. Unlike the decentralisation of the 1950s – which was “without any serious democratic component” – the decentralisation of the 1990s was “building popular participation and accountability into local governance” and “government at the local level will become more responsive to citizens’ desires and more effective in service delivery” (Blair, 2000: 21). Blair made a comparative analysis of decentralisation in six countries, “sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)”. Donors offered significant support to African central governments’ decentralisation policies. The United Nations Development Programme’s capacity building programme for decentralisation went up from 66 million USD in 1994 to over 400 million USD in 2004 (UNDP, 2004a: 2). A stocktaking of the World Bank in 2003 acknowledges that a variety of motives may have driven decentralisation, but sounds content: “Whether arising from dramatic political reforms, donor pressure and programs, or as part of evolutionary administrative change, recent local governance revival has been one of the most significant facets of state restructuring in Africa since independence” (Ndegwa and Levy, 2003).

A typology of decentralisation

The literature shows a reasonable consensus when describing typologies for decentralisation, with the work of Rondinelli most often used as a point of reference. In

essence, decentralisation is defined as the transfer of power from central government to other bodies. Or, in Rondinelli's terms: "The transfer of responsibility for planning, management and resource raising and allocation from the central government to: (a) field units of central government; ministries or agencies, (b) subordinate units or levels of government, (c) semi-autonomous public authorities or corporations, (d) area-wide regional or functional authorities, or (e) nongovernmental private or voluntary organisations" (Rondinelli et al., 1983: 15). This transfer of power takes place on two different axes. First, power can be transferred to certain degrees on a scale of a continuum. There are, however, four general markers of the degree of transfer of power on an increasing scale: deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation. Second, power can be transferred in different management spheres: the administrative sphere, the financial sphere or the political sphere. (Andrews and Schroeder, 2003; R. M. Bird and Vaillancourt, 1999; Cheema and Rondinelli, 2007; Crook, 2003; Hope, 2002; Johnson, 2001; Klugman, 1994; Litvack and Seddon, 1999; Manor, 1999; Prud'homme, 2003; Ribot, 2003; Rondinelli et al., 1983; Smoke, 2003; UNDP, 2004a).

Theoretically, varying degrees of power can be transferred to other bodies in different spheres. For example, a central government could decide to merely deconcentrate power in the political sphere by appointing councillors to a district council (instead of having these councillors elected) and yet devolve all powers in the financial sphere to this council, allowing them to introduce new taxes. However, such an arrangement would be rather skewed in political and operational consequences. In a majority of cases, central government would first decide on a degree of transfer of power and then transfer powers to the same degree in all three management spheres. Particularly in the financial sphere, the principle 'finance follows function' immediately applies; if a lower body is given the powers to execute a function, it will also need to be given the finances to do so. In the administrative sphere, on the other hand, there may be a delay in transfer of power if the recipient body does not yet have the staff or technical capacity to carry out its new functions. However, the lack of capacity should not be used by a central government to unduly delay a transfer of administrative power; capacity in practice is also acquired on a 'learning by doing' basis (Manor, 1999: 67; Ribot, 2003: 60).

Deconcentration – the lowest degree of a transfer of power – entails the handing over of some administrative authority and responsibility to lower tiers within the same ministry or central government agency. In most cases this means primarily a shifting of the workload and staff to lower tiers, possibly with minimal discretionary decision-making according explicit guidelines. Delegation – an intermediate transfer of power – allows more decision-making discretionary powers to the recipient body, but it still leaves the recipient body to be accountable to central government. Quite often this entails transferring power to public corporations or semi-autonomous bodies in infrastructure or agriculture. The function or the type of public service often determines the boundaries of delegated power. Devolution – the most complete transfer of power – occurs when central government powers are transferred to what is usually an elected local government body, such as a district council or municipality. Devolved power has clear geographical boundaries and in most cases the authority to raise its own taxes. Civil servants are primarily accountable to the elected local body. Privatisation entails the transfer of power from a public body to a private entity, such as a company or non-profit bodies like churches or NGOs. Rondinelli’s typologies routinely include privatisation as a form of decentralisation. However, many explicitly disagree with that, arguing the objectives of private bodies are set by its members, not by the public in general, and therefore no longer qualify to be called ‘public administration’ (Oyugi, 2000: 6; Ribot, 2001: 1).

2.3 Motives to decentralise... and the doubts

The previous section showed that the 1990s saw the start of a “tidal wave of decentralisation” of the public administration in Africa (Larson and Ribot, 2004: 1), even if it needs to be mentioned that Africa had “experienced previous waves of decentralisation” (Oxhorn, 2004: 297). Nonetheless – and perhaps in a subtle change from past practice – the literature about decentralisation since the early 1990s distinguishes two rather distinct schools of thought to advocate decentralisation. One school of thought presents motives that derive from economic and market-oriented perspectives of efficiency; decentralisation is presented as the most efficient way to organise the public administration.

The second school of thought is predicated on motives that originate more explicitly from political perspectives of democracy and empowerment; decentralisation of the public administration is believed to be the best way to ensure participation of citizens and

accountability of government officials. Interestingly, while the two sets of arguments revolve around quite different concepts, both generally present decentralisation as “correlated with ‘good governance’” (Saito, 2003: 6) and “poverty reduction” (Crook, 2003: 77). This section starts with an overview of the details of these two schools of thought, before summarising the literature about the – rather limited – effects of decentralisation on good governance and poverty alleviation around the time of the field research in 2005, after more than a decade of decentralisation policies.

The last part of this section reviews another segment of the literature on governance in Africa that argues that rather unique African characteristics of governance – perhaps summarised under the banner ‘neopatrimonialism’ – explain the limited effect of governance reform, including decentralisation.

Decentralisation for market and efficiency

The school of thought that advocates decentralisation from an economic perspective presents two principal advantages: it argues decentralisation has a better allocative efficiency of public resources when compared with centralised governance and it claims decentralisation facilitates an increase in local revenues. First, this section takes a closer look at the claims – and the doubts – with regard to allocative efficiency of decentralised governance (D. Hirschmann, 1999; Mbaku, 2000; Ndegwa and Levy, 2003; Oates, 1999; Olowu and Smoke, 1992; Smoke, 2003; Woller and Phillips, 1998).

Much of the argument that decentralised governance via local government is more efficient in allocating resources relates to the ‘New Public Management’ approach that entered the public administration in the 1980s in the Reagan and Thatcher era, with its “vision of public managers as the entrepreneurs of a new, leaner, and increasingly privatised government, emulating not only the practices but also the values of business” (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000: 549). This approach argues that private sector principles will “obtain better results from public sector organisations irrespective of the economic status (poor or wealthy) of a country” (Hope, 2002: 160). For this, the so-called ‘subsidiarity principle’ is often invoked; tasks in the public administration should be done at the lowest tier possible and upper tiers’ primary task is to ensure lower tiers have the means to do it (Ndegwa, 2002: 4). Allocative efficiency in a decentralised public service driven by private sector

principles is obtained both via internal as well as external mechanisms. Internally, a decentralised administration is expected to have lower transaction costs by having shorter lines of communication and decision-making and a faster response to local needs and demands, based on local knowledge and local skills. Externally, a decentralised public administration is more efficient because it is more responsive to local demand. “Decentralisation ... is not in itself a goal of development, but a means of improving public sector efficiency” (World Bank, 2000: 106).²

Critiques of the claim that decentralisation has greater allocative efficiency come at two levels. At an operational level it is argued that even if a decentralised public administration has efficiency in responding to demand, a local government often does not have efficiency in supply; some purchases benefit from economies of scale. The bulk purchase of schoolbooks or machinery for road works is generally cheaper. This is even more relevant in poorer countries where large groups of poor people are likely to have less differentiated preferences when it comes to the services from local government – people want *a* water pump before they are likely to express a preference for a particular type of pump. The same principle also applies to personnel recruitment; local government may not be able to afford the recruitment of highly skilled staff, or may under-utilise them (Manor, 1999; McLure, 1995; Prud'homme, 1995; Smoke, 2001). At a more technical level, several case studies point out that potential efficiency from decentralisation varies greatly from one sector to another because each sector has its own technical complexities and interconnectedness with wider dynamics. The management of resources and targets in the education sector, for example, is less complex and less dependent on local variables when compared with the health sector.³ Managing the risks of malaria, the outbreak of infectious diseases or distribution of perishable vaccines requires cross-sectoral and inter-regional coordination that is more complex than examination processes, curriculum development, or building classrooms (Braathen et al., 2005; De Mello, 2004; Litvack and Seddon, 1999; Okuonzi and Birungi, 2000; Semali et al., 2005).

² The concept underpinning this reasoning is ‘public choice theory’; the easier it is for citizens to express their wishes and content or discontent with the providers’ response, the more direct or effective people exert their options in the sphere of ‘voice, exit or loyalty’ (A. O. Hirschmann, 1970, 1978).

³ This technical argument against decentralisation in some public services – such as health – is diametrically opposed to the argument advanced by proponents of sectoral decentralisation who argue that all decentralised planning is more efficient because it can “grasp the spatial connections in sectoral planning” (Hope, 2002: 67). This, presumably, also refers to the ‘integrated rural development planning’ approaches where all sectoral development is coordinated from one point.

Second, the economic argument in favour of decentralisation claims it facilitates an increase in local revenues (R. M. Bird and Smart, 2002; R. M. Bird and Vaillancourt, 1999; De Mello, 2004; Klugman, 1994; Martinez-Vasquez and McNab, 2003; Oates, 1993; Prud'homme, 2003). This claim rests on two arguments. First, it is argued that the local tax base is “underutilised and may have considerable untapped revenue potential” (Smoke, 2001: 3). Local government is expected to be more knowledgeable than central government about local economic processes, places of business activity and local tax evasion practices. If local government were to be allowed to retain a large part, or all, of local taxes, the revenue of local tax collection would considerably increase. Second, it is believed that once decentralisation starts to make local public services more responsive and meet people’s needs, these people will also be more willing to pay taxes or fees for these services because in a decentralised public administration people can see a more direct link between their tax and the resulting service. “Generally, the potential for revenue increases from taxes and user charges and fees is more than 50% of the present yield” (Steffensen and Trollegaard, 2000: 52).

The claims of an increase in local revenues for a local government via decentralisation are challenged at two levels. First, at the local level there is the question of whether the economies of local polities in much of rural Africa are actually strong or wealthy enough to generate the cash income that is expected. Taxation on property or real estate, for example, is likely to be minimal in most of rural Africa (Saito, 2003: 38). Second, there is the question of whether local politicians in a fairly recent decentralisation process would be willing to confront the electorate by imposing new taxes or by being very active to close ‘tax loopholes’ (Manor, 1999: 69). Some research suggests that increasing local taxation systems is fraught with problems and may actually lead to a deterioration of accountability and trust (Iversen et al., 2006). Moreover, it is also not clear that people will experience any noticeable improvement in local public services in the first few years, which would make them willing to pay for the improvements – assuming people have the money to pay and are seeing education and health services as a service for sale and purchase rather than a right. This is especially relevant if central government decentralises the responsibility for public service delivery without providing adequate resources (Livingstone and Charlton, 1998, 2001). Detailed studies into the willingness to pay local taxes in rural East Africa suggest people’s willingness is indeed positively influenced by improvements in the

quality or accessibility of local public services. However, it is also, and perhaps more so, related to people's ability to pay, the perceived probability of 'being caught' and the possibility of paying a small bribe instead of a big tax (Fjeldstad, 2003, 2004; Fjeldstad and Semboja, 2001).

The claim that decentralisation leads to increased local revenues is also challenged at two more political levels (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2005; Manor, 1999; Prud'homme, 2003; Smoke, 2003). Some analysts expressed concerns – though practical evidence is scarce – that decentralisation could enhance local polities' latent desires for political independence and secession. In the face of a lack of practical evidence for this, the counter argument is that the repression of such desires by a central government is as likely, if not more so, to incite those who want secession or federalism. In such a context, decentralisation (or federalism) could be a strategy to maintain the form of a unitary state, while maximising local autonomy. Another facet of the 'political independence' that decentralisation might generate lies in the sphere of natural resource management. There could be "inter-locality tensions" over the use of regional resources such as rivers, which would require an "external arbitrator" such as central government (Saito, 2003: 40). Another political concern – with a dearth of practical evidence in Africa and only some evidence from Latin America – lies with a country's central bank and macro-economic policy (World Bank, 1999b: 111). If decentralisation allows local governments to take loans on their own account or engage in financial obligations – ranging from salaries to investments – on the basis of projected local revenue that may not materialise, the potential failure of local governments to fulfil financial obligations will impact on a country's macro-economic position.

Decentralisation for democracy and empowerment

The second school of thought that advocates decentralisation does so from a more explicit political perspective. It builds on the 'wave' of political changes from one-party systems to more open or multi-party systems in the late 1980s and early 1990s across the globe and suggests that decentralisation facilitates the conditions for democracy and the empowerment of the poor, marginalised or disenfranchised. The two key complementary elements in the literature around this school of thought are 'participation' and 'accountability'. In global terms, participation gives people in a local polity a role in local

decision-making, and accountability processes enable people to hold local government responsible for the implementation of the decisions. The argument that decentralisation increases people's participation is often the first to appear. Participation is presented as an end in itself – participation in public decision-making is the essence of democracy – but participation is also presented as a means to ensure that the allocation of local resources addresses the needs of the poor people, the majority in most African countries (Abrahamsen, 2000; Ake, 1996; Cornwall and Brock, 2005; Cornwall and Gaventa, 2001; Crook and Manor, 1998; Diamond and Plattner, 1999; M. Moore and Putzel, 1999; OECD, 2005; World Bank, 1999b, 2000).

First and foremost, it is argued that decentralised governance processes are so much closer to people that their participation in politics and political discussions becomes first physically possible and then politically meaningful. Centralised governance and centralised decision-making restricts 'participation' to those who can afford to travel and access national level party or engage in lobby activities. Decentralised governance does not have these barriers; anyone can walk to a meeting of the local council or school committee. Once decentralisation had created the possibility for people to participate, it is hoped that a chain of events – “a causal formula” (Blair, 2000: 23) – is put in motion. People's participation in politics will eventually get some of them elected in local bodies – ranging from local management committees to local councils. Once represented in local public bodies, the representatives can negotiate, compete or ally with other interest groups, which will lead to political empowerment and an influence on decisions about the distribution of public resources. Ultimately, resources will be distributed in a more equitable fashion, which leads to a reduction in poverty. While advocates acknowledge that the results become “successively less substantial,” in the long run benefits will appear as leadership skills are acquired and children see new role models. Some advocates argue that even when there are no local elections, “limited types of participation” in organising or managing the delivery of public services can still be a useful stepping stone for “enhancing the flow of information between government and citizens” (Litvack and Seddon, 1999: 17), and people's “participation in service delivery will help them monitor and discipline service providers” (World Bank, 2003: 4).

As decentralisation creates the opportunities for people's participation in elected local management committees and local councils, it effectively creates the formal institutions to express what Hirschmann's defined as "voice" (1970, 1978). However, as decentralisation policies expanded in the 1990s, several advocates suggested the concept of 'voice' via elected public bodies needs to be expanded with "a menu of options for ... the use of exit and voice mechanisms". Such a menu of options to express 'voice' would ensure the local bodies remain 'responsive' when the "voices of the poor" are "crying out for change" between electoral cycles (Narayan et al., 2000). Options could be vouchers, public hearings, inter- and intra-departmental competitions, public surveys and participatory assessments (Paul, 1992: 1047). By the early 2000s, Cornwall and Gaventa's analysis of dozens of case studies results in an overview of 14 different mechanisms used in decentralised governance as "means of amplifying citizen 'voice' such that engagement with the state moves beyond consultative processes to more direct forms of influence over policy and spending decisions" (2001: iii; See also: World Bank, 2003: 1). Ultimately, people's participation in decentralised governance moves from periodic or topical participation to a model of "co-governance" that is much more permanent and general (Ackerman, 2004). An often cited example of this is "participatory budgeting" in some Brazilian municipalities, where thousands of citizens participate in annual budgeting exercises (Baiocchi, 2003; Wampler and Avritzer, 2004). As people's participation in decision-making in local governance becomes more permanent it, inevitably, moves to a closer involvement in the implementation of local public policy and monitoring and control of the performance of civil servants – which will eventually facilitate holding these civil servants to account.

Criticism on the expected chain of events that follows from participation basically states that participation is a much more complex phenomenon than the dichotomy 'exit and voice' suggests and therefore very vulnerable to interferences that will disrupt that 'virtuous' chain. References in the literature to the complexity of variables affecting participation can be categorised into four variables: the personal attitudes of the people involved, the public service in which participation takes place, the political relations between government and citizens, and elite capture. First, the attitudinal aspects refer to attitudes of citizens as well as attitudes of civil servants (Braathen et al., 2005; Cleaver, 1999; Crook and Manor, 1998). Citizens' attitude to participation varies. People who have

hitherto been marginalised from decision-making by government authorities for years – or sometimes even generations – will not suddenly trust these authorities and engage in participatory decision-making processes once decentralisation policies introduce these participatory processes. Similarly, civil servants may look down upon, or be patronising to, ethnic minorities or poor people. Both groups will probably lack experience and skills in participatory processes. Second, people’s participation in a decision-making process is also influenced by the type of public service. For example, people are more inclined to participate in decision-making in public services where that service is relatively easy to understand, has a local monopoly, costs them little and whose services are required on a more permanent basis (e.g. large irrigation schemes). In this perspective, school committees can generally expect a lower barrier to poor people’s participation than a dispensary committee (Devas and Grant, 2003; Goetz and Gaventa, 2001; Paul, 1992; World Bank, 2003).

While the above two variables are personal and technical, the other two variables are more political. The overall political relationship between the state and citizens in a country also influences the character of people’s participation. Many African governments have a history of seeing participation as a way to “convince local residents to donate volunteer labour” (Ackerman, 2004: 447; Cooke, 2003). Similarly, government can use participation to “soften resistance to changes which policy implementation entails” (Hope, 2002: 68). The most critical variable is perhaps that of ‘elite capture’ (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2000; Crook, 2003; Manor, 1999; M. Moore and Putzel, 1999; Olowu, 2003). While most advocates of decentralisation acknowledge that local elites are more likely to be seizing the opportunities to influence decision-making in their personal favour, advocates also believe this elite capture will eventually decrease as disadvantaged people increase control over local bodies.⁴ Critics of decentralisation are not convinced and argue that “decentralisation is only productive if the centre remains responsible for the supervision and coordination of activities in the local units” (Ackerman, 2004: 459). And then point out that many central

⁴ One potential indicator of local elite capture could be the extent to which local government budgets are oriented or shifting from public education and health services towards ‘low-tech’ local public works that can be carried out by local companies; e.g. road maintenance and the construction and maintenance of classrooms, culverts and small bridges. However, it should be noted that such a shift also reflects the need of local politicians to show ‘something tangible’ to the electorate. In this light, a bridge or classroom may generate more votes than subsidising a vaccination programme or hiring more teachers (Andrews and Schroeder, 2003; Jutting et al., 2005; Manor, 1999; Robinson and Stiedl, 2001).

governments depend on local elites for political support and are therefore unlikely to curtail local elites' capture of decentralised resources (Mwenda and Tangri, 2005). However, closer studies of local elites' negotiations with central government reveal that while in a general perspective different groups of local elites may be "more likely to collude ... than to compete" (Blair, 2000: 23), there are also examples of competition among, for example, local land-owning elites, local trading elites and local bureaucratic elites (Boone, 2003; Hossain and Moore, 2002).

Accountability is the second element – next to participation – in the school of thought that advocates decentralisation in support of democracy and empowerment. In sequential terms, accountability is the next step; once people have participated in making decisions on local policy and resource allocations, accountability refers to processes by which people hold local government responsible for the implementation of these decisions. However, a review of the literature quickly leads to a need to structure "the many meanings of accountability" (World Bank, 2003: 51) as well as the operational mechanisms that are promoted, before a review of the critics is considered (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2006; Blair, 2000; Deininger and Mpuga, 2005; Devas and Grant, 2003; Ribot, 2001; Shah, 1998; World Bank, 2001a).

An oft-cited work by Schedler *et al* on accountability opens by arguing that today's "fashionable term accountability" actually addresses the classical political question of, "first comes power, then the need to control it".⁵ Accountability as fashionable term "is nicely ambivalent" with "fuzzy boundaries" and a confusing internal structure (Schedler *et al.*, 1999: 13). Schedler sets out to structure the contemporary concept of accountability around three principles that would control the exercise of power in public office: transparency, answerability, and controllability. Transparency demands that information relevant to civil servants' actions is available to other government agencies and the public to allow verification that agreed process is followed. Answerability refers to the obligation of civil servants to justify decisions they have taken by explaining them against the backdrop of policies developed with public participation and general arguments of rationality and reason. While transparency and answerability invoke an image of "benign inquiry and friendly dialogue between accounting and accountable parties", controllability

⁵ See, for example: (Alsop *et al.*, 2005: 4; Gloppen *et al.*, 2002: 3; OPM, 2005: 14).

refers to the mechanisms that ensure that sanctions are enforced upon civil servants who have acted against their mandate or agreed procedures (Schedler et al., 1999: 15). Schedler's conceptual dissection of the concept of accountability is subsequently integrated in a definition of accountability that emanates from the World Bank and probably reflects common ground in most development policy: "We can therefore define accountability as a proactive process by which public officials inform about and justify their plans of action, their behaviour, and results and are sanctioned accordingly" (Alsop et al., 2005: 7).

While there appears to be reasonable agreement on the principles of accountability, literature shows a great diversity when describing the direction of the acts of accountability. However, a general dichotomy is clear; on one hand there are acts and mechanisms of accountability towards other officials and on the other hand there are acts and mechanisms of accountability towards the public. Civil servants' accountability towards other officials can be called "horizontal accountability" (e.g. Alsop et al., 2005; OPM, 2005), or "bureaucratic accountability" (e.g. Charlick, 2001; Khemani, 2001), or "supply side accountability" (e.g. Goetz and Gaventa, 2001; Malena et al., 2004) or "upward accountability" (e.g. Agrawal and Ribot, 1999; Ndegwa and Levy, 2003). Within this category, a number of sub-categories can be identified, such as political accountability (to elected bodies), fiscal accountability (to the Auditor-General), administrative accountability (reporting to higher sectoral tiers), and judicial accountability (courts, ombudsman). When civil servants' acts of accountability are directed towards the public, these acts are defined as "vertical accountability", or "public accountability", or "demand side accountability", or "downward accountability". The mechanisms to facilitate these acts of accountability can take many forms, ranging from direct to indirect, from individual to collective and from specific to general action (e.g. complaints processes, media, NGOs, trade unions, referenda, performance ratings, score cards, expenditure tracking, protests, etc.). Since the 2000s, some policy-makers in the World Bank increasingly promote this "societal accountability" because the other direction of accountability – from civil servants to other officials – seems to falter (Alsop et al., 2005; see also: Narayan, 2002; World Bank, 2001a).

Two additional issues with regard to definitions of accountability surface in the literature. First, some analysts disagree with the dichotomy depicted above. They argue there is only

one from of accountability: from civil servants to elected politicians. Rather than speak of civil servants being accountable to citizens, they argue civil servants are to be “responsive” to citizens (e.g. Blair, 2000: 37; Manor, 1999: 50). Second, and related to the above, is the concept of “a long route of accountability” and “a short route of accountability” (World Bank, 2003: 49). The long route of accountability could be described as the parliamentary democracy route, where citizens express their content or discontent about civil servants’ performance to politicians in elections and these politicians – in turn – communicate the citizens’ message to civil servants in their regulatory control of the civil service. With electoral cycles of a few years, this is a long route indeed and the short route of accountability is then defined as the direct interaction between civil servants and citizens. Moreover, the short route avoids the problem that “many elected officials are not accountable to their constituencies” (Ribot, 2001: 23).

Several reviewers of experiences with accountability in African practices end up with rather sceptical conclusions: “low levels of public confidence in these horizontal forms of accountability in most developing countries has evolved alongside growing dissatisfaction with the limitations on the effectiveness of vertical forms of accountability” (Goetz and Gaventa, 2001: 7). Kelsall speaks of “the African crisis, at the root of which lies a crisis of accountability” (2003: 11). And Manor finds “that greater accountability of government institutions – the most crucial element in successful decentralisation – can be hard to obtain ... The impediments to greater accountability tend to be well nigh insurmountable” (Manor, 2004: 7). Arguably, many of the problems with accountability refer back to the three principles underpinning accountability, as outlined by Schedler. Transparency in African governance systems is often problematic.⁶ “Accountability”, claims a research in Uganda, requires “a climate where information is openly available and transparency high” (Deininger and Mpuga, 2005). This is often not the case, even if concerted efforts to disseminate relevant information via radio and newspapers have increased downward accountability (Reinikka and Svensson, 2005). Answerability is, similarly, hard to instil. The manifold mechanisms to “amplify citizens’ voice,” almost presume civil servants are

⁶ Manor is one of the few analysts who points out that transparency is “not an unmixed blessing,” for two reasons (1999: 73). First, he argues that the shading of figures and fudging of numbers can be a useful aspect of political negotiations and not necessarily unethical. Second, if decentralisation leads to an increased transparency and visibility of corruption at local levels, this does not necessarily mean that the overall extent of corruption has increased because the national level corruption prior to the decentralisation of funds was never measured.

slightly hard of hearing, rather than unwilling to be formally and publicly responsive to all citizens (Ackerman, 2004: 458). Controllability – the third principle – requires not only enforcement but also that the higher tiers actually know what is happening at lower levels, something which is often missing “owing to problems in monitoring bureaucratic performance” (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2005: 675).

In summary, the ‘wave’ of decentralisation policies that started in most African countries in the 1990s was driven by two different schools of thought; one predicated on principles of markets and efficiency and another on principles of democracy and empowerment. In itself, “this alliance between the neo-liberalists and the neo-populists is unique, since these two groups often display different orientations on economic and political affairs” (Saito, 2003: 26). Nonetheless, this ‘marriage of convenience’ was founded on the shared belief that decentralisation would improve the quality of governance and reduce poverty. However, there are few evaluations to substantiate that decentralisation has had a significant impact on governance. For example, Narayan and Chambers’ study in 60 countries underlines decentralisation has “the potential for supporting democracy,” but concludes: “despite the trend towards formal democratisation and decentralisation, poor people by and large do not experience local government or local representatives of central state institutions as either enfranchising or responsive” (2000: 200). Similarly, Crook’s conclusion – “In none of the African countries reviewed in this article is it likely that decentralisation will empower any real challenge to local elites” (2003: 86) – is almost copied by Devas and Grant: “From this and other studies, it is clear that the assumption that decentralisation of decision-making will automatically result in decisions that reflect the needs and priorities of local citizens is naive” (2003: 314). With regards to decentralisation’s impact on poverty, the records are equally meagre. “The actual linkages between decentralisation and poverty alleviation, however, have not been ...validated by empirical research” (Romeo, 2003: 89). And an OECD review of experiences concludes: “In theory, decentralisation should have a positive impact on poverty ... the reality looks less promising” (OECD, 2005: 2).⁷

⁷ A few analysts, however, are not as disheartened by the rather limited impact of decentralisation on governance and poverty. Results may come in time or with better policy design. OECD officials, for example, state “successful decentralisation may take more than a decade within a context of financial and political instability” (OECD-DAC, 2004: 9). And Ribot argues, “decentralisation is often implemented haphazardly” (2003: 54). Kulipossa agrees that the low impact of decentralisation is due to “poor design of

Africa's neopatrimonial governance practices

Both of the previous two schools of thought on decentralisation acknowledge that the phenomenon of 'elite capture' of public resources can derail efforts to make public administration more efficient and democratic. However, neither considers 'elite capture' a systemic issue and both believe elaborate formal mechanisms for transparency and accountability can redress the issue or manage the risk. A third school of thought on governance in Africa – summarised here under the banner of 'neopatrimonialism' – argues that the informal and the personal dynamics between citizens and the state have intertwined so much with the formal and institutional dynamics that a focus on formal institutions is myopic. "The logic of personalised politics" prevails and "there is no incentive to work for a more institutionalised ordering of society" (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 162). In this light, 'elite capture' is not an aberration or risk of governance in Africa, but an integral feature of it. This section will first review the concepts underpinning neopatrimonialism before considering the impact or relevance of this school of thought for decentralisation policies in Africa. The section ends with a few critical comments on the validity or relevance of neopatrimonialism as an analytical framework (Bayart, 1993; Bayart et al., 1999; Berman, 1998; Bratton and Walle, 1997; Chabal, 1992; Chabal and Daloz, 1999; Englebert, 2000c; Olivier de Sardan, 1999; Schatzberg, 2001).

One of the points of departure in the thinking about neopatrimonialism is that for most Africans the colonial state "was exogenous to their societies" (Englebert, 2000b: 1823) and at the moment of independence in the early 1960s, most African states not only inherited colonial borders but also "the bureaucratic institutions of political domination" geared to "control outlying provinces" and extract agricultural production (Berman, 1998: 313). This state apparatus had no interest in protecting individual citizens' political or economic rights – quite on the contrary, it was a 'predatory state' developed to control and extract. As a consequence, most Africans sought protection from the state in "strengthening kinship ties" (Ekeh, 1990: 693), or in collective networks or "factions" that were not necessarily familial (Sandbrook, 1972: 104). Citizens did not identify with the state. The elites that inherited the central government – on the other hand – "soon discovered how truly little

decentralisation policies, procedural weaknesses, and a lack of pragmatic implementation strategies" (2004: 768).

power they had inherited,” as the central government apparatus was mistrusted and never felt as if it were legitimate and belonged to all citizens (Englebert, 2000b: 1823).

The easiest way to maintain power as central government was to use the state’s resources to build and maintain personal alliances with competing groups. The development of formal and depersonalised, state institutions would not only be a massive task that had to be started from the ground up, but such a task would also find little material and ideological support from the citizens. And as long as central government commanded enough resources to distribute via patronage networks – that is until the late 1970s – quite a number of central governments could be classified as “a functioning neopatrimonial state” (Chabal, 2005: 3) or “an alternative institutionalisation of sovereign authority capable of defending itself and doing things without significant bureaucracies” (Reno, 1995). A key feature of these neopatrimonial networks is their hierarchical and pyramidal character, there is one man – women rarely feature – at the top. Political power is based on the ability of a patron to command public resources and redistribute these among clients, in exchange for which the patron get loyalty, votes or information. Berman describes this as the “Big Man-Small Boy politics” (1998: 330), while Sandbrook uses the Swahili term *samaki wakubwa* – Big Fish (1972: 114).⁸

As a consequence of governing via informal personal networks – client-patrons relations, clientelism, nepotism – the state’s formal institutions lose their rational-legal and depersonalised character. The mixture or the inter-penetration of the formal and the informal institutions then becomes the defining feature of neopatrimonial governance. Some analysts express this ‘two-faced’ character of neopatrimonial governance in their metaphors: the “rhizome state,” where personal networks have grown throughout the formal apparatus (Bayart, 1993: 218); or the “bifurcated state” (Mamdani, 1996: 16); or “an Africa of the veranda and an Africa of the airconditioner” (Reno, 1995: 110). However, while the personalisation of formal institutions would generally lead to illegal or

⁸ It should be noted that neopatrimonial governance practice – ‘rule and distribution of public resources via personal networks’ – is not a uniquely African phenomenon. For example, Clapham edited in 1982 a book with case studies about ‘private patronage and public power in the modern state’ that included examples from the USSR, Ireland, Vietnam and the USA (1982). Scott (1969) compares African patronage practices with the “machine politics” around immigrant communities in the USA around 1900 and Englebert (2000b) compares neopatrimonial politics in African states with practices in other groups of former colonial states. Nevertheless, Bratton and Van der Walle conclude that “although neopatrimonial practices can be found in all polities, it is the core feature of politics in Africa” (1997: 62).

corrupt governance practices – as the personal relations rather than the formal regulations determine the outcome of the interaction – this does not necessarily mean that the use of public resources for private gain is considered immoral by the people involved. In fact, under neopatrimonial governance, there is morality in using public function and public resources to the benefit of certain personal networks.⁹ Again, various analysts have created their own terms to explain the morality of neopatrimonialism. Lonsdale created the concept of “moral ethnicity” (1992: 466); Schatzberg speaks of the “moral matrix of father family food” (2001); Bayart of the “politics of the belly” (1993) and Olivier de Sardan dissects a “moral economy of corruption” into five entirely acceptable moral ‘logics’: the logic of negotiation, gift-giving, solidarity networks, predatory authority, and redistributive accumulation (1999).

While many neopatrimonial states functioned into the late 1970s (Chabal, 2005: 6) or late 1980s (Reno, 1995: 110), the end of the cold war meant that central governments were less able to play the international geopolitical card to obtain foreign aid to assist in the funding of redistributive, neopatrimonial, practices. The growing discontent of clients – the patrons could no longer live up to the expectations – joined with the growing pressure from international donor agencies and financial institutions for more democracy and an efficient administration. This, in the end, may explain why many African central governments ceded to multi-party elections and decentralisation policies in the 1990s. However, when these reforms of the 1990s and 2000s are analysed through a neopatrimonial lens, there is invariably concern for the fact that most reforms concentrate on the formal institutions such as parliamentary elections and a decentralisation of the public administration and ignore the other side of African governance; the rhizome, the Africa of the veranda. Not surprisingly, most of these analyses see or expect the informal and personal politics to grow roots through the new democratic or decentralised institutions. Englebert’s conclusion that “political reforms which focus on democratisation, although no doubt desirable per se, should not be expected to lift the political constraints to growth in Africa (2000a: 29) are shared by Chabal in his claim that “the success of decentralisation ultimately rests on the quality of state governance” (2005: 2). Others are perhaps more direct: “This brief summary of the results of our research argues for a degree of scepticism

⁹ Also see the section on ‘personal networks’ in chapter 3, where I discuss Eke’s distinction between the “primordial public sphere” and the “civic public sphere”.

as regards the hopes on which decentralisation projects in Africa are founded” (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan, 2003: 166).

Critical comments on neopatrimonialism as a framework to analyse governance practices such as decentralisation are scarce. Perhaps this can be explained by the fact that it is classified as “postmodern literature,” written by “scholars [who] prefer to limit themselves to trying to understand or merely to describe what is going on in Africa, instead of attempting to change it” (Kelsall, 2003: 22). Most of the writing about neopatrimonialism is indeed somewhat ‘scholarly’. It is perhaps indicative that one of the scarce critical comments on neopatrimonial analyses comes from academics arguing that these analyses are “conceptually problematical and amount to a serious misreading of Weber” (Pitcher et al., 2009: 125) – not an argument that would excite development practitioners or policy-makers. In contrast to the literature about neopatrimonialism that mainly originates from European universities, most of the analyses about governance and decentralisation – whether to promote efficiency or democracy – is found “in writings sponsored by North American and international development agencies” (Boone, 2003: 374), written by “researchers, development agencies and NGOs” (Ribot, 2003: 53) and advocated by “international financial institutions, party leaders, grassroots activists, journalists” (Schedler et al., 1999: 13). In all, a review of literature suggests that there is rather limited debate between – on the one hand – the school of thought around governance as a neopatrimonial practice and – on the other hand – the two schools of thought around governance as a practice to promote efficiency or democracy.¹⁰

Nevertheless, a few researchers have raised questions about some of the basic tenets underpinning neopatrimonialism. Meagher, for example, studied informal business networks in Nigeria and wonders why the studied networks – characterised by trust, flexibility, and reduced transaction costs – do not flourish as they should according to mainstream economic sociology or a neopatrimonial perspective (2006). On the basis of field research in local polities in Tanzania, Kelsall challenges the neopatrimonial assumption that people vote on the basis of identity. “My experience in Arumeru, and in Tanzania generally, suggested that most people had a keenly individualistic streak within

¹⁰ One of the exceptions would be Chabal, who does engage with the world of (Dutch) development agencies and official donors (Chabal, 2004, 2005).

them, and that they did not vote gladly for fools. Granted, ‘identity’ issues did influence the vote, but it seemed that the distinction between the ‘African’ self and the ‘European’ one had been too sharply drawn” (Kelsall, 2004: 10). Perhaps more critical comments on neopatrimonialism tenets would emerge if more scholars had time and opportunity to do field research, without being sponsored by international development agencies.

In summary, this chapter has reviewed the literature around the wave of decentralisation in Africa since the early 1990s and outlined a reasonable consensus that has emerged with regard to a typology of different degrees and spheres of decentralisation. Moreover, this chapter also presented the literature produced by two principal schools of thought – one school emphasises efficiency and the other empowerment – among policy-makers advocating the introduction of decentralisation policies in the 1990s, as well as the literature produced by a more academic school of thought about governance processes in Africa. All this forms the background of the field research in 2004 into the school and dispensary committees that had surged to prominence in Uganda and Tanzania since the 1990s. However, before presenting the findings from this field research in chapter 4, the following chapter will discuss the research methodology and three concepts that are central to this research.

3. RESEARCH METHODS AND CORE CONCEPTS

3.1 Introduction

The two specific research questions of this thesis – studying the contemporary and the historical institutional framework between central government and local polities – each present a set of specific methodological challenges. This chapter presents these challenges and explains how the researcher responded. The next section considers the issues related to the concept of positionality, before outlining how the ethical implications of these issues have been addressed in the research. This section also provides detailed notes on the role of translators and the sampling process that determined which school and dispensary committees were to be interviewed. Section 3.3 provides insights in the five research methods that were used, with particular attention to the way in which two participatory research methods that are generally considered qualitative research methods – Venn diagrams and pairwise ranking – were adapted to also allow quantitative analyses. Finally, section 3.4 clarifies how the researcher has interpreted and used three core concepts in this thesis: institutional framework, local polity and personal networks.

3.2 Methodological considerations

This section starts by studying the concerns with regard to the concept of ‘positionality’, particularly as they have been argued in the context of postmodernism and postdevelopment. The methodological response in this research has been threefold: showing reflexivity, emphasising agency by local actors and employing participatory research methods. In addition, the research endeavours to address concerns related to positionality with ample ethical considerations. Next, this section reflects on the role of translators and how the use of participatory research methods facilitated the morphing of translators into the role of co-facilitators, enhancing the quality of the research process. The last part of this section provides the details of the three steps and three principles of the sampling process.

Positionality and contested realities

The positionality of this research and the researcher is presented in the first two paragraphs of the introductory chapter. The research originated in mainstream practice of development

cooperation – a Dutch development organisation offering technical assistance to African local government bodies – and the actual research revolved around the decentralised management of education and health services, a public policy area that is at the heart of dominant development discourse such as the ‘Millennium Development Goals’ and ‘good governance’. Moreover, the research states as its overall purpose the making of a contribution to that same mainstream practice of development cooperation: the capacity building of local organisations. These terms of the positionality of this research carry many of the risks that lead post-development analysts such as Escobar to advocate for (anthropological) development research “that distances itself from mainstream development institutions and conceptions,” because it is likely to do “no more than recycle, and dress in more localized fabrics, the discourses of modernisation and development” and “fail to value local reality, introducing instead new mechanisms of dependency and control” (Escobar, 1991: 677).

In addition to the positionality of the research, the researcher’s ascribed and acquired personal identities comprise the quintessential characteristics of the group that has dominated discourse on ‘development’ until “feminism and poststructuralism” opened up that discourse: “White, western, middle-class, heterosexual men” (England, 1994: 80). Some have argued that field research that originates – and returns – to (western) universities can do much more damage than ‘just’ recycling the modernisation and introducing dependency. In this perspective field research “must ... both empower the researched and contribute to the generation of change enhancing social theory,” lest it risks being characterised as “rape research” that only produces “career advancement of researchers built on their use of alienating and exploitative inquiry methods” (Lather, 1988: 570). In the same vein, it is argued that contemporary anthropological researchers can easily abuse local communities as “data plantations,” to the detriment of the researched people and only benefiting the researchers’ careers (Swadener et al., 2000: 4). The imagery of plantations and black slaves is, presumably, applied to suggest not much has changed between ‘then’ and ‘now’.

There is indeed historical evidence to suggest a historical continuity of the positionality of colonial researchers and their research practices and today’s development researchers and their research practices in development studies. Anthropology departments in the 1950s

and 1960s had many anthropologists who started their careers as colonial district officials in Uganda or Tanzania (e.g. Beattie, 1960; Brokensha, 1972; Culwick and Culwick, 1937). Most of them used their personal networks in Uganda and Tanzania to advance their academic careers. And there were also many anthropologists offering academic support for the British colonial policy of ‘indirect rule’ (e.g. Kuper, 1947; Perham, 1934; Schapera, 1938).¹¹ Personal networks between academics and colonial administrators also fostered such professional cooperation.¹² The academic field of “practical anthropology” was actually established to promote the “study of such subjects as African political systems, native customary law, land tenure, and economic activities, which were likely to prove useful to the administrator” (Richards, 1944: 289) and colonial administrations were certainly grateful for this support, seconding administrators “to carry out anthropological enquiries” (Hailey, 1944: 14). Such career developments and cross-overs between development practitioners and academics continue to occur to the present day. Former development professionals move into academic careers in development studies, and academics accept research contracts from international aid agencies and commercial corporations in poor countries, in which they, it is argued, effectively function as “linchpins of development’, ‘builders of order’, and ‘catalysts and inducers of economic and social change’” as “short term consultants” (Craig and Porter, 1997: 231).¹³

Eventually, critics allege, these researchers are “transplanting preconceived Northern models into distinct Southern societies” because their “research addresses only those

¹¹ Several of these academics not only supported the colonial administration with field research, but also offered explicit political support to colonial rule. For example, Perham’s academic pen was Britain’s answer to American political calls for early decolonisation after the Second World War, arguing: “When we in Britain hear it said that the African colonies should be emancipated today or tomorrow we realize that we are working with different conceptions of time and on the basis of utterly different estimates of African realities from those used by American critics” (Perham, 1944: 445).

¹² Margery Perham who was to become the grand dame of British colonial anthropology spent a lot of time “closeted” in the office with Governor Donald Cameron during daytime, while he taught her to play squash in the evenings – if she was not touring Tanganyika with Colonial Chief Secretary Phillip Mitchell in his special train. These personal relations not only fostered the mutually beneficial cooperation between the colonial administration and universities but also led “one senior wife” [?] to remark: “Margery Perham should be boiled in oil” (Oliver, 1982: 409).

¹³ Arguably, even some of today’s debates in aid agencies show a historical continuity. For example, the current debate between the ‘outside-in’ and the ‘inside-out’ proponents of capacity development – exemplified in articles like “From the Inside Out: The Role of Organisational Change and Capacity Building in the Promotion of Gender Equality” (Watson, 2006) – uncannily resembles the debate in 1925 in Tanzania over indirect rule. When some District Officers proposed to place some of their own staff inside the Native Administration to instruct the Chiefs in their administrative duties, Governor Cameron replied wrathfully: “If a Native Authority is not strong enough to administer the affairs of a tribe, it is no Native Authority at all and strengthening must proceed from *within* and not from *outside*” [italics added] (quoted in: Austen, 1968: 162).

subjects that can be compartmentalised and take on theoretical significance within the accepted version of the West's development experience" and "serve the interests of TNCs [transnational corporations]". Moreover, contemporary field research in poorer countries "has blocked access to alternative concepts and indigenous knowledge and has fostered an intellectual dependence on Northern concepts and models" (Brohman, 1995: 138). The effects of this dependency or alienation on the people being researched have been presented long before today's postmodernist discourse that states: "The founding elites of the emerging nations were, quite often, harbouring within their cells some of the 'genes' of their former masters" (Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997: 378). Fanon, for example, wrote already in the 1950s about "black skin, white masks" (1952), Freire created the image of 'the oppressor is in the oppressed's mind' (1970), and Biko described the dependency and alienation, shortly before he was murdered by white policemen, as: "The type of black man we have today has lost his manhood ... he looks with awe at the white power structure and accepts what he regards as the 'inevitable position'. ... His heart yearns for the comfort of white society and makes him blame himself for not having been 'educated' enough to warrant such luxury" (1978: 42).¹⁴

Of the several possible responses to the post-development critiques or questions regarding the positionality of field research for development work, three responses are of particular relevance as methodological considerations in this thesis. First, there is the unqualified acknowledgement of the risk that field research and researchers may indeed end up reinforcing the inequalities or harming the people involved in his or her field research. From that acknowledgement flows reflexivity, succinctly described as a "self-critical sympathetic introspection and the self-conscious analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher" (England, 1994: 82), or thinking "critically about the positionalities of researchers and the researched, to ask important questions about the ways in which these are negotiated in practice" (P. H. Hopkins, 2007: 390). During the field research for this thesis, the researcher endeavoured to keep a continuous critical awareness of himself as a person and a researcher in a political and historical context. A journal was kept to record the choices made during the day and questions that emerged and were found to have no

¹⁴ As an example of this alienation – without wishing to suggest that the following quote "best reflect[s] the particular biases and ideology of the researcher" (Swadener et al., 2000: 3) – I remember that in three different occasions during my field research there were people in school committees who broached the topic of corporal punishment with me and each of them explained: "We Africans have our ears on our back".

immediate answers. One of the most recurring issues in the journal was dealing with the consequences of the time limitations around the relationship with the people involved in the research.

Most of the encounters with members of school and dispensary committees, headteachers, nurses, local government officers, or local aid workers were one-off events in the form of an interview of a few hours at most. This meant there was very little time to develop personal relations and explore the possibility to move beyond the ‘predetermined’ expectations related to each party’s personal identities such as professional position and ethnicity. The researcher could reflect on, but do little more than that about “how one is inserted in grids of power relations” (Sultana, 2007: 376). Against the background of a short time for the encounter and a formal introduction as “a researcher” by the local authorities – often accompanied by an informal comment that he was also “a development worker,” if only because he looked, moved and sounded like one – there was little anybody involved in the encounter could do to move beyond the professional and ethnic identities and “the meanings that these attributes conveyed” to everyone involved (Mullings, 1999: 348). The researcher was an ‘outsider’ belonging to a network of aid agencies that are well known to most people in the schools, dispensaries and local councils, and it is most likely he was approached and informed in much the same way as other representatives from aid agencies were approached and informed. The research methods that were used were selected with these limitations in mind.

The second response to post-development critiques regarding positionality of field research lies in pointing at the agency of the people who participate in research. The positionality of the researcher and the researched, and the agency of the researched people and the researcher are connected in that the two – positionality and agency – can produce what is called a “contested reality”. Dominance or hegemony is never complete and local communities – local polities – can and do challenge the hegemonic ‘representation’ of reality. Berman, for example, concludes that the representation – or the discourse – of an all-powerful colonial state as the *‘bula matari’* (crusher of rocks) is not complete. It is, “missing the complex, but often shrouded, underworld of collaboration, negotiation and conflict at local levels that intimately tied the colonial state to African societies and significantly constrained its power” (Berman, 1998: 314). Similarly, and from a local

perspective, contemporary states in rich and poor countries – as well as dominant development discourse – are not essentially different. Myers speaks of Australian government health workers when he concludes that in their interaction with Aboriginal communities, “these advisers represented the hegemonic definition of contested reality by the nation-state with its refusal of authority to local understandings” (1988: 618). Nonetheless, as Myers also shows, the state’s representation of Aboriginal reality is eventually contested – and vigorously – by several local groups, including local Aboriginal communities.

Some postmodern representations of local communities and local polities in poorer countries appear to suggest these local polities possess a rather limited agency to be able to ‘contest’ the dominant representation of reality. Some argue that “financing, marketing, transporting, voting, obtaining public services, using the media, travelling, applying ‘modern’ technology ... almost every contact of the peasants with others is an occasion for being damaged” (Esteva, quoted in: Escobar, 1991: 676). Escobar’s poses a rhetorical question: “Does not development today, as colonialism once did, make ‘possible the kind of human intimacy on which anthropological fieldwork is based, but insure that that intimacy will be one-sided and provisional’ even if the contemporary subjects move and talk back?” (Escobar, 1991: 677). If Esteva’s peasants and Escobar’s subjects are credited with agency, then the answer can be a simple: “No, not every contact with others leads to damage or one-sided intimacy”.¹⁵ Similarly, another postmodern representation of Uganda as “an international Bantustan” appears to ignore Ugandan agency: “By necessity, the country turned to the international donor community for aid funds as well as technical and managerial personnel to administer it ... donor expatriates increasingly constituted the principal actors in the realm of public policy ... not even a direct colony was as acutely reliant on external forces” (Himbara and Sultan, 1995: 85). This thesis will argue quite the contrary: Uganda’s success in attracting billions of dollars in foreign aid is ultimately the result of carefully calibrated negotiations between larger local polities, smaller local

¹⁵ To be fair, Escobar acknowledges in his later work the research of others (Comaroff & Comaroff, Scott, Fals Borda) and accepts that it is possible that Africans “read their own significance into the colonisers’ practice and sought to neutralise their disciplines” and that “hegemony is more unstable, vulnerable and contested than previously thought” (Escobar, 1995: 95).

polities, the Museveni central government and – in fourth place – international donor agencies.¹⁶

Moreover, a look into the past suggests that local polities in Uganda and Tanzania have responded in an often deliberated and informed manner to inquiries by outsiders – be they the first European explorers, anthropologists for colonial administrators or researchers for the independent government – to suit their varying local interests by contesting or distorting the construction of a particular representation of reality. When Livingstone arrived in the Rotse polity in 1851, the Rotse already knew of his reputation as an anti-slavery crusader and persistently argued they had only been dabbling in slave trade for a year. Evidence, however, suggests they had been actively trading in slaves for at least 15 years (Flint, 1970: 72). When colonial anthropologists in Tanzania tried to identify local leaders in the 1920s, some local polities gave evasive answers. “They know perfectly well but, for one reason or another, they may not tell you” (quoted in: Iliffe, 1979: 322). Other local polities actively approached colonial anthropologists in the 1930s to ensure that their version of their polity’s boundaries was registered as the official record in order to ‘correct’ earlier colonial records that advantaged a neighbouring, competing, local polity (Monson, 2000a, 2000b). Later, in 1968, when government researchers went out to record the oral history of the Maji-Maji uprising of 1905-1907 as a nationalist history of various local polities rising together to resist the colonial government, this conversation was recorded:

Researcher: Did the Luguru hate the coming of the Germans?
Luguru Elder: No, they welcomed them.
Researcher: Why is that?
Luguru Elder: All the Germans wanted was to live in his country, so why should the Luguru abhor them? You are such know-it-alls; this isn’t a game.

The stunned researcher then learned that the Luguru polity had been in a long-standing conflict with the neighbouring Mbunga polity, and Luguru saw an alliance with the

¹⁶ Perhaps I should underscore that the concept of ‘agency’ of course not just means ‘engagement’ with central government, but also ‘evasion’ or ‘undermining’ (See for example: Migdal, 1988; Migdal et al., 1994; Scott, 1985, 1998). Local agency refers to the ability to ‘negotiate’ with central government as a canoeist negotiates a river: sometimes going through the middle, sometimes seeking the shoreline and sometimes taking the canoe out of the water and carrying it overland to refloat it at the next bend.

Germans as an effective means of dealing with their neighbours. At that point, the researcher stopped the interview (Sunseri, 2000: 567). Apparently the researcher could not deal with local people contesting his nationalist construction of reality.

In all likelihood, when the field research for this thesis took place in 2004, the encounter between the researcher and people in local management committees in Uganda and Tanzania was – for many and from a local perspective – another opportunity to negotiate or contest the latest construction of reality; that of decentralisation and local management committees. And each committee chose to respond in a manner that suited its interests. In about one-third of the group interviews, the committee members asked probing questions about the purpose of the interview and how their answers would be relayed to central government. (They were generally disappointed by the researcher’s insistence on ‘confidentiality’ and ‘anonymity’.) In a few other cases, committee members expressed disappointment that no ‘participation allowance’ was forthcoming. (Often a handful of marker pens went missing after the group interviews where this disappointment was expressed.¹⁷) Most committees treated the interview as if it were a business meeting, engaging in the discussions but also keeping an eye on the clock. About a quarter of the committees served tea and sandwiches, and yet another handful organised welcome ceremonies with songs, public tea or special lunches that included all the children. Arguably, most committees showed clear and diverse agency in response to the research and ‘control’ over the content and process of the encounter was in most cases a matter of negotiating.

The first response to post-development critiques regarding positionality in field research was ‘reflexivity’ or maintaining a critical awareness. The second response was to underscore local people’s agency in responding to researchers’ questions and that local people can and do contest the reality or representations that are being constructed. The third response to critiques on positionality in field research followed from the emphasis on

¹⁷ In another research with schools in Uganda, the researchers concluded that “all headteachers” were “eager to participate” because they expected the research “project” would eventually be “associated with substantial sums of money”. In the research process, the offering of gifts like pens, notebooks or allowances became an issue that affected the engagement of parents, teachers and headteachers with the research (Carasco et al., 2001: 272). In my field research - admittedly a one-off encounter and never presented as a ‘project’ – no more than a handful of the 64 committees that were interviewed raised the issue of material reward. However, the few committee members that pocketed the markers had correctly calculated the researcher would not want to openly negotiate the return of these markers.

local people's agency and led to a commitment to include participatory research methods in the field research, next to more mainstream methods such as questionnaires, individual interviews and archival research. Participatory research methods can facilitate a process in which local people can maximise their agency in 'constructing a representation of reality' or in 'contesting the representation that is on the table'. Some post-development analysts suggest that researchers' 'control' over the process and outcome of field research allows them to "play the ventriloquist" and only highlight those quotes from the interviews "that best reflect the particular biases and ideology of the researcher" or serve to "exoticise or romanticise the 'Other'" (Swadener et al., 2000: 3). Such 'selective quoting' is, of course, always a possibility and a risk, but it seems a risk in all research and not necessarily larger in field research for development studies. In fact, a lot of field research for development studies employs participatory research, a research methodology that originated precisely around the question "Whose reality counts?" as the title of one of Chambers' seminal works goes (1996).

As probably its best known advocate, Chambers argues that even if "the realities of the powerful tend to dominate", then "participatory approaches and methods ... enable poor and marginalised people to express *their* realities" [italics added] (2004: iii). And participatory research methods also explicitly include the relationship between researcher and researched in the equation: "These visual and tangible approaches and methods reverse power relations and empower 'lowers'" (Chambers, 2007: 21). Or, from another angle, participatory research methods seek to be "maximising the capacity of actors to object to what is said about them" (Mosse, 2004: 666). Inevitably, the widespread use of participatory research leads to research practices that resemble the practices it sought to displace (see: Cornwall and Guijt, 2004). "Participatory processes undertaken ritualistically ... turned out to be manipulative, or had in fact harmed those who were supposed to be empowered" (Cooke and Kothari, 2001: 1). This leads these critical advocates of participatory research to argue that each use of participatory research methods requires they be put in a "theoretical, political and conceptual" context – which this section has done – as well as a close "re-examination of the methodological tools used", which is done in section 3.3 with a detailed presentation of the Venn diagrams and pair-wise ranking exercises that have been used (Cooke and Kothari, 2001: 5).

Going back, for a moment, to the question ‘Whose reality counts’; it is important to note that this research only interviewed members of school and dispensary committees. Of course, their ‘local perspective’, was only one of a potential range of local perspectives. The interviews with committee members were likely to be a ‘from the inside outward’ perspective on the local community and remained uninformed about the views of other groups within the local polity, such as interest groups of parents and patients and potentially competing local elites such as chiefs, business groups, religious leaders or administrative elites. Fortunately, part of the field research in Uganda could be coordinated with another PhD researcher who happened to be doing an in-depth research in two villages about villagers’ perceptions of local institutions such as school committees. His findings provided a complementary look at two school committees ‘from the outside inward’ and “strongly confirmed” findings from the interviews with school and dispensary committees (Prinsen and Titeca, 2008: 157).

In sum, the above reflections acknowledge that the researcher’s positionality is likely to have affected the way in which the research was conceived, designed, implemented and written. However, these effects have been mitigated by a critical awareness of his positionality, the agency of local people to ‘contest’ the reality be constructed in the field research, as well as the use of participatory methods to maximise the room for local agency. In the end, this research’s overall purpose is to contribute to the daily work and challenges of development practitioners working at sub-national level in Sub-Saharan Africa and to achieve that the research solicits “intersubjective scrutiny” (Babbie, 1998: 51) or “external validation” (Salzman, 2002: 805), rather than courting postmodernism’s “extreme reflexivity” (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003: 66). In simple terms: comments and debate about the findings in research are critical to its meaning and subsequent relevance.

Ethics

Prior to leaving for the field research in August 2004, ethical aspects of the field research were discussed with supervisors and staff at Massey University and the research design was approved via the ‘Low Risk Notification’ process of Massey’s Human Ethics Committee. However, field research generally poses ethical questions that cannot be foreseen and it seems appropriate to record in this section some of the details about ethical issues that emerged in the course of the field research. Two areas are of particular

relevance: the approval for the research and the engagement in the research by local government bodies, and the informed consent and engagement of interviewees.

First, the field research required the formal approval of local government bodies, i.e. the district health and education authorities – the ‘gatekeepers’ (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003: 153). There were detailed conversations based on an ‘information sheet’ with the ten district directors involved, and all agreed to issue an official letter of introduction from their respective departments to sub-district authorities and school and dispensary committees. These letters introduced and approved the research by “A Researcher from Massey University New Zealand”, underscored that “the findings of the meetings will be recorded as confidential and anonymous”, and asked the sub-district authorities and committees to support the research.¹⁸

The depth of the subsequent engagement of the local government officials varied per district, but all directors and their staff provided the researcher with the information required for the research – i.e. location of schools and dispensaries, logistical advice, and supervised access to the district archives – and there were no attempts to influence the sampling process or obtain access to the researchers’ records of the interviews with local management committees. To offer reciprocity and create transparency, each research cycle in a district ended with an invitation to senior education and health staff and relevant district councillors to attend a “debriefing meeting with a snack and a refreshment” in which the researcher presented his findings in a general fashion, soliciting feedback and comments, and offering the opportunity to actors ‘to object to what is said about them’.¹⁹ Three of the five of these debriefing meetings were attended by most invitees and generated informative debate or were ground for further individual interviews, one debriefing meeting failed to materialise due to other meetings and one meeting had only two junior officers attend.

The second area of ethical questions relates to the consent and engagement of the interviewees with the research. There were two groups of interviewees, the largest group consisted of the members of local management committees, but in addition the researcher

¹⁸ Copies of these letters can be provided upon request.

¹⁹ Copies of these invitations can be provided upon request.

also interviewed a range of individuals who worked in or with the district education and health services. Questions with regard to ‘informed consent’ for the interview were slightly different for these two groups.

The committee members received an invitation for the group interview on a given date and time via the sub-district authority or the headteacher or nurse in-charge, generally with a reference to the approval of the district authorities for the research, sometimes in writing, sometimes verbally. This raises the question of whether these committee members were actually in a position to give their informed consent to the interview. Did the invitation process not constitute an instruction to appear for the interview? The honest answer would probably be that the invitation could indeed be perceived as an instruction to appear. By respecting the formal lines of authority in accessing the committee members, the research may have been perceived by committee members as not just ‘authorised by the authorities’, but also ‘authored by the authorities’. Four factors, however, mitigate these concerns.

First and foremost, the invitations could be elegantly declined, ‘due to other commitments’. And in fact, very few of the committees had a full attendance. Second, the researcher spelled out the voluntary, anonymous and confidential character of the research at the start of the group interview, while circulating a written information sheet to the same effect and acknowledging that while it would perhaps be difficult for members to leave, it would be perfectly okay to remain silent. Third, committee members hold an elected or appointed position in a public body and the interview would be about that public body. Arguably, speaking about their function is part of their function and there was little ‘damage’ that participation could do to interviewees. Finally, whether it could be debated if committee members belong to the local elite, it would be unlikely to count them as the marginalised or vulnerable people in the local community.²⁰ As such, the interviewees would probably be able to “more readily resist the intrusive inquisition of social research” (quoted in: Ward and Jones, 1999: 303). Taken together, the above factors mitigated the

²⁰ Interviewing local elites is a field that comes with its own set of ethical considerations that in several aspects is quite distinct from interviewing people who are, in a local context, more marginalised or vulnerable. Ward and Jones, for example, propose researchers to be “sensitive to ‘research situatedness’” and their “mode of entry” (Ward and Jones, 1999). Also see: (Herod, 1999; A. Hunter, 1993; Scheyvens and Storey, 2003: 182).

risk that the research would be harmful to committee members – even if their engagement with the interview were not fully voluntarily and wholly based on informed consent.

The researcher also extended invitations to four different categories of individuals at district level – education or health officials, politicians, opinion leaders such as priests or business owners, and aid workers – for an individual interview with the researcher. The researcher only extended these invitations to a person once he felt there was a personal *rapport* or manifested interest by the individual to talk. There were no ‘cold’ or ‘blanket’ invitations, not even to officials. (When the researcher felt a particular District Education Officer was not interested to be interviewed individually, he chose not to pursue such an interview but perhaps rather solicit an interview with a junior education officer who had shown an interest in the research.) When a request for an interview was extended, the researcher underscored anonymity and consciously allowed an elegant ‘way out’ by stressing “if you have time” and an opportunity to reflect by never proposing the interview immediately after requesting it.

With regard to the issue of ‘anonymity and confidentiality’ and the ‘right to object or correct’, matters were also different for both groups of interviewees. Committee members could be reasonably assured their names were not recorded (no list of attendance was circulated and it was unlikely the researcher would remember all names after the round of introductions). Moreover, no education or health officials were present during the interview and the researcher stressed that the district education and health authorities would only receive “general information about overall trends”. With regard to ‘the right to object or comment’ on the interview report, the research faced practical obstacles when balancing this right against the need to preserve anonymity and confidentiality. Schools and dispensaries were, on average about a 45 minutes drive away from the district capital where the researcher resided. After every interview, the researcher took away the paper documentation produced in the interview – i.e. the Venn diagrams and the pairwise ranking cards and sheets – and processed these every evening into a 2-6 page summary on a password protected laptop. These reports did not contain any names or location but were coded. Eventually, the schools and clinics received these anonymised reports in closed

envelops via private channels.²¹ However, while this process ‘returned’ the fruits of a committee’s work to the committee, it must be admitted that time and logistics did not allow committees to object or to correct the report.²²

For individual interviews, the matter of ‘anonymity and confidentiality’ and ‘the right to object or correct’ was addressed in a different fashion.²³ These interviews were not recorded on audio tape – the researcher simply made notes in a small notepad – and the researcher made 1-4 page reports of the interviews in the evening of the day, in an anonymous form on a password protected laptop. Each interviewee was offered the opportunity to receive a copy of this report the next day “for correction”. Less than half the interviewees wanted a copy and only two returned their copy with a few corrections.

Finally, a note on the meagre reciprocity and local benefits is in place. The field research ‘extracted’ information from hundreds of local people via participatory research methods, without giving them much in return. At best, the group and individual interviews were a pleasant opportunity to discuss and exchange professional and personal experiences. About a dozen school and dispensary committees said they felt the Venn diagram and Pairwise ranking exercises had enthused them or assisted in better understanding their environment, work or the choices they had. In these cases, the exercises may have had a ‘group-building’ effect.²⁴ However, these effects of reciprocity should not be exaggerated. In fact, advocates

²¹ The anonymised reports were put in a closed envelope on which the name of the school or dispensary was written. In this way, any visible connection between the name of the school or dispensary and the report would be severed once the envelop was opened. (Although it is possible that someone very familiar with the sector and district might be able to relate the report to a school or dispensary from the report’s content, the severance of the visible connections would maintain formal confidentiality.) These envelopes were given to my SNV contacts in the district who agreed to hand deliver them to the school or dispensary at the next possible opportunity.

²² Even if the committee members had no opportunity to ‘object or correct’, I found the return of the reports to the committees important and was later happy to read: “In good PRA practice there is a tradition that the data – the maps, matrices and diagrams – belong to those who created them” (Mayoux and Chambers, 2005: 290).

²³ It should be noted that a number of these “individual interviews” were in fact conversations with two or three persons who were familiar with each other; e.g. two councillors, or a priest and his assistant.

²⁴ Generally, participatory methods are intended to ‘mobilise’ groups into action, which leads some activists to overlook the fact that ‘communities of the poor’ are actually quite fragmented communities. “There is the risk of invoking an erroneous conception of ‘community’” (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003: 62). Interestingly, the local management committees do represent in many respects a ‘community’ organised around a common objective, so the participatory methods used in the research have met some of their original purpose if they assisted in ‘mobilising’ some committees into further action. In Chambers’ words: “There are also encouraging pointers that participatory numbers [‘party numbers’] resonate with and support decentralised and democratic governance and local empowerment” (2005: 290).

of the use of participatory method for large scale or statistically relevant data collection are often left with concerns. “The main challenge is ensuring that mainstreaming them [of participatory methods] does not compromise their role in giving poor women and men more voice” (Mayoux and Chambers, 2005: 271) and “The statistics produced by such studies [using participatory methods] should be capable of informing policy at national level. However, there are some concerns about empowerment and ethical issues, which present challenges for the future” (Barahona and Levy, 2003: 2). The researcher in this thesis remains seriously indebted to the members of local management committees for their time.

Translators and co-facilitators

The group interviews with school and dispensary committees were largely structured around two participatory research methods – Venn diagrams and pairwise ranking – that were adapted in such a way their use would not require extensive facilitation by the interviewer. In fact, once the different steps in the exercises were explained, most of the discussion would be carried by the committee members, taking ownership of the process. The facilitator’s role would be mostly limited to time management and ensuring steps were taken in the intended sequences, which could be verified without the facilitator actually knowing what was discussed by the committee precisely because progress of the discussion was visualised.

In practice this meant that the researcher sought translators for his introduction and explanation of the research methods and, at some point, the translation of some facilitation during ranking sessions.²⁵ These translators not only needed to be fluent in English and one or two of the local languages, but also be over 25-30 years to ensure wide acceptance among committee members who were thought to be mostly in their late 40s. Moreover, the translator could not be working for the education or health departments (and preferably not for local government at all) to enhance an atmosphere of confidentiality. Via the personal network of former colleagues and after some trial and error, the researcher was able to

²⁵ People in the three districts in Uganda spoke five languages: Lutooro, Lugbara, Aringa, Acholi, Kakwa, and Ma’di. In Tanzania, Kiswahili was used in all interviews.

contract translators that either worked in the private sector or in administrative functions in government departments that were not education or health related.²⁶

After each of the first group interviews, the researcher debriefed with the translators, enabling them to assume the role of co-facilitator in the group interview. The researcher continued to introduce the purpose and structure of the interview to the local school and dispensary committees, but the group dynamics and – therefore – quality of the research was significantly enhanced when the researcher then stepped into the background and placed the facilitation of the group interview entirely in the hands of the co-facilitator. The ease with which the translators could move into roles of co-facilitators and thus improve the quality of the groups' debate underscored claims by Mayoux and Chambers that “good use of participatory methods does not require high levels of formal education, but it does require training, experience, understanding of the issues involved and especially appropriate behaviour and attitudes” (2005: 275). Additionally, by moving into the background, the researcher was able to observe in greater detail some of the group dynamics and personally make sure the complex and abundant paper documentation produced in the course of the interview was recorded correctly and consistently – something which is “a key challenge” when trying to use participatory methods for generalisable research (Mayoux and Chambers, 2005: 282).

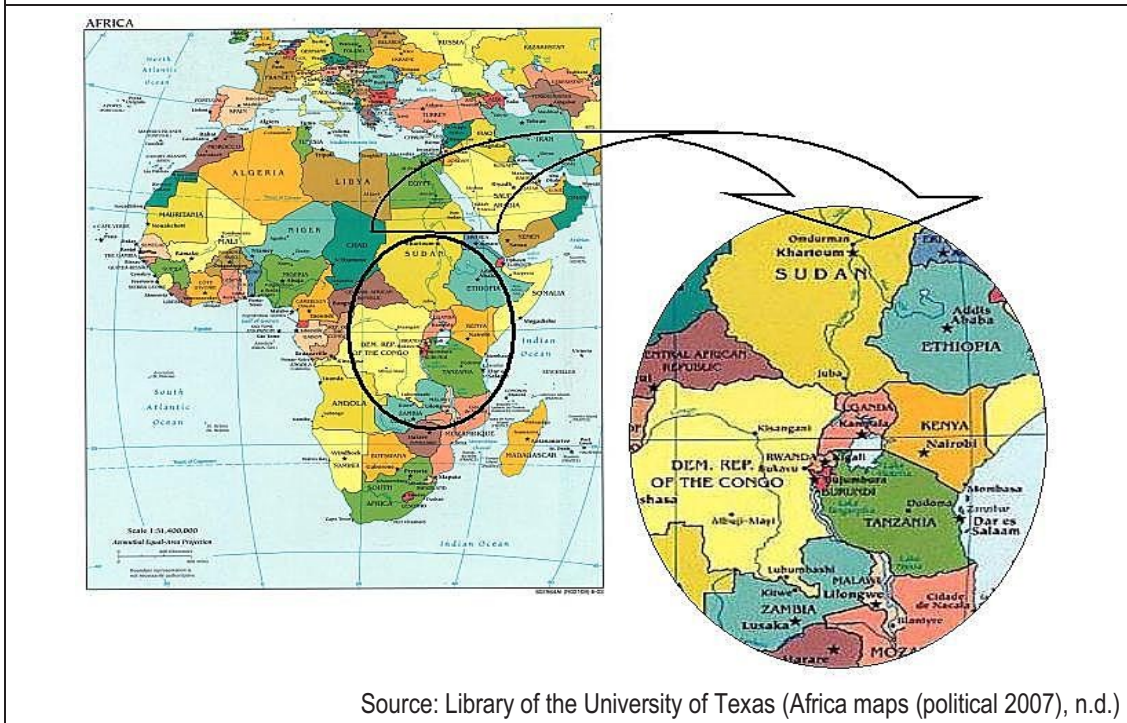
Sampling and samples

The research design sought to make comparative analysis between two East African countries and obtain some degree of representativeness by working in different districts in each country (Picture 1). The sampling process took place in three steps. First, country selection took place by opportunistically combining professional travel with the envisaged field research, which led to a selection of Uganda and Tanzania and the five-month period between August and December 2004 as the period for most of the field research.²⁷

²⁶ The trial consisted of testing candidates' skills in translation and 'group facilitation' in a mock exercise. The error consisted in engaging in an agreement with a local NGO to cooperate in the translation for the research; the NGO's staff were good translators but unable to refrain from promoting their own cause. Ultimately, I worked with five translators, two worked as secretaries for private businesses, two for government departments that were not related to education or health (the Wildlife Department and the Personnel Department), and one who worked as an aid worker.

²⁷ Throughout 2004 and 2005 I was contracted by SNV Netherlands Development Organisation for a series of short term consultancy contracts in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya.

Picture 1: Uganda and Tanzania in East Africa

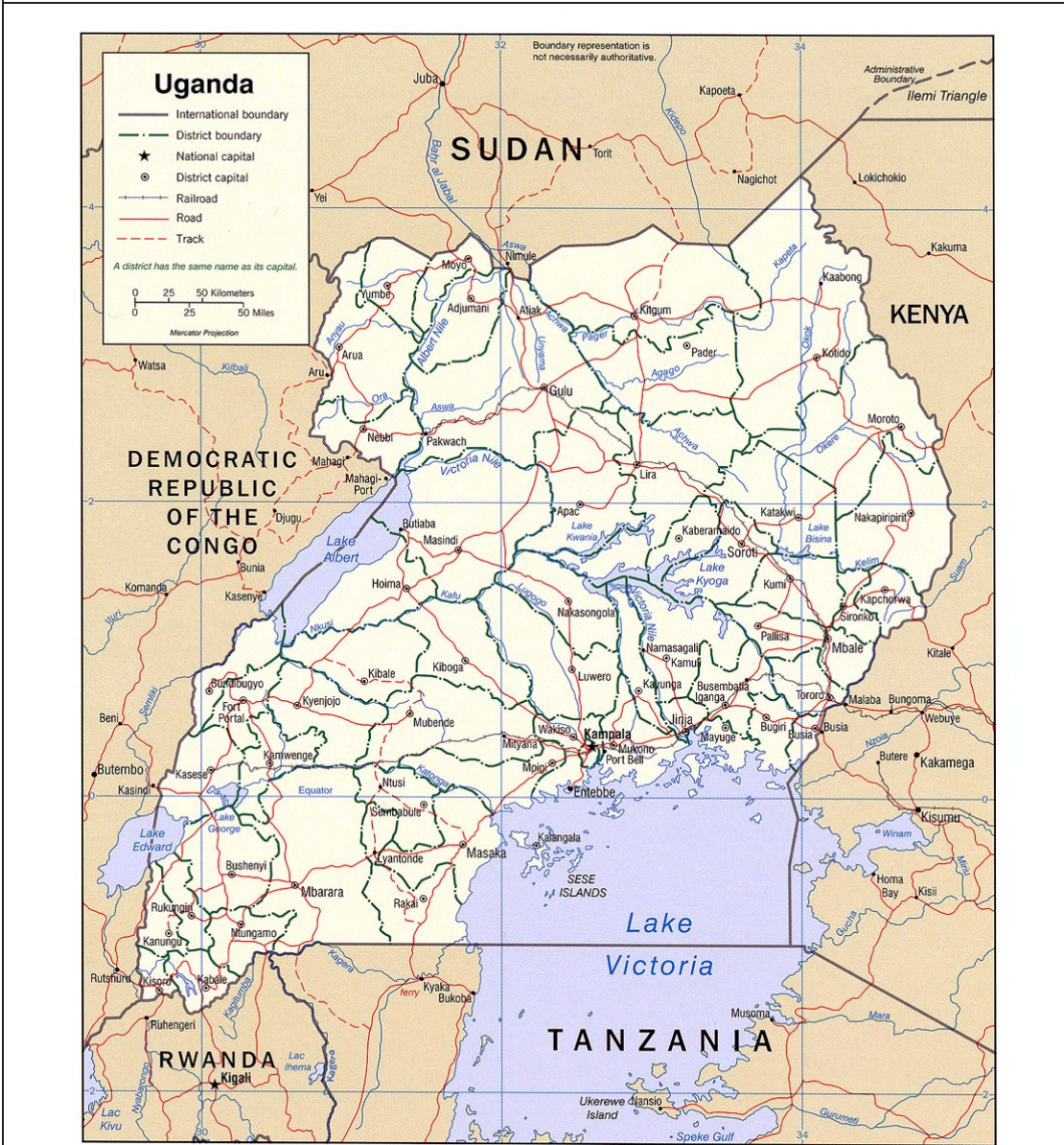


Source: Library of the University of Texas (Africa maps (political 2007), n.d.)

Second, the selection of districts was driven by the fact that nine former colleagues working at district level in Uganda and Tanzania agreed to informally sound out senior education and health officials in their districts about the research proposal. Eight former colleagues found district officials willing to discuss and probably approve of the research once the researcher would present himself. With an eye on diversity and for logistical reasons, five districts were ultimately selected. When the researcher was introduced to the district authorities, he duly obtained permission to do the research.²⁸ The five selected districts were three rural districts in Uganda – Moyo, Arua and Kabarole – and two rural districts in Tanzania: Hai and Same (Picture 2 and Picture 3). Both countries are often presented as examples where decentralisation has been taken furthest. The selected districts have population numbers that range from 220,000 (Same in Tanzania) to 565,000 (Arua in Uganda). Each of the five District Councils employs hundreds of staff, manages budgets of several million dollars and has increasing statutory fiscal and legislative powers (Shotton and Winter, 2005: 227).

²⁸ The selection of countries and districts is quite opportunistic. However, by general characteristics the selected districts appeared to be comparable to adjacent districts and the availability of personal networks in the selected districts definitely made the following advice wise: “Choose a site or sites that ... are likely to give you the appropriate data” (Scheyvens and Storey, 2003: 30).

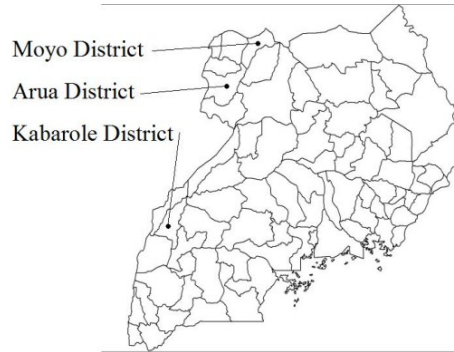
Picture 2: Map of Uganda and Uganda's districts in 2004



Most of the field research in Uganda was done in 2004 in three districts: Moyo, Arua and Kabarole (Fort Portal).

Country map above sourced from the Library of the University of Texas (Uganda maps (political 2005), n.d.).

District map to the right sourced from Wikipedia (Districts of Uganda, n.d.).



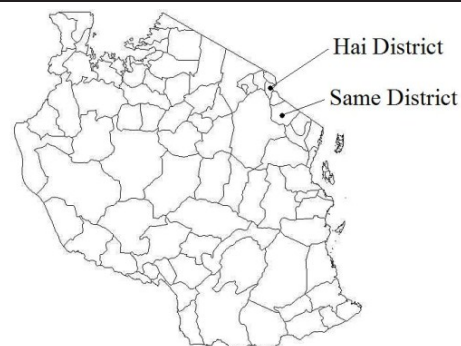
Picture 3: Map of Tanzania and Tanzania's districts in 2004



Most of the field research in Tanzania was done in 2004 in two districts: Hai and Same, both within the Kilimanjaro region.

Map above sourced from the Library of the University of Texas (Tanzania maps (political 2003), n.d.)

Map to the right, sourced from Wikipedia (Districts of Tanzania, n.d.).



The third step in the sampling process – i.e. the selection of school and dispensary committees to be interviewed in each district – was much less opportunistic and guided by three careful sampling principles, using basic data provided by district health and education officials. First, on the basis of a work schedule of two two-hour group interviews per day (reserving time slots from 9.00-12.00 and 14.00-17.00) and taking account of road conditions and distances but avoiding the “tarmac bias”, a map was made of the area around the district capital that could be reached within one hour driving (Chambers, 1983: 13). Second, within that area – covering about 40-70% of the five selected districts – the dispensaries were identified as starting points, because there were fewer dispensaries than schools. Third, within a 30 minutes driving range of the dispensaries to be interviewed in the morning slot, the nearest school was selected that was not located in the same village as the dispensary – to avoid a bias against the larger settlements where dispensaries were usually built. Finally, if there were days left in the work schedule once all dispensaries within an hour’s drive were included, the remaining days were booked for group interviews with school committees in areas that had not been ‘geographically covered’ yet.²⁹

Once the researcher, assisted by his local translator, had determined a list of the school and dispensary committees to be interviewed, the list was presented to the education and health department – not so much for approval, but to create an opportunity to de-select dispensaries or schools of which it was known that their management committees had been wholly dysfunctional or dormant.³⁰ After this, a timetable was made and invitation letters for the interviews were printed and the distribution of these letters arranged.³¹ Altogether, a total of 68 group interviews were planned and 64 group interviews effectively took place.³²

²⁹ The described sampling process took ‘geographical’ distribution of the samples as a guiding principle, rather than, for example, socio-economic or cultural distribution. This decision was based as much on the assumption that geographical distribution would probably cover socio-economic and cultural diversity, as on the fact that there was no meaningful data on socio-economic or cultural diversity readily available.

³⁰ In all, two dispensary committees in Uganda were de-selected for having been ‘dormant’ for over a year and one school committee was de-selected because of an acute and sharp conflict between the headteacher, parents and the school committee which was subject to an on-going investigation.

³¹ Due to weak or absent telecommunication systems, all invitations had to be physically distributed. In most cases I was able to tap into the existing informal ‘travel and mailing’ arrangements between government departments and NGOs. In a few instances I had to hire a car and driver to distribute my invitations – and documents that government departments or NGOs needed delivered – in the same area.

³² In about a ten cases the invitations for the interview were ‘mislaidd’ and we arrived at the school or the dispensary to find nobody was expecting us. In some of these cases the nurse or headteacher was genuinely disappointed and offered to organise the interview in the weekend. Whenever possible, we took up this offer.

3.3 Research methods

Three principles directed the selection and development of research methods for this thesis. First, following on from the reflections on positionality as well as reflections on the quality of the research process (for example, by seeing translators move into roles of co-facilitators), research methods with the committee members needed to revolve largely around participatory methods. Second, because the overall purpose of the research was to contribute to understanding wider dynamics around decentralisation policies as a dominant feature of today's development discourse, the research methods also needed to maximise the generalisability of the findings (see: Babbie, 1998: 237). At first sight, there appears to be a tension between these two principles of participatory methods and generalisability of findings.

Generally, participatory methods are perceived to contribute to creating qualitative, case-specific, information. The information generated with participatory methods is primarily owned by the participants and used to mobilise for action that is pertinent and relevant for the participants who generated the information. 'Generalisability' does not appear in the list of the many advantages of participatory methods presented by its advocates (see, for example: Kumar, 2002: 27). One of the main reasons for this is probably that the primary beneficiaries of the generalisability of information are 'outsiders' (e.g. researchers, policy-makers, aid workers) and not the local group or community that generated – and therefore arguably 'owns' – the information. The local group would probably prefer to generate information that is actionable rather than generalisable. Approaching the issue from the other side, critics argue that "information acquired through participatory methods is ... context-dependent and not suitable for making inferences [generalisable]" (Barahona and Levy, 2003: 32). However, the two need not necessarily be incompatible.

In 2000, Chambers participated in a "participatory poverty study" for the World Bank that used participatory research methods with "20,000 poor women and men from 23 countries". An endeavour of which the authors noted: "Something like this had never been attempted before" (Narayan et al., 2000: 2, 3). Many of the methodological challenges in the research for this thesis – e.g. site selection, the pressure of time, establishing trust, and the problem of generalisation – already appeared as headings in the report on this World Bank research. Moreover, it acknowledges there are "continuing ethical challenges ...

when the prime objective is not to directly empower and benefit the participants, but to help outsiders learn ... and influence policy and practice” (2000: 17).³³ Nonetheless, after studying a few more experiences, Chambers joins in the conclusions that “recent evidence shows that participatory methods can generate accurate quantitative data” and “participatory methods have been reliably used to investigate and quantify sensitive issues like violence and power relations which would have been difficult through questionnaires” (Mayoux and Chambers, 2005: 271, 279). Others similarly find that participatory methods can generate statistics useful for policy-making: “We claim that the statistics generated in these studies are at least as reliable as statistics obtained from traditional methods such as surveys” (Barahona and Levy, 2003: 2).

It seems that those who experimented with participatory methods to generate statistics for wider policy purposes – as this thesis also aspires – concur that two aspects are of critical operational importance. First, there is a need to employ “statistical principles” in the “selection of the sample of communities in which the research will be carried out” (Barahona and Levy, 2003). And because quality will be compromised “with small sample surveys claiming exaggerated levels of representativeness” (Hulme, 2000: 93), “purposive samples ... are essential for detailed coverage of different groups” (Mayoux and Chambers, 2005: 283). Second, the latter continue that a “degree of standardisation is required to enhance the validity of aggregation across different communities” (2005: 279) or, in the words of Barahona and Levy, “PRA [participatory] tools are adapted through a process of standardisation ... taking into account the requirements of comparability of data between sites” (2003: 56). On top of this, careful recording of the large volumes of documentation is required. All these aspects have explicitly been taken into account in the design and large-scale application of Venn diagrams and pairwise ranking exercises in the group interviews for this thesis.³⁴

The third principle that guided the selection for research methods was the principle of ‘triangulation’; using different research methods, locations, information sources and disciplines to analyse the topic of research (Chambers, 1996: 157; Kumar, 2002: 323). This

³³ See comments in the preceding section Ethics.

³⁴ Honesty demands that I record here that I designed my research with careful attention for these aspects, but rather on the basis of ‘instinct’ and ‘experience’, and not because I had studied these references when designing the methods in 2004.

variety in perspectives would assist in not just capturing most facets of the topic, but it would also allow contradictions to emerge *ex post*, or allow for deliberate cross-checking when emerging patterns are not quite clear. Moreover, by collecting data in different sources, triangulation also protects researchers from betting on just one horse. (In this field research, for example, the researcher had high expectations from secondary archival research by accessing the university libraries in Uganda and Tanzania, but in practice this proved to render meagre results.) Some analysts distinguish and recommend using various types of triangulation, almost presuming infinite resources, but in the research for this thesis triangulation was applied modestly and predominantly in what is called “methodological triangulation ... using different methods in relation to the same object of study” (Mikkelsen, 2005: 96).³⁵ Practically, the research designed or used five different research methods:

- Semi-structured group interviews
- Closed individual questionnaires
- Open individual interviews
- Primary and secondary archival research
- Reading and ‘re-reading’ primary and secondary sources

The design and actual use of each of these five research methods requires some further presentation, especially as the next two chapters present the findings and analyses that are the results of the application of these research methods.

Semi-structured group interviews

Most group interviews with school committees took place in a classroom or a lunchroom. In dispensaries, the group interview was often held in the nurse’s office. Each group interview opened, of course, with personal introductions and the explanation of the purpose, matters of consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and an explanation of the interview process. A group interview was scheduled to last about two hours, but late arrivals, tours around the school or dispensary, and tea breaks meant most encounters lasted close to three hours. The design for the group interviews was tested twice, once in

³⁵ Mikkelsen distinguishes “at least five types of triangulation” (2005: 96).

Uganda and once in Tanzania, with members of a school committee in which one of the researcher’s local contact persons was a member.

Table 1 details how the 64 group interviews were distributed over school committees and dispensary committees in Uganda and in Tanzania. Without wishing to open a discussion about sampling, sample size and reliability intervals, the table shows that – with exception of the largest district of Arua – about 4% to 19% of the committees in a district were included in the research sample. By most standards, this would suggest that a reasonable sample was taken and a reasonable degree of generalisability of the findings can be expected, especially as the interviews involved a large majority of the committees’ statutory members.

Table 1: Number of semi-structured group interviews				
	Committees in Uganda		Committees in Tanzania	
	<i>In Schools</i>	<i>In Clinics</i>	<i>In Schools</i>	<i>In Clinics</i>
Group Interviews (Total=64)	17	11	27	9
Participating members (Total=420)	127	60	180	53
Statutory Total of members ^{a.}	10	5 or 7 ^{b.}	9 to 11 ^{c.}	8
Average in sample	7.5	5.5	8.5	5.9
Mode in sample	6	7	6	4, 5, 6, 7
Ratio of schools/clinics <i>n</i> Sample : <i>n</i> district (%)	Moyo= 9:73 (12%) Arua= 4:416 (1%) Kaba.=4:112 (4%)	Moyo=4:33 (12%) Arua=4:57 (7%) Kaba.=3:28 (11%)	Hai=13:152 (9%) Same=14:176 (8%)	Hai=5:27 (19%) Same=4:26 (15%)

Notes:

- a. Includes an ex-officio secretary (head teacher or nurse in-charge) who may or may not have formal right to vote.
- b. There can be five or seven members, depending on number of administrative units in the area covered *and* on type of regulations used (i.e. the ‘1998 regulations’, or the ‘2003 regulations’).
- c. The number of committee members ranges from nine to 11, depending on whether the committee opted to have representatives of the foundation body (church) and a patron.

The semi-structured group interviews revolved largely around two participatory research methods: first the making of a Venn diagram (for technical details see: Kumar, 2002: 234; Pretty et al., 1995: 242) and subsequently a pairwise ranking exercise (technical details in: Kumar, 2002: 246; Pretty et al., 1995: 83). Each of these two methods was adapted – standardised – in form and use to facilitate systematic recording of the results. After the

group interviews with the 64 committees, the researcher categorised one-by-one each unique response in categories defined by the researcher, endeavouring “to exercise judgement in allocating participatory research findings to common categories” (Mayoux and Chambers, 2005: 290). For example, the unique descriptions of the contents of the relationship between committees and other actors in the Venn diagrams were categorised by the researcher as either an ‘act of upward accountability’, or an ‘act of downward accountability’. Similarly, the unique descriptions of successes and problems prioritised by the committees in the pairwise ranking were categorised as ‘operational or internal issues’, ‘communication with government’, or ‘communication with local and non-state actors’.³⁶

The Venn diagram in the group interview served a dual research purpose; it provided not only insights into the character and density of the institutional and personal networks around the school and dispensaries committees (see Table 12, Table 19 and Table 20 in chapter 4), but also in the directionality and content of the acts of accountability by the committees (see Table 7 in chapter 4). In fact, as the findings in chapter 4 show, Venn diagrams were used effectively to – what Chambers called – ‘quantify sensitive issues like ... power relations’.³⁷ First, committee members *listed* “all persons, groups and organisations that have some importance for the committee”. Second, in open discussion, the names on the list were *sized up* as of ‘high, normal or minor’ importance and transferred on to – respectively – large, medium and small pre-cut round cards. Third, the committee members *positioned* these cards around a large round card that had ‘Our Committee’ printed on it. The cards could touch ‘Our Committee’ if there was a direct connection, or be positioned in a chain to others if contacts were indirect. In a fourth and final step, pre-cut in-going and out-going arrows were placed on top of the direct relations of the committee. Committee members then *described* the content of the relationship by writing on post-it notes what was received and sent to the direct contact and pasted those notes on top of the arrows. Picture 4 shows images of this four-step process.

³⁶ ‘Exercising the judgement’ in categorising and labelling a large number of unique units of data was probably one of the most complex, time-consuming, and sometimes agonising activities in this research. See, for example, the material in Anecdotal Evidence Boxes 7 and 8 at the end of chapter 4. In this light I found Mayoux and Chambers (2005) and Barahona and Levy (2003) may have under-played the complexity of this task of *ex post* categorisation (especially as volumes of material increases) and the significant risk of researcher bias.

³⁷ Venn diagrams have also been used successfully with dispensary committees in Uganda by other researchers (e.g. Bjorkman and Svensson, 2007: 11).

Picture 4: A four-step Venn diagram of a management committee's network

(clockwise, from left top)



1st: Listing all actors important for the committee.



2nd: Sizing up each actor's importance.



4th: Describing the content of the relationships.



3rd: Positioning actors around the 'Our Committee'.

Critical for the research was the careful recording of the complex and detailed Venn diagrams in such a way that an aggregated record could be made. A special 'recording sheet' was designed for that, noting the name, size and position of the contacts, as well as the contents and directionality of the content of the relationship.³⁸ Even so, recording the full and final Venn diagram before the wind would blow it away – hence the little stones! – usually took about 20 minutes. (Picture 5 provides an impression of the complexity of the standardised final Venn diagram.) The patterns that emerged from the analysis of the aggregated findings could then be compared – triangulated – with findings from the individual questionnaires (e.g. regarding members' personal networks), the regulatory requirements for committees' accountability, as well as correspondence found in the primary archival research.

³⁸ A model of the 'recording sheet' can be provided upon request.

Picture 5: The standardised four layers of Venn diagram

(clockwise, from left top)



All actors positioned around the committee.



Looking at what this actor sends to the committee.



This diagram is transcribed for later aggregation.



Details are written on post-it notes.

The pairwise ranking exercise also served a dual purpose. In a first step the analyses of all pairwise ranking exercises provided insight into the character of the items that had been on the agenda of school and dispensary committees during the last year. In a second step, the pairwise ranking exercise revealed patterns in what had been committees' biggest successes and biggest problems. (See Table 5 in chapter 4.) These findings could then be juxtaposed – triangulated – with the committees' regulatory terms of reference and minutes of meetings, which were found via primary archival research. The pairwise ranking consisted of three steps. First, individual committee members brainstormed, noting down their views on successes and problems. Next, in a plenary discussion all cards were considered and a common list of a maximum of six successes and six problems was agreed. Third, the successes and problems were then prioritised in a pairwise ranking exercise. (See Picture 6 for an impression of the sequence.)

Picture 6: Pairwise ranking of successes and problems in three steps

(clockwise, from left top)



1st: Brainstorming on successes and problems.



2nd: Making one common list of successes...



3rd: Prioritising both lists via 'pairwise ranking'.



... and another common list of problems.

While the group interviews revolved largely around the Venn diagram and pairwise ranking, there was often also ample room to have introductory conversations with headteachers, nurses and chairpersons (most in English) and make detailed notes of comments about the discussions in the group (translated for the researcher if the co-facilitator was not required to facilitate) or written by individual committee members on cards. Obviously, the researcher's notes are at risk of a number of contextual biases (e.g. language, spatial, hierarchy) and, of course, 'researcher's interest bias'.³⁹ Nonetheless, with this caveat these notes are used in chapter 4 to highlight or underscore trends.

³⁹ My 'notes from group interviews' would probably constitute evidence in a risk analysis of 'selective quoting' as a researcher takes notes "to play the ventriloquist" with participants' comments (Swadener et al., 2000: 3).

Closed individual questionnaires

A second research method in the field was a classic closed individual questionnaire, investigating individual committee members' profiles and opinions. At the end of group interviews, each committee member was asked to fill in a questionnaire with 11 closed questions – simply requiring the ticking of a preset box – and two brief open questions (see Appendix 1 for a model of the questionnaire).⁴⁰ The questionnaire was tested – and subsequently slightly adjusted – in Uganda in the same trial as the testing of the group interview. In Tanzania a Kiswahili translation of the questionnaire was used. In general, committee members took about 10-15 minutes to fill in the questionnaire and none of the committee members reported problems in filling in the questionnaire – aside from the occasional “I forgot my reading glasses”. The data emerging from these individual questionnaires proved to be a surprisingly rich source of information – particularly with regard to members' personal networks – and a useful backdrop to triangulate information from other sources. Table 2 details the general profile of the 420 respondents.

		Ex officio members	Local Members	Total
Uganda	School Committee	28	99	127
	Dispensary Committee	16	44	60
	Sub-total	44	143	187
Tanzania	School Committee	68 ^a	112	180
	Dispensary Committee	10	43	53
	Sub-total	78	155	233
Totals		122	298 ^b	420

Notes:

- a. This relatively high number of *ex officio* members is due to the fact that Tanzania's school committees also have two members elected from among the school's teachers. For the purposes of this research these two members are counted as *ex officio* members because they are not representatives of the local community.
- b. Local members and *ex officio* members filled in the same questionnaire. However, upon collecting the filled in questionnaires, the researcher separated the questionnaires by the two groups. Most of the analyses in chapter 4 on the field research are based on these 298 committee members because they represent – through election or selection processes – the local community.

⁴⁰ The findings from one of the questions in the questionnaire (i.e. question number 13 on the impact of participating in local management committees on people's trust and understanding of different tiers of civil servants) are not presented in this thesis but are being processed for a topic paper.

Open individual interviews

In contrast to the ‘standardised’ participatory methods in the semi-structured group interviews and the closed questionnaire, the third research method used in the field research consisted of a number of “flexible, iterative, and continuous” individual interviews and conversations (Babbie, 1998: 290). In every district, the researcher was introduced – or came across – individuals who appeared interested in the research or were likely to have interesting experiences with local management committees or decentralisation. Taking some ethical safeguards into account (see the earlier section on Ethics) the research often asked these persons for an open individual interview over lunch or dinner in the weekend. With hindsight, these persons have been categorised into four groups: district officials, local politicians, opinion leaders or aid workers, as in Table 3.

In these 28 open individual interviews, the researcher usually broached two issues. Most interviews started seeking clarification on factual matters – for example details of an electoral process, or getting dates and numbers right – but once these ‘how, who, when, where’ questions were addressed, many of these interviews moved into an open conversation about the ‘why’ of matters. In chapter 4, many of the remarks from these individual interviews are presented as illustrations or explanations of trends or patterns. While these conversations cannot be summarised in a few phrases, they certainly assisted the researcher in developing a better understanding of local actors’ perception of decentralisation as a political and historical process.⁴¹

	District officials ^a (education or health sector)	Politicians ^a (district or sub-district councils)	‘Opinion leaders’ ^a (church, business, or ‘elders’)	Aid workers ^a (expatriate and local people)	Total
Uganda	13	3	4	6	26
Tanzania	7	2	4	4	17
Total	20	5	8	10	43 (28) ^b

⁴¹ Again, as indicated in footnote 39, I acknowledge that the selection of persons for these individual interviews carried the risk of ‘researcher bias’. Moreover – and more importantly – as these individual interviews had much more the character of a private conversation, a gender bias was inevitably introduced. My invitation to a male councillor for a Saturday night beer in the local restaurant probably carried little innuendo, while the same cannot as easily be expected for a female councillor. When I felt this might be an issue, I mitigated this bias by inviting men for evening drinks and women for lunches or by inviting a woman together with a colleague. Nonetheless, only 10 of the 43 interviewees were women.

Table 3: Number of open individual interviews
<p><u>Notes:</u></p> <p>a. Several of these interviews were not, strictly speaking, 'individual interviews' because in a number of cases two or three persons who knew each other quite well wanted to be interviewed together. For example, a priest and his assistant, or two aid workers who were co-workers.</p> <p>b. The above explains why the referencing to these individual interviews in the footnotes in chapter 4 about the field research only runs from interview #1 to #28.</p>

Primary and secondary archival research

A fourth research method employed in the field research is primary and secondary archival research. Primary archival research encompassed accessing the archives or files of the district education or health departments. The research had a particular interest in studying instructions or regulations sent by the district education or health authorities to local management committees, as well as correspondence from the committees to the district authorities that related to 'accountability'. All districts in Uganda allowed the researcher supervised access to study the archives, allowing him to peruse most communication between the departments and local management committees. Most archives proved to be rather difficult to navigate as virtually all correspondence and documentation was simply archived on the "chrono" principle; i.e. by date. Picture 7 gives an impression of the "chrono archives". As researching the archives was a slow process and note-taking quite cumbersome, the researcher was eventually allowed to show the district directors the documents he found "most interesting" and obtained permission to organise for the photocopying of these documents.

In total, about a hundred documents (about 300 pages) were photocopied with the researcher's promise that he would 'white out' identifying names if he were to use these documents. On closer inspection back in New Zealand, many of these documents proved to contain rich evidence and paper trails. Duly 'anonymised' sections of 24 documents have been integrated in chapter 4 as 'anecdotal evidence' – providing the necessary triangulation to trends and patterns emerging from interviews. (Primary archival research at district offices in Tanzania was not undertaken because the researcher's lack of knowledge of Kiswahili made quick scanning of documents impossible. However, ten samples of minutes of school or dispensary committees were obtained directly from schools and clinics and translators made 'short summaries' of the topics covered in these minutes.)

Picture 7: Primary archival research



A District's "Chrono" archives in Uganda.



Education Department archives in a district in Uganda.

The research also endeavoured to carry out secondary archival research; it was suggested by personal contacts that libraries of universities in Uganda and Tanzania might have undergraduate or postgraduate research theses about school or dispensary committees. At different moments between 2004 and 2006, the researcher visited the various libraries of the Makerere University in Kampala, the Christian University in Mokono, the University of Dar es Salaam, as well as the Jomo Kenyatta University in Nairobi.⁴² Except for the Christian University in Mokono, accessing these libraries proved to be more cumbersome than the district archives and it seemed harder to arrange for photocopying in these universities than in a remote district.⁴³ In the end, only a handful of theses with some useful information was found (i.e. Nkata, 1996; Olwiita, 1997; Tuwangye, 2003; Zinomuhangi, 1998).

Reading and re-reading primary and secondary sources

To find answers to the second specific research question – How have central government and local polities been developing their institutional frameworks over time and from local polities' perspective? – the research delved into existing primary and secondary written sources as they are accessible in libraries. However, reading historical sources to determine

⁴² I also had the opportunity to visit the library of the Africa Study Centre of the Leiden University in the Netherlands in June 2006 and scour for theses or papers from Uganda and Tanzania on school or dispensary committees. Interestingly, this library only had one relevant local research paper. Perhaps there isn't that much academic research into local management committees.

⁴³ Other researchers seem to have faced similar obstacles when trying to use Makerere's University library (Howell, 2001: 411; McConnell, 2005: 469).

how relationships were developed in the past is fraught with at least four methodological challenges, particularly when the local perspective is sought. First, the questions around positionality as discussed earlier in this section are perhaps even more relevant for historical research than for contemporary research – simply because there is no longer anybody alive from 1880 or 1930 with a local polity perspective who could be interviewed with participatory methods or who could ‘contest’ the reality that researchers construct after reading the historical records. The Luguru elders from those days are no longer among us. Second, the written records that can be studied are virtually all colonial records, written by people working for, or embedded with, the central government. People in local polities in Uganda and Tanzania have not left their own written records about their relationships or negotiations with central government for their domestic audiences, certainly not before the 1950s.

The third methodological challenge is related to the previous; the records that colonial officials left are not the history of a ‘winner’ who tried to impose a particular version of history onto the minds of the ‘conquered’. Unlike some contemporary representations of reality that might try to imprint images in ‘the oppressed’s mind’, colonial reports were written with quite a contrary directionality because these reports were exclusively for an audience higher up in the hierarchy: in the colonial capital or in London.⁴⁴ As a consequence, the reports are “accounts by a subordinate primarily concerned with creating the best possible impression with superiors” (Beidelman, 1966: 119). Ranger (1979: 78) and Pels (1996: 743) present examples of colonial officials who wrote reports about local dynamics that did not portray the expected success stories of central government policies. Both officials suffered the consequences. Fourth, because actors in local polities exerted agency then as much as now, many actively withheld or distorted information when central government officials tried to record local events. “A certain degree of studied carelessness could serve local interests by systematically frustrating surveillance [by the District Commissioner]” (S. F. Moore, 1992: 28). In short, even if there is a record of local events in colonial times, both parties may have deliberately – not to mention subconsciously – tried to distort the records.

⁴⁴ Arguably, a good number of contemporary reports written by government officials are still written for audiences in overseas capitals in Brussels or Washington.

Considering the above methodological challenges, reading historical texts becomes increasingly a process of ‘re-reading’ the text with an awareness of these caveats. Efforts to discern a local perspective on the relationships between central government and local polities then need to ‘read against the grain’ or ask ‘what is not recorded?’ For example, when the records suggest that “[District Commissioner] Baines was foresighted enough to make as much use as possible of chief Lwamgira” (Austen, 1968: 126), or conclude that Native Authorities were often former house servants “inured to a routine of command and obedience” (Pels, 1996: 749), then reading against the grain might lead to wonder whether chief Lwamgira and the former house servants were not equally foresighted to use the British as much as vice versa.

Yet, efforts to read against the grain carry risks. Tanzanian historians in late 1960s established a “Dar es Salaam School of historiography” that with “diligence and determination ... and striking internal consistency” found evidence of widespread and varied resistance from local polities against colonial rule (e.g. Denoon and Kuper, 1970: 329; Ranger, 1968a, 1968b). The researcher cited earlier in this chapter who stopped recording his interview with the Luguru elder about the arrival of the German colonial officials was part of that ‘Dar es Salaam School’, which reinterpreted history and “created an authentic Africa” (Schoenbrun, 1993: 54). In the late 1990s there was a “resurgence of interest in history and memory within the context of state power and legitimacy” (R. Roberts, 2000: 513). This resurgence of research in the late 1990s undermined the ‘Dar es Salaam School’ by concluding Tanzania’s local polities showed far less resistance to the German and British colonial governments than suggested by the ‘Dar es Salaam School’. Several researchers of the late 1990s argued that local polities had been more inclined to use colonial rule and colonial resources to advance their own particularly local interests against neighbouring local polities (cf. Becker, 2004; Monson, 2000b; Sunseri, 2000). At this moment in time, this thesis is inclined to see – and perhaps therefore find – evidence in this line of thinking that emphasises local polities’ agency. Nonetheless, the risks of becoming a historical ventriloquist are real. This thesis therefore also acknowledges that academic research has a limited ability to represent or “re-represent African pasts” (Campbell, 2006: 85; Schmidt and Walz, 2007: 53).

3.4 Core concepts

Throughout this thesis, three concepts are used quite frequently – institutional framework, local polity and personal networks – and because they are essential to the argument, some reflection or definition regarding each of these three core concepts is appropriate.

Institutional framework

As the two specific research questions of this thesis revolve around the relationship between central government and local polities, the wording “institutional framework between central government and local polities” appears frequently. For this thesis, the concept of “institutional framework” is taken from the work of North, an economic historian associated with the so-called ‘new institutionalism’ of the 1990s (see: Hall and Taylor, 1996). Even though North’s work is generally oriented towards the role of institutions and economic development – his acceptance speech for his Nobel prize was titled ‘Economic performance through time’ (1994) – some of his analytical concepts have also been helpful to analyse the role of institutions in governance in Africa in general, or Uganda and Tanzania in particular (e.g. Alence, 2004; Flanary and Watt, 1999; Kjaer, 1999). For the research in this thesis, North’s work is helpful in a number of ways. First, its origin in economics brings with it a focus on the exchange of resources, as does this research when analysing the relationship between central government and local polities. Second, North emphasises the importance of human agency in historical development over structural determinism.⁴⁵ “Institutions are ... humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction. [T]hey structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social or economic”, is the opening phrase of his seminal work (North, 1990: 3).⁴⁶ Simply

⁴⁵ The extent to which the various schools of “new institutionalism” actually emphasise human agency over structural determinism is, inevitably, subject to debate (e.g. Hall and Taylor, 1998; Hay and Wincott, 1998).

⁴⁶ Aside from the useful concepts developed by North, his choice of words in “the evolution of ... economies the sequence of stages of exchange” (1991: 99) has an uncomfortable resemblance with Rostow’s ‘stages of economic growth’ and Rostow’s starting point that European history in one way or another is the template for thinking about development. Some eulogists actively compare North with Rostow (e.g. Parker, 1993: 626). And where North does explore the development of an institutional framework in East Africa – “While tribal chieftains found it profitable to protect merchant caravans they had neither the military muscle nor the political structure to extend, develop, and enforce more permanent property rights” (1991: 104) – his analysis is at odds with an analysis that suggest ‘tribal chieftains’ along the long-distance trade routes in Tanzania and Uganda in the 19th century were very well able to enforce property rights and legal contracts, but they just enforced different rights and contracts. For example, while the concept of interest-bearing capital gained currency among the coastal traders, customary courts in the polities along the trade route did not acknowledge the concept of interest. Likewise, whereas coastal traders acknowledged individualised liabilities, law in the interior polities maintained familial liability. And while legal concepts in coastal polities

put, institutions are the rules and organisations are the players. But perhaps most relevant here is North's differentiation between the formal institutions (such as rules and regulations) and the informal institutions (such as the personal networks and cultural values) and – as a third element – the linkages between these two.

First a closer look at the informal institutions. North distinguishes three types of informal institutions: those that are in fact extensions from formal institutions, those that derive from wider social or cultural conventions, and internally enforced standards of conduct that are very personal 'values and preferences'. Formal institutions, the second element in the institutional framework, are different from informal institutions as a matter of degree. In fact, most formal institutions have started as informal institutions – unwritten norms, values, and codes of conduct – that ended up being formalised in law or regulations. Unlike the informal institutions, the formal institutions could more or less be ordered in a hierarchy; from constitution, to laws, to judicial rules to contracts and regulations in organisations (North, 1990: 36, 46). The third critical element in an institutional framework is the enforcement. If the enforcement of formal and informal institutions fails, then the predictable and perhaps voluntary exchange of resources in the institutional framework will be affected. According to North, "the inability of societies to develop effective, low-cost enforcement" is the "most important" cause of "underdevelopment" (North, 1990: 54).

From these three elements, North's work provides at least two useful points of attention for research into the institutional framework between central government and local polities. First, even if formal institutions – such as regulations regarding decentralisation – can be changed or introduced quite quickly, the informal institutions – the norms, values upheld in personal networks – change much more slowly. And since the informal institutions provide legitimacy to formal rules, "revolutionary change is never as revolutionary as its supporters desire" and actual change in behaviour of organisations and people will be different or slower than perhaps anticipated (North, 1994: 366). Second, it is the combination of the three elements – informal institutions, formal institutions and enforcement – that is critical:

favoured compensation in case of a breach of contract, interior polities' concepts sought to re-establish the pre-contract situation (Lyall, 1986: 123).

“It is the admixture of formal rules, informal norms and enforcement characteristics that shapes economic performance” (ibid, 1994: 366). Arguably, with many of Africa’s states – central governments – characterised as ‘weak states’, the enforcement of formal institutions by this larger polity is quite likely to be ‘overruled’ by the enforcement of informal institutions at the level of the smaller, local polities. This leads to the next core concept.

Local polity

This thesis continuously uses the concept of ‘local polity’ in juxtaposition to central government. However, this local polity is not simply a smaller version of the national polity governed by central government. The national polity has clearly demarcated territorial boundaries that are internationally recognised and its ability to uphold these boundaries is “vital” for its survival (Richmond, 2002: 381).⁴⁷ Domestically, the national polity requires “the ability to extract the economic resources needed to maintain their differentiated administrative structures” (Clapham, 1998: 156). The local polity, on the other hand, does not need to uphold demarcated boundaries to survive, nor the (delegated or autonomous) ability to extract resources from its inhabitants to finance an administration. In the context of this thesis, the primary boundaries of a local polity are the limits within which North’s concept of ‘enforcement of formal and informal institutions’ is effectively applied. These differences explain why a local polity in this thesis is not simply a smaller version of the national polity; the two have rather different functions.⁴⁸

North’s description of a polity’s general role in the economic sphere assists in defining a *local* polity if his references to economic concepts are placed in brackets: “Polities significantly shape (economic) performance because they define and enforce the (economic) rules. Therefore, an essential part of development policy is the creation of polities that will create and enforce (efficient property) rights” (North, 1994: 366).⁴⁹ In

⁴⁷ While it may be ‘vital’ to maintain these boundaries against invasion by other polities or secession by groups from the inside, in an African context where a number of states may be ‘weak’ or ‘collapsed’, the discussion opens to “degrees of statehood” (Clapham, 1998) ... or “Quasi Statehood” (Warner, 1989).

⁴⁸ Migdal’s concepts of “strong societies and weak states” probably capture the distinction between ‘national polity’ and ‘local polity’ quite well (1988).

⁴⁹ North’s awareness of his eurocentric biases is expressed in the remainder of this quote: “However, we know very little about how to create such polities because the new political economy (the new institutional

effect, this is not dissimilar from anthropological definitions of “political community”. A review of classic definitions around the concept of polity highlights that a political community is the area within which conflict is settled via negotiated arbitration or compensation among people living in the area. This ‘enforcement’ of the rules may or may not have aspects of coercion, but it always has “a moral basis of political suasion” (Bates, 1983: 11). The latter would probably be encompassed by North’s informal institutions.

By defining the boundaries of a local polity as the limits within which formal and/or informal institutions are enforced, the local polity has become a political entity with boundaries that may be quite fluid, depending on two variables: the character of the institutions, as well as the relative strength of the enforcement capacity of the higher level polity. An example of the size of a local polity varying with the character of the institutions would be the settling of marital matters or domestic property issues. In these cases, the local polity may be confined to the area of a village council. However, when it comes to addressing land or water rights, the institutions are often enforced by district or provincial councils. Similarly, when institutions regarding cultural identity need to be enforced, the local polity can be larger, such as the Baganda or the Bagisu polities in Uganda. The second variable – the relative strength of the enforcement capacity of the higher level polity – may have an impact on a local polity’s size that varies in time. For example, this thesis shows how school committees or PTAs enforced a ‘voluntary’ contribution from parents to secure a school’s continued operations when Uganda’s higher level polities failed to collect taxes and fund schools in the 1970s and 1980s. However, once the higher level polities’ enforcement capacities were restored in the 1990s, the local polity’s enforcement capacity was scaled down by pressure via formal regulations as well as diminishing informal support by parents to pay ‘voluntary’ contributions.

The concept ‘local polity’ is often used in this thesis without defining explicitly which size or type of local polity is meant because it should be clear from the context in which the concept is used. Nevertheless, when talking about schools and dispensaries, the local polity referred to in this thesis is often the smallest of local polities, on which numerous analysts find common ground. Abrahams, for example, presents a “village polity”, with which most

economics applied to politics) has been largely focused on the United States and developed polities. A pressing research need is to model Third World and eastern European polities” (North, 1994: 366).

central governments – “the colonial regime and the independent Tanzanian government” – “have at some time come into conflict” (Abrahams, 1989: 356). Klein refers to the smallest local polity as “villages or confederations of villages” ruled by “councils of elders” (2001: 52) and Hyden as communities ruled by the “economy of affection” (1980: 18). Berger’s novelist approach describes this local polity as “the basic unit ... the political and social system [that] offered them the minimum of protection [with] their own unwritten laws and codes of behaviour, their own rituals and beliefs, their own orally transmitted body of wisdom and knowledge” (1979: xii).⁵⁰ However, while many of these definitions suggest an ‘enduring core’ to the smallest type of local polity, this thesis emphasises the fluidity of the size of the local polity. Moreover, the growing number of districts in both Uganda (Green, 2008) and Tanzania (Kelsall, 2000) – “districtisation” as consequence of decentralisation policies – may be on its way to become a type of ‘local polity’ in its own.

Personal networks

The third core concept often employed in this thesis is ‘personal networks’, which link people within a local polity and connect them with people inside as well as outside the local polity. It is within these personal networks that many of the informal institutions – particularly values and norms related to social and cultural conventions – are enforced and an ‘informal accountability’ takes place. Personal networks and their “connections to the institutional matrix” are nothing particular of African politics, it happens in all cultures and continents (cf. Eisenstadt and Roniger, 1984). However, as was discussed in the literature review, the phenomenon of ‘neopatrimonial networks’ is particularly associated with African politics. In a seminal paper in 1975, Ekeh argues personal networks form the “primordial public sphere” in the postcolonial state, the sphere where morality is enforced. On the other side he positions the “civic public sphere” of the public administration, which he characterises as “amoral”. In the tension between these two spheres, a citizen “will only continue to be a good man if he channels part of the largesse from the civic public to the primordial public” (Ekeh, 1975: 108). Without mentioning the word, Ekeh was probably one of the founders of the later debate about the ‘neopatrimonial state’.

⁵⁰ Though Gandhi’s description competes: “My idea of the village *swaraj* is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependency is a necessity ... The outermost circumsphere will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it” (1997: 306).

Later, in the 1980s, Bayart becomes one of the principal analysts of the concept of neopatrimonialism and argues that the density of the personal networks in Africa is much higher than elsewhere. Personal networks “link the ‘lowest of the low’ with the ‘highest of the high’ through the agencies of continuous news, requests, gifts”. Via “the news bulletins on the ‘Pavement Radio’ (*Radio Trottoir*) the ‘small men’ are frequently up to date with the stratagems of the ‘big men’” (Bayart, 1993: 219). Similarly, Chabal and Daloz talk of “a myriad of nepotistic or clientelistic networks” that provide political capital to the political elites in government and the public administration; on the condition they meet the expectations of their clients. And in these personal networks the informal institutions are rigorously enforced: “Even if patron-client relations remain unequally biased in their favour ... patrons can easily suffer ... ‘the blackmail of the ruled’ (Chabal and Daloz, 1999: 38). As a consequence, Chabal argues, the “informalisation of the state means in effect it cannot institutionalise” itself and “allow the operation of a bureaucracy capable of implementing public policy”. That, in turn, “lends networking the singularly central place it has acquired in the continent’s political economy” (Chabal, 2009: 137, 140).

However, when the concept ‘personal networks’ is used in this thesis, it does not exclusively or necessarily refer to neopatrimonial personal networks in which the members of school and dispensary committees are in continuous contact with politicians or others in the public administration to obtain ‘largesse’ for themselves, the school or dispensary. The personal networks of committee members may or may not include elements of a clientelistic network – this field research could not establish that – but when the concept of personal network is used in this thesis it is more multi-faceted and also refers to more mundane elements of networking, such as building “relationships [that] may have critical strategic implications for resource acquisition and school performance,” as Hite *et al* discovered when investigating the personal networks of headteachers in Uganda (2006: 512). Such resources are not exclusively material (e.g. furniture, books, drugs), but also, and perhaps even more so, resources in the sphere of human resources, information about procedures, and professional skills (e.g. Herriot et al., 2002; Kitavi and Westhuizen, 1997). In sum, when the concept of personal networks is used in this thesis, these personal networks include perhaps clientelistic aspects, but they certainly include ‘personalised

professional contacts' with district authorities, fellow headteachers, other committees in the local polity, and contacts with local businesses.

In closing, this third chapter discussed the methodological considerations around the research for this thesis as well as the five principal research methods that produced the research findings as they are presented in the next two chapters. First, chapter 4 presents the findings from the field research carried out in Uganda and Tanzania, using four of the five presented research methods. Second, chapter 5 presents the findings that resulted from the use of the fifth research method: a reading and re-reading primary and secondary sources to provide the historical contextualisation of the findings from the field research. Finally, this third chapter also reflected about the character of three core concepts – institutional framework, local polity, and personal networks – that are woven throughout the next two chapters and bind these chapters together.

4. FIELD RESEARCH: CONTEMPORARY LOCAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is one of the two core chapters of this thesis. It contains the analyses of the data collected in the field research gathered in Uganda and Tanzania in 2004 around the first of the two specific research questions:

How are central government and local management committees in Uganda and Tanzania developing the institutional framework for the decentralised management of schools and dispensaries?

The chapter opens with a section on the historical contextualisation of school and dispensary committees in Uganda and Tanzania. This includes a description and characterisation of the formal institutional framework for each of these management committees. The next section starts with the formal responsibilities of management committees, before it provides detailed insights into the actual, day-to-day, activities of the committees. A step from a local perspective to the next section is made when committee members reflect on what makes their work successful or difficult: pointing to their resources and their networks.

The third section presents analyses about the formal and the actual control over the flow of resources around management committees. It investigates the election and selection processes of committee members and the role the headteacher and the nurse in-charge play as the so-called *ex officio* members of committees. The section ends with analyses of committees' acts of upward and downward accountability – including financial accountability.

The last section of this chapter profiles the people who are the members of school and dispensary committees and analyses the character of the institutional and personal networks surrounding the committees. In the end, this section addresses the question of whether committee members constitute the local elite and whether they have captured these committees as public bodies in the local polity. The overall conclusions from this field research lead to clear, if complex, answers.

On a methodological note; the field research made a deliberate choice to seek answers with breadth and comparative value, rather than depth and qualitative perspectives to the research question. Much of the analyses in this chapter are based on the results from group interviews with 64 management committees and 420 individual questionnaires filled out by participating committee members. However, some qualitative perspective has been added on the basis of minutes and correspondence collected at district or village level. This qualitative perspective is presented in so-called ‘Anecdotal Evidence Boxes’ at the end of this chapter.

Finally, on a practical note about names; throughout this text the terms ‘school committee’ and ‘dispensary committee’ are used as a generic term to indicate the committees that manage the lowest tiers of public education and health services. Only when relevant, the country-specific terms will be used: “School Management Committee (SMC)” in Uganda, “School Committee (SC)” in Tanzania, “Health Unit Management Committee (HUMC)” in Uganda, and “Health Facility Committee (HFC)” for Tanzania.

4.2 History and formal framework of local management committees

Much has changed for local management committees since the decentralisation policies of the late 1990s in Uganda and Tanzania. This section discusses how school committees have operated and developed in both countries since the 1950s and how the formal framework of today’s school committees largely builds on the practices and experiences of the preceding half a century. The history of dispensary committees is shorter, but this section also shows how even short histories such as that of Uganda’s dispensary committees influence the contemporary formal framework. In closing, this section reflects on the local relevance of the formal regulations for local management committees.

School committees in Uganda

Prior to the mid 1950s, the management of schools in Uganda’s local polities was in the hands of churches – so-called “foundation bodies” or “voluntary agencies”.⁵¹ Parents or

⁵¹ This section starts the ‘historical context’ of school management committees in the late 1940s. However, the history of education in Uganda goes back much further, as will be discussed in the next chapter. Perhaps the most telling indicator of the depth of Uganda’s educational history is the title of an article published in 1917: “A history of education in Uganda” (Walker, 1917).

local actors had no place in the institutional framework and central government relied exclusively on these churches to manage primary schools and provided aid-in-grants as financial assistance. Each of the three principal religious groups had its own education bureaucracy, with an Education Secretary-General in Kampala and an inspector, two assistants, an accountant, a clerk and a cashier in every district. All teaching staff was employed by one of these three bureaucracies (Heyneman, 1975: 52). Where central government's Education Department did have education policies, it could only implement them through a "policy of cooperation" with the churches. For example, when central government wanted to increase the number of schools in the late 1940s, it basically made agreements with various religious orders' education bureaucracies – led by Secretaries-General for Education – to expand the number of schools managed by churches in exchange for which "their annual budget [were] to be balanced by government grants". Central government's annual education reports to the Colonial Office were largely based on the reports submitted by the churches (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 1973: 58). There is no record of formal influence or representation from local polities or parents in these education structures until the 1950s, though one Ugandan doctoral thesis makes a tantalising reference to the establishment of "African Schools" in 1925, "started partly as a sign of opposition against the dominance of mission control and management of schools where laymen had no say" (Nkata, 1996: 94).

As decentralisation policies in the 1950s increased the autonomy of local polities, they began to acquire an influence on education structures.⁵² A 1953 study commissioned by central government, took its cue from Colonial Office instructions to prepare for mass education (Beck, 1966: 136). To achieve that, it recommended "District Councils be responsible for primary education" (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 1971: 15). This proposal would end the close and personal arrangements that hitherto controlled the education structures at central level between the three Secretaries-General and the national Director of Education.⁵³ The Director opposed the proposal in lockstep with the churches: "The voluntary agencies, particularly on the Protestant side, maintain, reasonably enough, that if

⁵² See Chapter 5 for details on the decentralisation of the public administration in Uganda in the 1950s.

⁵³ These close and personal relationships had, of course, pros and cons. An example of how personal conflict could also sour institutional relations was a personal conflict between the central government's Director and the Secretary-General of the Anglican order, which led the Anglicans to refer the Director in correspondence as "the Dictator of Education" (Whitehead, 2006: 2).

the Local Education Authorities are to assume responsibility for primary education, it is right that they assume also responsibility of the managerial, inspection and clerical functions ... an educative process involving a considerable period of time” (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 1973: 60-62). The colonial governor, however, followed instructions from London, sent the Director on early retirement and accepted the recommendations (Whitehead, 2006: 2). Local polities could now establish District Education Committees, provided half the seats would be reserved for representatives of the foundation bodies.

Local polities seized the opportunity, possibly nudged on by an increased legitimacy after the first local elections for most District Councils in 1955. All District Councils – but also Native Governments or Native Administrations in the Buganda, Bunyoro, Tooro and Ankole polities – established Education Committees and introduced a local education tax. Buganda, for example, introduced an annual five shilling education tax on all households. These local taxes were initially offered as aid-in-grant to churches to co-finance the expansion of school buildings and staff houses. Local polities were essentially copying the agreements central government had with churches. But soon, these Education Committees started giving the churches managing these schools “advice on all aspects of their educational plans” as well as special incentives like scholarships for secondary education or studies overseas (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 1973: 63). It is not known how local education taxes compared with central government’s aid-in-grants to the churches, but figures from 1942 suggest central government contributed two shilling for every one shilling the Catholic orders put into education (Beck, 1966: 135). This would still leave the orders with substantial costs for running their schools and the orders would presumably be keen to negotiate a contribution from local polities.

School committees were formally created in a 1959 Education Ordinance. This Ordinance introduced regulations stipulating that all schools should have a Board of Governors. These Boards were to have 13 members; five members were to be proposed by the foundation body, four by the district education committee, and the remaining four after joint deliberations (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 1971: 16). Though all members had to be formally approved by the Minister, these regulations probably left local actors, particularly the representatives of the foundation body, with enough room to gain control on the local

schools.⁵⁴ In all, in less than a decade, local polities had become parties who negotiated directly with churches – essentially the local representatives from international actors – about the management of local education facilities.⁵⁵ A special body was created in the institutional framework for this purpose: District Education Committees. Here, local polities brought their own financial resources to the negotiating table and could potentially out-manoeuvre central government when it came to determining character or content of local education facilities.

After independence in 1962, however, the new central government moved to invert the changes in the balance of power in the institutional framework of education. After “one of the longest debates on education in Parliament,” government promulgated a new Education Act in 1963 to ensure that “Government was going to control schools”. Government assumed management of the schools and employment of teaching staff – leaving churches with the ownership of school buildings. Subsequently, government made the orders’ education bureaucracy superfluous by creating a centrally managed education bureaucracy, dividing the country into 54 ‘Education Areas’ (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 1971: 17).⁵⁶ This central government decision not only removed the churches as principal actors in education, but also hamstrung the Education Committees of the District Councils because the Education Areas did not relate to District boundaries. There are few records of the response by Education Committees and local polities. Ssekamwa and Lugumba wrote the government’s reorganisation of the education system “was not accepted without some resistance”. The churches took the government to court and won their case, but saw the government ignore the court ruling in an increasingly violent struggle for power between central government and the major local polities in 1966.⁵⁷ The Buganda polity lost control over primary schools in 1963, but continued to control secondary school until central

⁵⁴ Whitehead also concludes there was a rapid change in the balance of power regarding control over education in Uganda, though he does not present that in the context of local polities and central government but as an act of decolonisation: “Native Ugandans took over control of education as part of a constitutional move towards self-government” (Whitehead, 2006: 2).

⁵⁵ Interestingly, a similar situation would arise again in the 1990s when District Councils negotiate directly with international donors about the funding of health facilities. See the next section.

⁵⁶ Actually, Ssekamwe and Lugumba noted: “In 1964, the Government abolished the posts of Education Secretary-General, education secretaries and school supervisors” (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 1971: 18). I find that odd, as these were employees of the four churches.

⁵⁷ The depth and endurance of the conflict is visible in a Master student’s research in 1998 into the “unhappy relationship between foundation bodies and government on the management of schools in Kabale district”. It concludes “the root cause of this conflict is the 1963 Education Act” (Zinomuhangi, 1998: 13).

government troops invaded Buganda in 1966 and ended the Buganda polity's relative autonomy (1971: 18).⁵⁸

By the early 1970s, central government was in full control of a centralised institutional framework of the education system. All local variation and autonomy in school management disappeared as the Ministry of Education became the sole employer of teachers under a unified salary system, school fees were set by one national table, school supplies could only be purchased from a state-controlled agency and schools were no longer allowed to have their own bank account (Heyneman, 1975: 52). With regard to school committees, sources appear to diverge. Ssekamwa and Lugumba, find that the school committees in the 1960s were mostly ineffective. "Some ... meet once a year and it is not uncommon for meetings to be cancelled for lack of a quorum" (1971: 78). Heyneman on the other hand, states, "School management committees were once powerful organisations" in the 1960s, but by 1969 they "lost the power to govern their own affairs" when central government grouped most schools in clusters of three or four and established new regulations for the membership of school committees (1975: 53).⁵⁹ The "Education (Management Committees) Amendment Rules, 1969" replaced the 1959 Education Act and under the new rules, the foundation bodies that ran most of Uganda's schools were no longer guaranteed membership of school committees.⁶⁰ Instead, the 1969 legislation established School Management Committees (SMCs) that had four members appointed by the District Education Committee, three by the Ministry of Education and two by the parents (GoU, 1969).

The years of civil war and economic collapse in the 1970s and early 1980s badly affected many public services. Health services shrunk, veterinary services were withdrawn, courts became very ineffective and cash crop production collapsed. However, the education sector was kept operational, if working under strain. A comparative research by a World Bank economist in six districts between 1971 and 1981 finds that the student-teacher ratio

⁵⁸ See Chapter 5 for the context and discussion about developments in the 1960s.

⁵⁹ By 2004, the time of the field research, the situation seemed to have reverted back to 'one school committee per school'. There was only one exception (group interview #28, 19 Oct 2004) among school committees interviewed during the field research.

⁶⁰ According a 1996 headteacher training manual, the 1969 legislation actually replaced – amended – the "Statutory Instrument No 244 of 1964" (GoU, 1996: 83). However, no other source refers to this legislation of 1964 and I was unable to find a text.

increased by up to 50%, books virtually disappeared and whereas each child had a chair in 1971, there were nearly nine children for every chair in 1981. Nevertheless, and amazingly, national exams were organised until 1978 and the number of schools doubled from 1,986 to 4,229 (Heyneman, 1983: 404, 411). Little can be found about how exactly schools were managed and who was responsible. Arguably, the foundation bodies could have used the retreat of central government as an opportunity to resume control over schools. But even reports that come out in support of churches' positions (e.g. Zinomuhangi, 1998) do not suggest they contributed significantly to schools during these years.

Most sources simply credit Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) for keeping the schools operational, but none provide any detail (Dauda, 2006: 30; Higgins and Rwanyange, 2005: 16; Reinikka and Svensson, 2004: 4; Saito, 2003: 158). Heyneman's analysis merely concludes that the costs of doubling the number of schools, "was borne wholly by private citizens," without mentioning PTAs (1983: 404). Unlike school committees, PTAs had played a role in schools as local voluntary organisations since the 1950s and were generally established by a priest or head teacher to mobilise additional financial resources, but had never had a role in school management or had a legal status.^{61 62} However, the civil war of the 1970s – with the removal of foundation bodies from education by central government and the subsequent retreat from funding schools by central government – radically changed the role of the PTAs. Parents began electing PTA executive committee members among themselves on an annual basis (Dauda, 2004: 35; Reinikka and Svensson, 2004: 5). This probably reflects much more agency from parents than in the past. A case study from Jinja District in 1985 details how PTAs successfully confront a local council that threatens to disband the PTAs and take over their funds (Dauda, 2004: 33). A case study from Mpigi district in the 1980s concludes "PTAs in many schools" raised the money to maintain or build classrooms – confirming Heyneman's data. However, where Heyneman makes no reference to private citizens' other contributions, this case study found PTAs also financed educational material and paid 'top-ups' on teachers' salaries that were twice as much as their government salaries (Nkata, 1996: 99, 102). PTAs and school

⁶¹ A 1996 Government manual for headteachers, for example, reiterated that the headteacher "should be able to establish a PTA ... and guide the parents and PTA" (GoU, 1996: 133).

⁶² The same 1996 manual recommended that PTAs have a constitution, but acknowledged there is no legally prescribed format before giving an example of a PTA constitution that could be used (GoU, 1996: 167).

committees not only drifted apart, but also changed position. PTAs kept schools afloat, not the school committees.

By the early 1990s, peace, economic recovery and international aid enabled central government to regain some influence on schools in local polities. Teachers received increased, if irregular, salaries and schools were allocated modest per capita grants for the purchase of educational materials, channelled via district education offices.⁶³ However, World Bank research found that in the 1991-1995 period, parental contributions continued to outweigh central government's contribution and remained on an average over 60% of all expenditure of schools. PTA contributions covered investment, recurrent costs and top-ups of teachers' salaries, while their decisions about levies and fees and the allocation of revenues were "entirely school-specific and set by each school's PTA". "PTAs were the primary decision-makers at the school level" (Reinikka and Svensson, 2004: 4). Yet, as central government gradually increased funding, it also began to strengthen the role and powers of school committees at the expense of PTAs.

A 1990 circular of the Ministry of Education noted: "It must be understood that their [PTAs] roles are different from those of management committees. Whatever decisions PTAs may make must be submitted to the management committee for endorsement before implementation" (quoted in: Nkata, 1996: 103).⁶⁴ A new training manual for headteachers dedicates one of its four units to PTAs and the relationship with the school committee. Its summary notes that "the head teacher should ... circulate minutes of PTA meetings to the School Management Committee" and "Ensure that PTA plans that require SMC approval are acted upon by the SMC before implementation" (GoU, 1996: 161). Yet it is unclear to what extent school committees were actually active. Reports about schools over this period barely mention school committees. A 1995 study in the Jinja district found PTAs meeting far more frequently than school committees, and they were "completely separate from the

⁶³ Irregular pay was a problem throughout the 1970s and 1980s and continued to be one of the major bottlenecks – next to housing – for teacher motivation and performance. The Minister of Education's Christmas speech of 1997 speaks volumes: "I want to thank all teachers who have taught for all these months without pay, you will not only go to heaven but even in this world you'll get abundant blessings" (quoted in: Dauda, 2004: 30).

⁶⁴ A similar approach was reiterated in a 1996 manual for headteachers, which stated unequivocally of a PTA, "It should not be involved in school management". The manual added: "PTAs have often interfered in the management of schools ... some have even tried to manage the school" (GoU, 1996: 159).

management committees”. And unlike school committees, PTAs controlled resources and outspent government four to one in capital investments (Dauda, 2004: 35).

The balance of power around the management of schools between central government, district education committees, PTAs and school committees changed sharply in 1997. While President Museveni had publicly opposed calls for the abolition of school fees until three months before the elections in May 1996, he changed his position as he was campaigning in the local politics and promised free primary education for all if elected (Stasavage, 2004: 58). After Museveni won the elections, central government abolished all school fees in 1997 and committed to increasing the overall education budget. These commitments received support from international donors, many of who agreed to channel their funding through the government’s education budget in 1998. By 2004 donors funded half the education budget and helped central government increase the education share in the national budget from 13.7% to 24.7%. The abolition of school fees and increased budgets had an enormous impact on the education systems. Between 1997 and 2003, the number of pupils rose from just over three million to more than 7.6 million (capturing 94% of all children), the number of classrooms increased from 8,531 to 13,353 and the number of teachers went up from nearly 82,000 to nearly 146,000 (Bategeka, 2005: 6; Higgins and Rwanyange, 2005: 12; McGee, 2000: 91).

Next to the increases in funding for schools, the institutional framework for school committees also changed – at the level of the district as well as at the level of the school itself. At the level of the district the decentralisation policies and local elections of 1997 meant that District Education Officers, District Councils, and District Education Committees increased their involvement with schools. Central government funding for schools – for recurrent expenses like educational materials as well as capital investments – was channelled via the District Officials (Bategeka, 2005: 4). School committees now had regular and very meaningful reporting contacts with these officials. In the local election campaigns of 1997, many candidates for local Councils realised that the electorate had a high interest in expanding and improving schools – not unlike Museveni in 1996 – and gladly accepted when approached to become a members of school committees. After the

elections, many school committees suddenly had a personal link with Councils.⁶⁵ In addition, District Councils had acquired discretionary powers to allocate their own resources from local taxes. Funding classrooms was “politically ideal”. And while funding varied in time and per district, case studies suggest Councils’ spending on education rose from levels below 10% prior to 1997, to ranges of 43% to 71% in 2001 (Saito, 2003: 155, 166).

At the level of the school itself, the changes in funding and institutional framework meant that school committees saw their relationship with PTAs inverted. The abolishment of school fees had not only applied to the fees parents paid to schools, but also prohibited PTAs from collecting fees from parents (Bategeka, 2005: 2; Higgins and Rwanyange, 2005: 12). In fact, central government had initially banned PTAs from operating at schools altogether. This ban was lifted in response to protests, but the maximum a PTA could decide to raise was capped at an amount close to the per capita grant that government offered (Dauda, 2004: 30). Perhaps most important in terms of the flow of resources, was the government’s announcement that education was free and PTAs could only ‘ask’ for voluntary contributions, but not demand payments under threat of barring the child from school. Many parents became reluctant to heed PTA calls for contributions (Saito, 2003: 171).⁶⁶ PTAs were reduced from being the richest and most powerful local actors to one without resources. School committees, on the other hand, began receiving capitation grants between 2.70 and 4.40 USD per child per year, depending on the child’s class. Within bandwidths, committees spend about 50% on instructional materials, 30% on co-curricular activities, 15% on utilities and maintenance and 5% on administration costs (GoU, 1998a: 4, 6).

At the time of the field research in 2004, the tensions between PTAs and School committees did no longer appear to be a contentious or important issue. Suzuki concluded that as the new policies settled in, “the role of the SMC has been revitalised” (Suzuki,

⁶⁵ Elections were held in 1997 for three levels of local government: Village Councils (LC-1), Sub-County Councils (LC-3) and District Councils (LC-5). Because management committees were also accountable to the Sub-Country and District Council, these ‘double roles’ as councillors and committee members were incompatible. After 2002, the Ministry of Education issued directions to districts to “advise schools not to nominate councillors as SMC members” (Suzuki, 2002: 256).

⁶⁶ A Master’s research from the Uganda Christian University of Mokono Makerere with a sample of 85 households in Mbarra district found that nearly half of them reported their household savings had increased since they no longer needed to pay for education (Tuwangye, 2003: 19).

2002: 248). On balance, the general atmosphere during the field interviews confirms this impression. Committees claimed to meet regularly and seemed at ease and familiar discussing the committees' function and work. With support from USAID, the Ministry of Education provided since 1999 a one-week nation-wide training programme for members of school committees at district level. The research did not investigate how many members of school committees had participated in the training, but well-used copies of the detailed training manual – which explicitly seeks to promote adherence to “The Education (Management Committee) Amendment Rules, 1969” – were seen in the head master's office of about a quarter of the schools. One District Education Officer said his predecessor had organised such a training for committees in 2002.⁶⁷

The field research took place in three districts and a sample of 17 of the 601 School Management Committees in these three districts was interviewed between August and October 2004. With one exception, all these committees had been operational for at least one year. In fact, several committee members had an express awareness of the fact that the recent changes were part of an on-going dynamic:

“The committee exists since the school was established in 1957. Initially, it was a PTA, but government took over in 1970 and set up the School Management Committee. But then in the war, the PTA took over again. Now the Committee is in charge again.”⁶⁸

“We have always had a school committee, my father was a member once. Though government was different in his days.”⁶⁹

Dispensary committees in Uganda

There is no record or reference to dispensary committees in Uganda prior to the creation of Health Unit Management Committees (HUMCs) by central government from 1989.⁷⁰ Most of Uganda's health facilities had collapsed during the civil war of the 1970s and 1980s and trained health staff had fled the rural areas. When the first services resumed in the late 1980s, District Councils introduced “user fees “on an ad hoc basis” to pay for costs and

⁶⁷ Individual interview #13 (4 Oct 2004).

⁶⁸ Group interview #11 (30 Sep 2004). See Chapter 3 for methodological consideration regarding the quotes from group interviews.

⁶⁹ Group interview #2 (24 Sep 2004).

⁷⁰ Uganda has about 525 dispensaries at the bottom of the health services pyramid. A dispensary is usually staffed by one enrolled nurse, one midwife, 2 nursing assistants, and 2-3 auxiliary staff (Deininger and Mpuga, 2004: 5; Hutchinson et al., 1999: 89).

health workers demanded variable fees and bribes to pay for supplies and supplement their salaries because central government transfers did not materialise or were up to eight months in arrears (Golooba-Mutebi, 2005: 170; Yates, 2006: 344). Understandably, there was “widespread public mistrust of health workers at rural clinics” and health workers’ reputation was far worse when compared to that of teachers (Saito, 2003: 178). In a first effort to re-establish some central government control in the sphere of public services, the Ministry of Health decided in 1989 to experiment with the officially endorsed introduction of user fees in one district.

Dispensary committees were first established in Kabarole district between 1989 to investigate whether the involvement of local communities in the collection of new tax – a user fee per consult at the dispensary – would ensure acceptance and improve actual delivery of health services.⁷¹ Provisionally, the committees were empowered to “oversee the day to day operations, make decisions on the running of the health unit, supervise the staff and control the budget”. Central government offered some training, and village councils selected the committee members. Within two years, a detailed evaluation showed the 38 dispensary committees were actively involved in managing the dispensaries, and had set fees in a range of 100-500 shilling as well as managed a scheme for exempting the very poor. Most importantly, villagers reported services had improved and group interviews in the surrounding communities found people informed and accepting of the fees. “The government unit has been so bad, but now they have started to help us.” Most revenues were spent equally on supplementing staff salaries – improving staff morale and presence – and on purchasing drugs on the open market when government was not supplying (Kipp et al., 1999: 31, 34).

In 1993, central government introduced user fees on a national level as the next step, “to lessen the impact of irregular payment of low health worker salaries, alleviate drug shortages, and strengthen community management of facilities” (Burnham et al., 2004: 188). Because a nation-wide policy for decentralisation of the institutional framework between local polities and central government would only emerge in 1998, the introduction of user fees by central government in 1993 could be interpreted as government’s

⁷¹ In the light of this thesis, it is thus important to note that these dispensary committees were not initiated as part of an overall decentralisation policy, but as an instrument of revenue collection by and in the local polity.

'legalisation' of an existing local revenue collection mechanism at local level, rather than a mechanism to 'strengthen community management' of dispensaries. While government experimented with decentralising health services in 13 of Uganda's 45 districts – for example, by shifting the employment of health staff to Councils – there was no central policy regarding dispensary committees' selection, appointment or accountability, nor any guidelines for the collection or expenditure of the users fees. Central government practically left the formation and operations of dispensary committees to the discretion of Councils, whether inside or outside the group of 13. One Council document simply instructed dispensary committees it had appointed to be "increasing the resources for health services" (Golooba-Mutebi, 2005: 171).

While user fees were now officially collected at dispensaries across Uganda, local polities collected and spent the revenues in widely varying manners. First, local dynamics determined the levels of the fees, resulting in levels ranging from 450 to 750 shillings per consult and evidence suggests some dispensary committees were actively involved in discussing and setting fees in consultation with communities and monitoring income (Burnham et al., 2004: 188). Second, while audits and research in the limited records suggest that on average about 63% of the revenue goes to supplement staff salaries and allowances, a closer look reveals this also varied considerably, some dispensaries spent no more than 37% on supplements and actively sourced drugs on the open market. A similar diversity is visible in reports about drug 'leakage' from dispensaries; ranging from 40 to 94% (Hutchinson et al., 1999: 117).

Yet, while these variations suggest a significant degree of local agency, the dispensary committees primarily acted as a revenue collecting body for its own purposes, which was not accountable to either the District Councils or the local communities.^{72 73} Audits in 1996

⁷² The balance of power within the dispensary committees also varied. A widely quoted research of 1996 records committee members complaining that staff do not share information (Golooba-Mutebi, 2005: 173). Other researchers interviewing committee members find to their surprise that, "committee members generally were able to answer all questions," and discover that staff and members hold very similar opinions about most issues such as staff morale, staff behaviour, and stock (Burnham et al., 2004: 189).

⁷³ The Government's training manuals for dispensary committees explicitly left committees with financial responsibilities and wide discretionary decision-making powers. For example, the training module for financial management states as learning objectives: "1. Set annual revenue targets for a typical health unit; 2. make budget estimates for a typical health facility...; 3. describe the different possible user-fee structures ...; 4. set fee levels, taking into account affordability [and] what you need to improve your service" (GoU, 1998e: 8).

concluded half the likely revenues of dispensaries are not reported to District Councils. Many committees are accused of abusing their rights to grant exemptions and their access to drugs for private gain (Saito, 2003: 178). Hutchinson found that in some districts, village elites used dispensaries for their political purposes: “Some people have used the health committees to consolidate local power” (1999: 103). Moreover, these elites had also taken enduring control. Most committees were established in the mid 1990s and a sample taken in 2002 of committee in nine districts found that most members had been on the committee ever since (Burnham et al., 2004: 189). Dispensary committees’ linkages with the surrounding communities – noticeable in the early experiments in Kabarole district – also failed to develop. Research in four districts in 1997 found most communities did not know dispensary committees existed, and those who did know could not name benefits of these committees and believed them “counterproductive and self-serving”. Interviews with committee members revealed that these members perceived no responsibilities toward the communities; none mentioned reporting to the communities or making an assessment of community needs as part of their responsibility (Hutchinson et al., 1999: 104).

With the introduction of sweeping decentralisation policies in 1997, District Councils’ powers and autonomy increased significantly and the first direct local elections of District Councils in 1998 provided a degree of legitimacy to these local bodies. The new institutional framework demands the elected Councils and Sub-County Councils set up committees of councillors to supervise public services, including health (GoU, 1997: 24, 2000: 19, 2001: 10). “Similar to School Management Committee in the case of education, Health Unit Management Committees are organised for the routine management of health facilities” (Saito, 2003: 182). Dispensary committees’ ‘experimental’ status was abolished. They were now formally put in charge of the “day-to-day running of the facility” and integrated into the structures of local government, reporting to the Sub-County Health Committee (Björkman et al., 2006: 12). In support of this process, donors and central government rolled out a week long nation-wide training programme for dispensary committee members ranging from the management of drug stocks and basic financial management to participatory planning and assessing community needs; more than three quarters of committee members participated in this training (Burnham et al., 2004: 189; GoU, 1998c, 1998d, 1998e, 1998f). None of the new regulations suggest that dispensary committees are to be downwardly accountable to villagers or village councils. In the

aftermath of the civil war, many dispensary committees originated and certainly operated largely outside control of local government structures, but the 1998 decentralisation integrated them into these structures.

Between 1998 and the time of the field research in 2004, three developments in the institutional framework around dispensary committees had a major impact. First, the newly empowered District Councils appeared to curtail the scope for ‘discretionary action’ in dispensaries. User fees were now set by Councils and no longer by dispensary committees, variation within a district disappeared and user fees began to vary “considerably” among districts. In the same vein, councils were “very reluctant” to endorse exemptions to user fees now that they had to compensate for shortfall in the collection of projected fees (Deininger and Mpuga, 2004: 7). Second, while there are limits to the way in which councils can allocate central government grants or their local revenue, variations are beginning to show. One case study found health spending per capita in three districts to range from 1,400 to 2,900 shilling (Saito, 2003: 191). Variations among district cannot simply be attributed to ‘poorer’ and ‘wealthier’ districts, but rather seem to be determined by the extent to which District Councils manage to negotiate funding from international NGOs (Akin et al., 2005: 1425). According official figures, the contribution by NGOs to district health budget varies from 1% in Yumbe district to 49% in Nebbi district (GoU, 2001: 7). Most likely, dispensary committees’ ability to negotiate extra funds now depends on the extent to which their District Council negotiated funding from international NGOs.

The third change in the institutional framework around dispensary committees is perhaps the most important: the sudden abolishment of user fees in 2001. After abolishing school fees as part of his bid to re-election in 1996, President Museveni promised the abolishment of user fees in dispensaries in his presidential campaign of 2001 (Yates, 2006: 8).⁷⁴ All of a sudden, dispensary committees no longer had a budget to manage and, without that, the

⁷⁴ Like in Tanzania, user fees constituted about 10% of the health budget (Hutchinson et al., 1999: 75). The abolishment did not impact hugely on central government’s budget, in which the health budget only constituted about 6%, unlike education’s 30% (Okuonzi and Birungi, 2000: 215). However, because user fees were applied by dispensary committees to supplement irregularly paid salaries for staff in a 50-150% range, the impact on a nurse’s salary was huge (Burnham et al., 2004: 188). To partially compensate for this, central government also hiked salaries for health workers between 25-60% (Yates, 2006: 8). The first SWAp for the Health sector in 2001 and a World Bank loan raised the budget of the Ministry of Health in 2002 with about 22% and covered most of the lost income in user fee and additional wage expense (Burnham et al., 2004: 188; Saito, 2003: 178).

motivation to supervise staff and day-to-day operations decreased. Within a few months, committees began to meet infrequently, or stopped meeting altogether. Interviewed in 2002, members “felt that central government was taking a larger role in the management of health units” (Burnham et al., 2004: 189).⁷⁵ Saito concluded: “The abolishment of user charges, ironically, has undermined the Health Unit Management Committees” (2003: 197).

Nevertheless, central government reconfirmed the importance it attaches to dispensary committees by widely distributing booklets that reiterated the committees’ roles in the management of dispensaries, supervising staff and budgets and encouraging community participation in health activities (GoU, 2003a, 2003b). District health officials said they followed central government instructions in 2003 when they went to Sub-County health officials and councillors to inform them it was necessary to re-select and re-appoint the members of the dispensary committees.⁷⁶ An international review in 2006 seems to underline central government’s commitment to dispensary committees: “A number of actors are responsible for the functioning of dispensaries, the most important actor is the Health Unit Management Committee (HUMC)” (Björkman et al., 2006: 12). Nonetheless, it seems indeed ironic that dispensary committees played a role in re-establishing a minimal level of health care in the aftermath of the civil war – and did so largely without support or control by government officials – and that since central government awarded these committees more formal powers than before – but without the element of collecting user fees – many seem to be in operational decline. Comments in dispensary committee interviews offer an insight:

“Our chairman died and we are now a sub-committee of the Council, but they have not appointed a new chairman. And we also don’t get any allowance anymore.”⁷⁷

Nurse in-charge: “Our monthly staff meeting now includes the HUMC, but the members are often busy and can’t come.”⁷⁸

⁷⁵ These feelings of central government ‘re-centralising’ control over health services in local polities is further strengthened later in 2002 when – in response to complaints about non or irregular payment of health staff’s salaries by District Councils – government backtracked on the 1998 decision to make health staff employees of District Councils and again became the employer of all trained health staff. This removed an important lever of local control over health staff (Burnham et al., 2004: 191).

⁷⁶ Individual interviews #8 (26 Sep 2004) and # 12 (2 Oct 2004)

⁷⁷ Group interview #25 (15 Oct 2004)

⁷⁸ Group interview #08 (28 Sep 2004)

For the field research between August and October 2004, a sample of 11 of 118 dispensary committees in three districts was interviewed. All these committees had been (re-)appointed at least one year earlier.⁷⁹ Officials in Kampala suspected many committees had been simply re-confirmed in their positions, but there was no research available about the impact of the abolishment of user fees on local dispensary committees and the booklet with new guidelines on current levels of activity by the dispensary committees.⁸⁰

School committees in Tanzania

The institutional framework of primary schools in Tanzania prior to independence in 1962 basically fell into two large categories: one for schools managed by churches and one for schools managed by Native Authorities.⁸¹ As from 1927, central government provided grant-in-aid to schools managed by churches if they met conditions with regard to curriculum and teacher qualifications. As it had in Uganda, this “policy of educational partnership” led to a large increase in the number of mission schools. The Masai diocese, for example, increased its schools from 89 in 1927 to 237 by the late 1930s (Iliffe, 1979: 358).⁸² There is limited information about the extent to which the churches in Tanzania developed education bureaucracies as they had in Uganda. Quite likely it was less, because while the churches were managing about 80% of Tanzania’s schools in 1940, only 30% of these schools succeeded in qualifying for government grants by having their teaching staff meet the minimal qualifications. Moreover, as the number of religious orders – at least ten – engaged in education in Tanzania appears higher than in Uganda, fragmentation may have hindered the development of education bureaucracies (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 1973: 85-102).

The second category of schools encompassed those managed by the Native Authorities; about 20% of Tanzania’s schools prior to independence. One of the earliest references to these “native schools” comes in a 1928 report from a visiting delegation of British

⁷⁹ That is, according the district health officials during the sampling process. When I actually interviewed these dispensary committees, two of them said they had only been active for a few months.

⁸⁰ Individual interview #1 (8 Sep 2004)

⁸¹ In addition; it should be noted the institutional framework regulated for racially segregated schools for Europeans, Asians, and Africans. This segregation was only eliminated at independence in 1962 (Coulsen, 1982: 86). In the remainder of this section, I only refer to the education system for African children.

⁸² In spite of the increase in the number of schools, by 1939 only 10% of boys and 5% of girls attended school in (Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 1973: 99).

parliamentarians. Under indirect rule, central government encouraged Native Authorities to establish “Native Administration Schools”. In the financial arrangements, the Native Treasuries paid for the building and maintenance of the facilities and central government provided basic equipment and the teachers (Coulsen, 1982: 87).⁸³ As was the case with the mission schools, very little is recorded on the actual management of these native schools and any involvement of parents or others from the local polity. (The 1928 report by the British parliamentarians, however, may allude to a prototype of a school committee when it explains that on one of the few government schools, “three of the elders from the surrounding tribes have been brought to the school to advise with regard to tribal customs, and to assist with the erection of school buildings” (Somerville et al., 1929: 143).)

A few references do suggest that some local polities took an active role in securing access to education or establishing native schools. Austen notes that Native Authorities in Bukoba decided to make “special contributions” in 1933 to re-open a native school after central government had closed the school due to budget cuts in 1931 (1968: 248). Iliffe mentions how a Sukuma polity collected funds to establish a boarding school in 1938 (1979: 488). Another reference to a “Native School” in Ulanga district in 1935 notes it had a ‘Board of Elders’: “Supervision was by a Board of four elders, who took it in turns to inspect ... every day and report to the chief”. Quite possibly, this Board would have been one of Tanzania’s first school committees. The colonial central government’s education officer in 1935 reported: “The school is the centre of the village and is in the centre of village life. It has already undertaken far-reaching agricultural experiments and is profoundly influencing methods of cultivation” (quoted in: Ssekamwa and Lugumba, 1973: 91).⁸⁴

⁸³ I could find no references investigating how native administration schools and mission schools related and compared in qualitative or quantitative terms. Ssekamwa and Lugumba, for example, noted that “only a very small proportion [of the teachers in native administration schools] were certified in the early years” (1973: 91). If so, this begs the question why central government appeared to be refusing grants to mission schools that could not hire qualified teachers or see their priests trained to become qualified teachers. In fact, government’s demands created conflict with – and within – the churches. In 1937, the White Father sacked 68 of about a 100 catechists because they were “inadequately trained”. By the late 1930s, “many missionaries doubted whether educational partnership benefited their work” (Iliffe, 1979: 359).

⁸⁴ These colonial central government views that strongly associate rural schools with increasing agricultural production would have a remarkable historical continuity as they resurfaced almost literally in 1967 when the independent central government’s ‘Education for self-reliance’ policy of 1967 states: “This is not a suggestion that a school farm or workshop should be attached to every school for training purposes. It is a suggestion that every school should also be a farm.” (Nyerere, 1968: 64). The first official terms of reference for school committees in 1968 are launched with the explicit objective “to demonstrate to parents, through open day functions, the better farming methods used in the school farm” (McCormick, 1976: 5).

The relationship between schools managed by the churches and schools managed by the Native Authorities became complex and sometimes competitive in the 1940s. Leaders in the Chagga polity began to see church domination and sectarian competition over the schools as an obstacle and they lobbied government officials – many of whom had never been keen supporters of mission schools – to control mission schools. Similarly, Native Authorities in the Usumbara polity asked for government support for their own schools. A District Officer in the Usumbara polity reported in 1942: “Natives maintain that the time is now ripe for their educational needs to be managed by their own Native Authority”. Central government followed and recommended that where possible Native Authorities should control primary schools as the secular local authority. In 1943, the Chagga Council was the first to take over several mission schools that received government grants. The Council established Tanzania’s first District Education Committee to manage the schools and started levying an education tax to cover 25% of teachers’ salaries (quoted in: Iliffe, 1979: 355).

Churches protested against this central government policy, and there is no clear record of other local polities assuming management of mission schools that received government grants. The complex relationship between local polities and churches over the management of schools is underscored by the fact that churches – even, or particularly, in the Chagga polity – continued to establish new schools. Samoff argues that churches “responded to” or “stimulated local pressure for more primary schools”. These new schools did not qualify for government grants as they had unqualified teachers, but as time went on “the most common pattern ... was for the local councils to assume responsibility for these previously unregistered schools” (Samoff, 1979b: 49). Arguably, in a complex dynamic of conflict and cooperation, churches and local communities forced government to take over the management – and financial responsibility – of schools in areas where it had not planned to do so.

As Britain’s mandate over Tanzania changed from the League of Nations to the UN in 1946, London came under more international pressure to prepare for ‘self-governance’ in Tanzania. The Colonial Office nearly doubled its education expenditure after 1947, which led to a significant increase in the number of primary schools in the 1950s and overall enrolment rose from about 10% in 1947 to 40% in 1956 (Coulsen, 1982: 90). While

churches continued to manage about three quarters of Tanzania's schools and received ever increasing government grants, they also had to comply with increasing government regulations and "their autonomy in educational matters slowly eroded" (Dodd, 1968: 273). Moreover, by the late 1940s, most of the 386 Native Treasuries had become involved in co-funding local schools, spending about 20% of their local revenue on education (Hailey, 1957: 474). By the mid 1950s, TANU emerged as a new actor in the education sector. TANU's local branches began to establish schools in much the same way as the churches did – responding to or stimulating local demand. By 1960, TANU had established its own education bureaucracy with area supervisors and school inspectors and the "Tanganyika African Parents Association (TAPA) ... eventually took over the operation" (Glickman, 1965: 142).

At independence in 1961, one of the first decisions of central government was to abolish the three racially segregated school systems and make the District Councils responsible for the management of primary schools (GoT, 1995: i). However, the new central government's emphasis was not on expanding primary education but rather on the expansion of secondary education (Nyerere, 1968: 48). UNESCO commended central government for focusing on secondary and vocational education, though it anticipated this policy was, "bound to be strongly attacked ... it will have to be carefully and constantly explained and defended" (UNESCO, 1966: 13). Initially, central government did, and received praise from international experts for its willingness, "to take unpopular decisions ... to limit the mushroom growth of education" (G. Hunter, 1967: 11). Notwithstanding its policy to limit the number of primary schools, central government did take increasing control of mission schools. As from 1961, the management of a school could no longer "refuse admission to any pupil on the grounds of his religion". In 1963 all teachers, whether employed by government or churches, were formally employed under a Unified Teaching Service and after 1965 all schools were supervised by "a sizable army of Primary School Inspectors" to ensure they were "implementing the Ordinance and regulations" (Dodd, 1968: 273).

However, actors in local politics were determined to have access to a primary school in their neighbourhood. They did not openly 'attack' central government's policy, they rather applied "unofficial political pressures that often ran contrary to government educational

plans” (Hyden, 1980: 91) and “continued to expand schools despite central restrictions on school expansion” (Samoff, 1979a: 43). According to Samoff’s case studies, Catholic churches, Lutheran churches and TAPA – often in fierce competitions with each other within a local polity – were the driving forces in establishing private schools and then successfully negotiating government funding by endeavouring to meet minimal requirements to qualify for grants. “Local residents, not national officials, had the primary initiative” (Samoff, 1987: 336). A government researcher commented critically on the “uncontrolled and haphazard expansion of primary education by the Tanganyika Parents Association” (Omari, 1968: 167) – echoing the international advice, but in vain. Throughout the 1960s, “The small staff at the National Headquarters” found it impossible to “centralise administration of the education programme” (Bienen, 1970: 431). By 1970, the initiatives of local polities had seen the number of schools grow from 3,100 to 4,705 (Nyerere, 1973: 297).

There are only oblique references to the actual management of schools in the 1950s and early 1960s and there are no records of national regulations.⁸⁵ A research in Mwanza district between 1965 and 1967 found most schools had had Parents’ Committees since the 1950s, one claiming to be operating on rules laid down by the District Council but the researchers reported: “We were unable to lay our hands on the official rules” (Dubbeldam, 1970: 140). Most parents of a school elected a Parents’ Committee from among themselves at an annual meeting, though numbers and processes varied. In the period of two years, six of the 14 Parents Committees had “regular meetings ... well-kept minutes, material results”, while six other committees “worked with varying degrees of efficiency” and two were “almost non-existent” (ibid, 1970: 145). An analysis of 21 listed agenda items suggests roughly one third related to the building and maintenance of the physical assets (including the garden), one third related to disciplinary action against pupils, and one third discussed contacts with other parties such as the Education Committee, the health services, the electricity company, and private businesses.⁸⁶ When interviewed, most parents knew of the existence of the Parents’ Committee and were appreciative as “a form of supervision of

⁸⁵ An example of such an oblique reference would be a 1965 article about Regional Development Committees noting “parents’ committees at lower primary schools” could be on the agenda (Tordoff, 1965: 72).

⁸⁶ Anticipating the findings of my own fieldwork later in this chapter; these agenda items are quite familiar and still surface in the meetings of school committees in 2004.

the school from the side of the parents”. On the other hand, “many teachers were strongly against parents committees, as they stated that the parents, mostly uneducated people, talked about matters they had no idea of” (ibid, 1970: 143).

One resource person interviewed in the field research in 2004 distinguished three types of schools and school management in the early 1960s. He explained that many mission schools had school committees or PTAs, but the members were handpicked by the priest “on the basis of trust and religious zeal” and their main function was to assist the ‘outsiders’ – i.e. the expatriate priests – in connecting with the community. Historical records of the Anglican Arusha School confirm this. Its school committee members were selected by the bishop and should be “regularly worshipping local Anglicans” (Nettlebeck, 1974: 31). The few government schools were managed by officials from the colonial or the independent government and, as far as he knew, had no formal involvement of parents. TAPA schools – or “bush schools” as this research’s resource person called them – were always managed and funded by groups of parents.⁸⁷ Parents did not spend their money on buildings or equipment, but tried to offer attractive salaries and “poach” the best teachers from other schools. There were no formal school committees; the structures varied per school and “depended who was leading the initiative”.⁸⁸ At the level of District Education Committees – formally in control of the management of schools – the scope for decision-making by local actors was increasingly reduced after 1964 when central government stated “... the allocation of capital grants will be so administered that the Local Authorities will find it markedly to their advantage to produce local development plans that conform closely to the national priority” (Education Ordinance 1961, quoted in: Dodd, 1968: 279).

The Arusha Declaration of 1967 had a significant impact on the education sector. It acknowledged that the proportion of children without access to primary school was still around 50% and it decided to shift government policy away from secondary towards primary education. The abolishment of school fees and a re-orientation of the curriculum to self-reliance were integral part of the new strategy (Nyerere, 1968). Over the next ten years, government would come close to achieving universal primary education, though at

⁸⁷ Interestingly, the interviewee used the term ‘bush school’ only for TAPA schools – as opposed the ‘mission schools’ and ‘native schools’- and without any disparaging undertone. This contrasts with Samoff who used the term for unaided mission schools and considered it a disparaging term (Samoff, 1991: 671).

⁸⁸ Individual interview # 21 (17 Nov 2004).

the expense of quality (Kuder, 2005: 165; Oketch and Rolleston, 2007: 16). Following up on the Arusha Declaration, the Education Act of 1969 promulgated government “take over the management and administration of every assisted school” (GoT, 1969: 8). This nationalisation of all schools, as well as the expansion of the number of schools, led central government to consider for the first time a legal framework for school committees. In rapid succession, two quite contrasting frameworks emerged.

In a first framework, the Ministry of Education issued a memorandum in May 1968 to all education officials in the country with the heading “School Committees”, noting, “the Ministry has decided that each primary school should have a Committee”. In continuation, the memorandum detailed the functions as promoting the integration of the school with the community and self-reliance, assisting teachers in practical matters, and supervising “proper use of school farm produce”. With regard to the membership, the memorandum prescribed a membership from eight or 12 persons, according the size of the school. But in all cases the parents would clearly outnumber officials. In full primary schools, for example, the committee would have eight elected representatives of the parents and four representatives of the staff. The school committee was required to report to the district education authorities and the Village Council (McCormick, 1976: 5).⁸⁹ However, when the new Education Act was enacted in December 1969, the legal framework for school committees was changed quite radically. In this second framework, the role of school committees was empowered to act on one issue only. It was given “the power to consider accepting or refusing applications for admissions”.⁹⁰ For membership, the 1969 Act also suggest four to 12 persons but all its members were to be drawn from government officials and the former owner of the school, while it is up to the discretion of the Minister to appoint “other bodies or organisations” if deemed relevant. The Act makes no mention of parents (GoT, 1969: 9).

⁸⁹ The memorandum also hints at an existing practice by concluding that “where such committees already exist, they should be modified” (McCormick, 1976: 5).

⁹⁰ According to Dodd, the right to of mission schools to admit only children of their particular denomination is the “last vestige of legal independence” (Dodd, 1968: 273). The 1969 Education Act appears to be turning school committees into central government’s local arm in the struggle with churches over control of schools, with central government making increasingly “insisting they be made non-denominational” (Hyden, 1980: 91).

The 1968 memorandum and the 1969 Act marked the birth of a formal framework for Tanzania's school committees, but the contrasts between the two also succinctly illustrate the decision in central government to reign in local initiative and centralise the institutional framework between local polities and central government (Dodd, 1968). The disestablishment of District Councils in 1972 was the final confirmation of centralisation (Jennings, 2003: 182). Perhaps as a consequence, there is little record of school committees actually being established and operational in the 1970s and 1980s. For example, a 1980 study on local education makes just a passing reference to school committees, before outlining that the planning and management of school is ultimately the responsibility of the Ward Development Committee, "to which all head teachers of primary schools belong", while at village level, the head teacher is also the Secretary of the Village Council (Maliyamkono, 1980: 344). Moreover, the integration of school management in wider bureaucratic structures like the Village Council and Ward Development Committee would probably also be in line with the *ujamaa* ideology that would seek to integrate school and productive work in the community (O'Connor, 1974: 76).

When District Councils were re-established in 1978, an amended Education Act was also presented to outline the roles of Councils and District Education Committees. There were also some changes for school committees. Their principal function remained considering applications for admission, but they now also could "advise the head teacher ... on matters relating to the management and conduct of the school," which now explicitly included "promotion of the policy of self-reliance". Moreover, the 1978 Act ruled that the members of the school committee "shall be appointed by the Village Council" (GoT, 1978: 22). Later instructions by the Ministry of Education of 1982, reiterated the committees had a primary function with regard to "admissions," because they were to meet "once in every school term". The 1982 instructions also stipulated that a school committee was to have eight members from the Village Council, three representatives from the teachers, one from the former owner of the school and "one to three pupils' parents" – the actual number depending on the discretion of the Village Council (PAMOJA, 2002b: 2). Central government responded to externally imposed structural adjustment programmes in 1984 by re-introducing rather nominal school fees which accrued to the District Council "where it got lost in the pool of general revenue" (World Bank, 1999a: 15). Conceivably, school committees could have played a role in assisting to collect the fees – as they are generally

expected to contribute labour and materials too – but in practice head teachers collect the school fees and pass them on to the Council (PAMOJA, 2002b: 47). Record of, or reference to, a visible or even minimal role by school committees throughout the 1970s or 1980s are rare and lack any detail.

In 1995, central government amended the Education Act of 1978 to accommodate changes in higher education, but also makes a bold amendment to the function of school committees. “There shall be established a school committee for every pre-primary and primary school responsible for the management and maintenance of the school” (GoT, 1995: 367). However, the amendment gives no further details explaining how such a significant expansion of committees’ responsibilities from “considering admissions” to “management and maintenance” would be implemented. In fact, the dearth of information that surrounded school committees in the 1970s and 1980s, continued in the 1990s.⁹¹ None of the principal sources covering education in this period comment on the 1995 amendment. Indeed, one experienced interviewee in the field research said of the 1990s, “School committees... they were actually sub-committees of the Village Council”.⁹² A 2003 study about local government in Kondoa district, confirms that until 2002 the Village Council received money from the District Council for “construction and rehabilitation of classrooms” – school committees did not feature (Nes, 2004: iv). A 2001 research in five districts “to find out what school committees have done during the past quarter of a century”, found most schools did have committees but concluded: “In a nutshell, school committees’ performance has been generally low and inefficient”. Moreover, it found “parents are reluctant to make all these contributions for they have the feeling of being exploited and not protected by school committees” (PAMOJA, 2002b: vi, xi, 36).⁹³ The

⁹¹ The phenomenon of central government enacting changes to an existing institutional framework without subsequently following through with operational guidelines is not uncommon. In the same 1995 Education Act, central government promulgated that “there shall be established for every region, district, municipality and township an Education and Training Board responsible for the management of all level of education and training...” for which the Minister would publish further guidelines “by notice in the [Government] *Gazette*”. However, at the time of my field research in 2004 these guidelines had still not been published. This – however – has not stopped local actors in Same district seizing on the opportunity and establish their own District Education Board in 2000 which brought together actors from the education sector, government, NGOs, businesses and school committees to raise funds and pay for innovation and training, even issuing and distributing its own “operational guidelines” for other districts (Dyer, 2004; PAMOJA, 2002a: 4)

⁹² Individual interview # 24 (5 Dec 2004)

⁹³ The PAMOJA research found that a “successful committee” is defined by some teachers and committee members as one where “members committed themselves to mobilising resources ... sensitising the general

perception that the committee was a means for local resource extraction also emerged in another 2002 research, which found school committees played a minimal role, while “the committee’s function is often reduced to extracting resources from the community” (Barret, 2005: 56).

A significant change to the institutional framework for school committees occurred in 2002. After six years of “difficult and often frustrating” negotiations with international donors in which “donors and their consultants [were perceived] to be assuming ownership by appropriating funds, agendas, priorities and decisions”, government announced new policies for the entire education sector with the budget being funded by a large group of international donors (Kuder, 2005: 168). The significance of the changes was probably reflected in the fact that for months, newspapers were full of reports and commentaries about the new Primary Education Development Plan 2002-2006 (Hakielimu, 2003). From the perspective of school committees, there were three major changes: a new mandate, a new flow of resources in a different direction, and a wide and well-resourced support programme to assist committees. First, government’s new policy not only mandated “school committees to be responsible for the management and development of the school”, but also provided specific details of this mandate. Committees were to “oversee the day-to-day affairs of the school”, “approve whole School Development Plans and budgets”, open bank accounts and ... manage funds received”, “prepare and submit ... reports”, and “communicate information to all parents...” (GoT, 2001c: 16). Government also legislated that at least half the committee members were to be elected from the parents (GoT, 2002a: 1369).

Second, school committees were to receive in their bank accounts a fixed capitation grant per pupil, to be spent on specified categories. In addition, school committees could apply for investment grants for classrooms or teacher houses in a contestable fund at district level. Once acquired, the cash grant would be transferred to the school’s bank account.⁹⁴

public along with the village leaders to play their roles in terms of contributions in money and in labour power when needed for self-help activities” (PAMOJA, 2002b: 31).

⁹⁴ The capitation grant is 10 USD, 6 dollars go directly into the school bank account and 4 dollars remain with the District Council to purchase textbooks. School committees should use the 6 dollars in categories such as facility maintenance, pens and notebooks, administration, and examination papers. Investment grants are 5,000 USD per classroom (GoT, 2001c: 8, 30). Obviously, there is debate about whether these grants are sufficient and transferred timely and entirely. An independent Public Expenditure Tracking System in 2004,

Moreover, government also abolished school fees and explicitly allowed school committees to engage in “public/private partnerships at the community level” to raise more funds (GoT, 2001c: 5, 11).⁹⁵ Arguably, from a local perspective, the flow of financial resource was turned around as money was coming from central government and going into schools instead of local school fees going to government.

The third significant change was in the fact that central government and international donors agreed on an annual 500 USD budget for training and support to school committees (GoT, 2001c: 13). In parallel, donors assisted the Ministry of Education as well as a consortium of 25 NGOs to develop and provide training programmes and material for school committees. By 2003, an average of 89% of school committees had participated in a training programme (REPOA, 2005: 54; TEN/MET, 2003).⁹⁶ During the field research, most schools showed a range of training materials and manuals for school committees, both from government and NGOs (e.g. Hakielimu, 2003a, 2003b; Hakielimu, 2003c, 2004). In one of the two districts, the district education officials had toured the district in 2003 and 2004 to provide one-week training programmes to school committees members in clusters of 8-10 schools.⁹⁷ Undoubtedly, such one-week training programmes have also had networking effects. Local officials were adamant about the changes: “With the new policy, school committees now have a big say”.⁹⁸

The field research in Same and Hai districts in late 2004 took place against the backdrop of these major changes in the institutional framework for school committees. A sample of 27 school committees from a total of 328 schools in the two districts was interviewed in November and December 2004 and all had been in place for at least one year, a majority

for example, found variation among districts, but on average school committees received \$5.80 of the expected \$6.00 (REPOA, 2005: 29).

⁹⁵ While the use of terms like “public-private partnership” may appear to be nothing but an exhortation to parents for free labour and building materials, government also legislated new tax regulations in which private sector donations to an education funds managed by a school committee became tax deductible (Hakielimu, 2003: 28).

⁹⁶ “Leakage” in this Capacity Building Grant from central government via regions and districts to schools was more substantial, only an average of 320 USD was spent on training per school in 2003 (REPOA, 2005: 53).

⁹⁷ Individual interview #25 (8 Dec 2004). Verifying from two different sources, a reliable estimate was that about 1,800 school committee members in this district had received a training, which included a *per diem* and accommodation. All training material was in Swahili and seemed of good quality.

⁹⁸ Individual interviews #21 (17 Nov 2004). However, individual interviews #24 (5 Dec 2004), and #25 (8 Dec 2004) also suggested the changes had been significant.

more than two years. It was not particularly investigated whether the interviewed committee members had participated in the training programmes, but going by the available statistics and visibly available training material it seems safe to assume most had. The atmosphere during the interviews varied among the committees, some very formal, others quite personal and humorous, some seemed eager to please the visitors, others seemed to be complying rather than engaging. However, all seemed groups of people who were familiar with each other. And as in Uganda, several school committees were well aware that the recent changes were part of a pattern that had a history:

“The school was established by TAPA [Tanganyika African Parents Association] in 1960. I think we must have had a school committee since then, though it has not always been active.”⁹⁹

“The school was established by government in 1950. I think we have always had a school committee.”¹⁰⁰

“Please meet Mr X, he is our *mzee* (elder). He is not a member of the school committee but we always invite for important meetings because he knows the history of the school.”¹⁰¹

Dispensary committees in Tanzania

Dispensaries as the lowest level of public health care in Tanzania emerged in the 1920s. Initially they were little more than a few first aid posts but when they began treating the common diseases in 1929, they quickly attracted half a million patients. Many Native Authorities began building dispensaries, but were stopped in their tracks when the economic crisis of the 1930s halted training of staff (Beck, 1977: 49). Sources do not mention any active involvement of local polities in dispensaries until the 1960s (e.g. Iliffe, 1998; Williams, 1964).¹⁰² Then, at independence there was a sudden burst of initiatives in local polities to build dispensaries, as they were also building schools (Samoff, 1979a: 38). And – as with the establishment of schools – these initiatives ran against central government policy. A report by one of Britain’s most renowned public health advisers recommended in 1964, “central government to have more direct control of all health and medical services” (McRobert, 1964: 432). The report led central government to decide,

⁹⁹ Group interview #42 (1 Dec 2004)

¹⁰⁰ Group interview #47 (6 Dec 2004)

¹⁰¹ Group interview #51 (8 Dec 2004)

¹⁰² Iliffe’s history of health services in East Africa notes, “public documents and the press are less revealing in Tanzania than in the other countries” (1998: 200).

“[80] rural health centres to be built under Ministry control but chiefly with local funds”. However, local polities resisted central government and rather responded to local initiatives by equipping rural dispensaries. Only five of the 80 health centres were built (Iliffe, 1998: 201). By 1970 central government had gained dominance in the balance of power with local polities and displaced District Councils as the manager of schools and dispensaries (Eckert, 1999: 229) and found itself responsible for 1,400 dispensaries. There had been 975 at independence (Nyerere, 1973: 293).

The first references to local committees around health services suggest central government established Primary Health Care Committees throughout the country in the 1980s. However, these committees were never really active, due to “increased verticalisation of health service programming and management with strong central control”. Reforms in the later 1990s led to the establishment of a new pyramid of Health Committees from village level upward to support public health campaigns. However, field research in four districts in 2001 found these Health Committees seemed to have fared like their predecessors, their effectiveness was “perceived as low and in most areas the Committees were regarded as almost non-functional” (Mubyazi et al., 2004: 168, 176). One health official in one of the two district of this thesis’ field research confirmed that the Health Committees had ceased to function, “because they were not paid”.¹⁰³ Similarly, another health official explained that NGOs had experimented with ‘local health groups’ in the 1990s as part of an UNICEF programme, offering boots, uniforms and bicycles for local groups in exchange for assistance to health workers in sanitation and clean-up campaigns. But it also ground to a halt after initial funding stopped.¹⁰⁴

The dispensary committees investigated for the present research – Health Facility Committees – were established as part of the same decentralisation policies that created the Village Health Committees in the preceding paragraph, but dispensary committees had an explicit mandate to manage dispensaries, rather than provide support to public health campaigns. The proposal to establish dispensary committees originated from the Ministry of Health after the local government reforms of 2000 expanded the roles and powers of

¹⁰³ Individual interview #23 (29 Nov 2004).

¹⁰⁴ Individual interview #24 (5 Dec 2004).

District Councils.¹⁰⁵ Once the first District Councils began re-establishing their structures and operations, the apparent dearth of a policy to restructure decentralised health services led the Ministry of Health to publish a set of “Guidelines” for the establishment of Council Health Service Boards, Health Centre Committees, Ward Health Committees and – at the bottom of the pyramid – an entirely new body: Health Facility Committees (HFCs) (GoT, 2001d).¹⁰⁶ These were followed later in 2001 by “A Model Instrument” for legal regulations concerning the composition, profile and selections of members and the roles and functions of Health Boards, Ward Health Committees and Dispensary Committees (GoT, 2001c).¹⁰⁷ The first document of the Ministry of Health – the “Guidelines” – explicitly places the Dispensary committee, “within the context of the Local Government Reforms which jointly aims at improving service delivery through empowering councils, genuine community involvement, sensitising communities to be self-initiative [sic]... and advocating for alternative financing options like Community Health Funds, Cost sharing and National Health Insurance” (GoT, 2001d: 1).

While the Ministry of Health noted that “the full council has a final say in whether or not to establish these structures”, a manifesto by Tanzania’s ruling party set December 2004 as the date when all District Councils should have established these structures (Boon, 2005: 4). After 2001, a number of district councils – local polities – adopted and copied the ‘model’ proposed by central government as their own and formally enacted its regulations to establish District Health Boards and dispensary committees.¹⁰⁸ However, not all did. In fact, by 2006 only half the districts had established the proposed decentralised health

¹⁰⁵ Tanzania’s most recent decentralisation policies started with experiments in a few districts in 1998, after which a nationwide Local Government Reform Programme started in 2000. Earlier steps towards decentralising health services had been taken after the re-establishment of District Councils in 1983, but a 1994 evaluation concluded most district health officials felt “powerless” with very limited influence on personnel, budget or priorities (Gilson et al., 1994: 451). Similarly, a survey of 1999 among district health officials reported that most “report that decentralisation has not yet started in their districts” (Hutchinson, 2002: 16). Dispensary committees were not contemplated in these earlier decentralisation policies.

¹⁰⁶ Tanzania has about 3,038 dispensaries at the bottom of its health services pyramid. A dispensary is usually staffed by two or three health professionals, assisted by two or three auxiliary staff (WHO, 2009: 8).

¹⁰⁷ Tanzania’s legal documents refer to the local management committees for dispensaries varyingly and inconsistently as “Dispensary Committee” or “Health Facility Committee”. Because these management committees exist alongside the so-called Village Health Committees or Village Primary Health Care Committees and because Swahili translations also vary, a certain level of confusion seems unavoidable. “An elaborate system of Committees was reported, by the key informants, to exist at hamlet, village, ward and district levels. Frequently, these Committees were called different names by the different informants and it was not always clear...” (Mubyazi et al., 2004: 175).

¹⁰⁸ I verified the regulations for District Health Service Boards and Dispensary Committees of 3 districts – Kiteto, Mpwapwa and Arusha – and found them to be exact copies of the model (GoT, 2002a: 1319, 2002b: 161, 1480).

structures (GoT, 2005: 5). Moreover, there appears to be an increasing diversity among the 69 districts as to how they actually operationalise the ‘model structures’ in their jurisdiction and use increased discretionary powers. A 2004 review praises six districts for their achievements and the details of the accolades suggest that each district had used the structures and resources for uniquely local emphases, ranging from recruiting staff for remote areas to the electrification of dispensaries (GoT, 2004: 4), or even building a new district hospital (Chee et al., 2002: 18).

Central government’s introduction of decentralised health structures in 2001 predicated on two entirely different objectives. One objective was to align the institutional framework for health services with the overall policy of decentralisation, supporting, “Governance’s commitment in devolving powers to the Councils and communities” (GoT, 2001d: 1). The proposed structures for the health sector were endowed with ample discretionary powers because while the legal framework makes District Health Board “accountable to the Council”, it also creates explicit autonomy for these Boards by adding: “...without the Council jeopardising the Board’s autonomy” (GoT, 2001c: 5). Interviews in the field research seem to confirm the Health Boards’ autonomy, as one district health official explained: “Dispensary committees only have to talk with the Health Board to discuss plans and expenditure.”¹⁰⁹

On the other hand, the proposed framework also explicitly seeks to establish decentralised health structures that act as an arm of central government – as noted, dispensary committees are expected to be “sensitising communities” on government policies – and to act as an arm for revenue collection by “advocating for alternative financing options like Community Health Funds”. In parallel to the “Guidelines” and “Model” for Health Boards and Dispensary Committees, central government also introduced the Community Health Fund Act in 2001. The stated objective of this Fund is, “to mobilise financial resources from the community for provision of health care services to its members” (GoT, 2001a: 5).¹¹⁰ Alongside the introduction of the Fund, central government abolished the free access to health services at the level of dispensaries and health centres and introduced a user

¹⁰⁹ Individual interview #22 (18 Nov 2004).

¹¹⁰ Somewhat surprising, the Act does not make any reference to Health Centre Committees and Dispensary Committees, unlike the “Guidelines” and the “Model” for the decentralised health system.

fee.¹¹¹ The Fund is a voluntary pre-payment scheme for families to purchase an annual membership for a fixed amount, which offsets the risk of having to pay much more in user fees if a family member falls ill (Mtei and Milligan, 2007: 3).¹¹²

Officially, central government's "primary aim was not to raise additional funds but to improve access to health care for the poor" when introducing the Community Health Fund (Mtei and Milligan, 2007: 2). Nevertheless, a World Bank report claims the Fund was introduced in 2001 after "the Government of Tanzania collaborated with the World Bank to design a new approach to improving the financing and provision of health care to households in rural areas ... because tax revenues simply could not sustain the public health system". The same report hoped that initially 30% of rural families would join the Fund, expecting to grow to 70% (R. P. Shaw, 2002: 2, 5). This did not happen. Uptake per district varies, but it ranges from 2-6% of the rural families and is actually decreasing (Mtei and Milligan, 2007: 4).¹¹³ While Health Boards and dispensary committees may not have been able to successfully 'sensitise' or 'advocate' on the Health Fund, the revenues collected via the Fund and user fees have noticeably reduced central government expenditure on health in the districts. Case studies suggest Health Fund fees and user fees now contribute an average of about 10% of districts' health budgets (Chee et al., 2002: 36; Laterveer and Munga, 2004: 5). Interestingly, when Uganda's dispensary committees were still collecting users fees in the 1990s, they were never able to contribute more than 10% to central government's budget (Hutchinson et al., 1999: 75).¹¹⁴ And – going back to the

¹¹¹ User, or "cost sharing," fees, had already been introduced since 1994 at the higher levels of the public health system, i.e. district hospitals, regional hospital and referral hospitals (Laterveer and Munga, 2004: 17).

¹¹² Tanzania actually experimented with users fees in the early 1990s. However, by 2000 medical consults at the lowest two levels health centre and dispensary were free. A charge applied for most drugs and other services. A range of insurance options emerged in the 1990s (e.g. the National Health Insurance Fund) but usage seem to have been limited to an top level civil servants and an urban elite (Laterveer and Munga, 2004: 18).

¹¹³ Various reasons are proposed for people's reluctance to purchase the membership, ranging from a correlation with low prices for cash crops, an inability to pre-pay the average fee of 5,000 shilling and rather pay the average 1,000 shilling in fees; and scepticism that the services were worth the costs (Chee et al., 2002: xx; Laterveer and Munga, 2004: 22; Mtei and Milligan, 2007: 5; R. P. Shaw, 2002: 6). Without entering in a policy debate, it is remarkable that World Bank economists such as Shaw are instrumental in designing the Health Fund, while the Bank's strategy paper of 2001 advises against such funds because "poor families may always be able to afford to put aside resources for a health-specific insurance fund" (World Bank, 2001b: 26) and neighbouring Uganda had abolished user fees in 2001 (Laterveer and Munga, 2004: 7). Kenya would do so in 2004.

¹¹⁴ Moreover, the introduction of user fees has also probably curbed or reduced actual health expenditure because it caused a decline in the use of health services – particularly by the poorer and more vulnerable families (Chee et al., 2002: 17; Laterveer and Munga, 2004: 37). Generally, the introduction of user fees for health services in Africa in 1990s led to a drop in attendance from 27 to 40% (Burnham et al., 2004: 187).

colonial 1940s and 1950s – Native Authorities never spend more than 11% of local revenue on funding local health services (Hailey, 1957: 474).

The introduction of decentralised health services and the accompanying user fees has probably led to a net reduction in the flow of financial resources from central government to local polities. However, the significant variation in districts' responses suggests that the new decentralised institutional framework of health services has also increased the autonomy or agency of local polities vis-à-vis central government. Aside from the already mentioned facts that only half the districts decided to really engage with the new structures for the health sector and that several among those used the resources for uniquely local health objectives, two additional indicators of increased agency of local polities stand out.

First, local polities have used the new institutional framework to develop district-specific practices, capacities and targets for financing their health services. For example, central government sets user fees at 1,000 or 1,500 shilling for a consult at dispensaries and health centres (Chee et al., 2002: 16). Yet, there are “huge variations” in charges for consumables, where *reported* average charges per patient vary from 12 shilling in the Mafinga district to 994 shilling in the Amana district (Laterveer and Munga, 2004: 21).¹¹⁵ For joining the Health Fund, central government recommends a fee of 10,000 shilling (R. P. Shaw, 2002: 9). However, several districts have used their discretionary power to set membership fees anywhere between 5,000 and 30,000 shilling (GoT, 2001a: 6; Mtei and Milligan, 2007: 4; Mushi, 2004: 2). As a consequence, the proportion of user fees in budgets of 18 sampled District Health Board varied from 1% to 22% (Laterveer and Munga, 2004: 19). In a similar show of local autonomy, Mwangi and Muheza districts have used their discretionary power to waive Health Fund fees for the poor (Mtei and Milligan, 2007: 6) and the Mukoba District Council refused to introduce user fees at dispensary level “since councillors fear that they will lose the votes” (Laterveer and

Interestingly, the figure of 10% was also the maximum that user fees contributed to the health budget in Uganda before it was abolished.

¹¹⁵ *Recorded* variations in official fees and charges among districts would express political agency by local polities. From a user's perspective there are many more variations in official charges and “unofficial fees” like a commonly expected “Thank you for staff 5,000 TSh” which make it “difficult to establish precisely what people actually pay for the costs of health services” (Laterveer and Munga, 2004: 21). Moreover, even the recorded accounting in, for example, Hanang district shows “discrepancies” and “incomplete records” particularly at the level of dispensaries and health centres. “The assessment team was not able to identify reasons for the inconsistencies in the district-level data”, and basically gave up (Chee et al., 2002: 36).

Munga, 2004: 32). In stark contrast, in Hanang district, “officials do not adhere to the national exemption policies” and grant no exemptions (Chee et al., 2002: 47).

A second indicator of increased local agency is the emerging evidence that some districts use the revenues collected as user fees for health services for discretionary spending elsewhere. (Laterveer and Munga, 2004: v). Another research found that only 20 to 50% of the fees collected at dispensaries and health centres were actually returned to these facilities in the form of purchases or investments, the remainder was left “unused” (Chee et al., 2002: 42). Arguably, local polities have thus increased their negotiating room vis-à-vis central government to a level comparable to the sovereign central government’s room as a vis-à-vis international donor agencies, who expressed “grave concern” that while they were increasing their aid to the health budget, there was “a continued decline in the share of government resources allocated to the health sector” (GoT, 2004: 9).

In all, the new institutional framework around dispensary committees in Tanzania suggests that at the moment of the field research, matters seemed unsettled and without clear direction. The continuous failing for decades of local health committees with a responsibility to support health campaigns under central government must have set a bad precedent. On the other hand, the new dispensary committees do have a more powerful mandate, access to resources and are guided by the District Health Board, a local body rather than central government. The field research was carried out between October and December 2004 in two districts that had 53 dispensary committees between them and nine randomly selected dispensary committees were interviewed.¹¹⁶

While the experiences with decentralised health structures since 2001 suggests several Districts Councils had seized the opportunities in the institutional framework to increase control by local polities over policies and resources, little was known about the response of actors at lower levels to the opportunities. Interviews with committees in the field research expressed a diversity of expectations:

¹¹⁶ The district health officials assisting in the sampling process said these 11 were among the dispensary committees that had been operating for at 18 months. However, when I actually interviewed these dispensary committees, 3 of them said they had only been in existence for a few months.

“I’m not sure what we will do. Government has not yet briefed us.”¹¹⁷

“We are in charge of planning, construction and purchases.”¹¹⁸

“We want to work hard and see the dispensary upgraded to a Health Centre.”¹¹⁹

Similarly, district health officials also seemed to be unsure how dispensary committees would develop. Though no one was overly optimistic, there were diverging expectations:

“All these committees fold when government doesn’t pay them.”¹²⁰

“Dispensary committees can revive the old spirit of ‘self-help’. That would be very good.”¹²¹

Conclusions

Taking a step back from these detailed descriptions and analyses and looking at the research question that asks how central government and school and dispensary committees developed the institutional framework for decentralised management of these services, three overall conclusions emerge.

First, with its prerogative to promulgate rules and regulations, it appears as if central government has principal agency in designing the institutional framework. However, central government may quite often be reacting or responding to initiatives taken by local actors in local polities. In the same vein, much of the decentralisation policies that led to the changes in the regulations for school and dispensary committees appear to have been driven by international donor agencies. However, sharp inconsistencies between decentralisation practices in Uganda and Tanzania suggest dynamics in local polities and between local polities and central government carry as much weight as donor policies.

Second, while central government regulations may in many instances create school committees and dispensary committees in local polities where there were none, it appears that local actors gradually – and subtly – appropriate the institutional space created by

¹¹⁷ Group interview #33 (24 Nov 2004).

¹¹⁸ Group interview #49 (7 Dec 2004).

¹¹⁹ Group interview #61 (15 Dec 2004).

¹²⁰ Individual interview #23 (29 Nov 2004).

¹²¹ Individual interview #24 (5 Dec 2004).

central government and shape these committees to suit local needs and dynamics. Central government often seems unknowing, uninterested or unable to correct or steer this.

Third, as time goes on, the balance of power, the balance of control over the flow of resources between central government and the management committees changes back and forth. Particularly in the case of school committees – but also in the case of dispensary committees in Uganda – periods of local dominance over the institutional framework have been alternated by periods of central government dominance.

4.3 Responsibilities and activities of management committees

An analysis of the institutional framework – the structure – between central government and local management committees for education and health services also needs to consider the division of the responsibilities and decision-making powers; the content within the structure. This section 4.3 provides this perspective. After a summary of the formal responsibilities of the four different management committees, this section analyses data from the group interviews and anecdotal evidence about the actual activities of the committees, focusing on their meeting frequency and the items on their agendas. It then presents a few reflections by committee members about their successes and their problems. In short, this section discusses what local management committees do and how they feel about it.

Formal responsibilities of management committees

Formal responsibilities of School Management Committees in Uganda were defined in 1969 and are still widely and repeatedly referred to by education officials during the field research. The regulations provide the committee with broad powers, “to manage the school for which it has been established”. While the committee delegates the “day-to-day administration” to the headmaster, the committee is ultimately responsible for all matters relating to “the academic, social and domestic organisation and conduct of the school” (GoU, 1969: 8, 9). The introduction of universal primary education and abolishment of school fees in 1997 was accompanied by guidelines that reiterated the school committees were the “Statutory Organs at the school level and they represent Government”.

Committees are empowered to be “giving overall direction to the operation of the school” and “approving the school budget” (GoU, 1998a: 17).

Against the backdrop of the abolishment of user fees in 2001 – which was collected and administered largely by Uganda’s Health Unit Management Committees – the formal responsibilities of these dispensary committees were redefined in 2003 and now cover full management of dispensaries, highlighting five fields: [1] monitor the general administration of the dispensary by staff; [2] supervise financial management, including the approval of annual budgets and work plans, monitoring of expenses, ensuring funds from government’s health budget are accounted for, and authorising re-allocations; [3] advise upon, regulate and monitor the use of funds from other sources; [4] monitor procurement, storage and utilisation of medication; and [5] foster improved communication with the public and encourage community participation in health activities (GoU, 2003b: 1)

In Tanzania, the new primary education policy of 2001 significantly expanded the formal responsibilities of School Committees, essentially leaving them in overall charge after 2002. The new regulations detail eight areas, which can be summarised as: [1] approve school development plans and budgets as prepared by staff; [2] oversee day-to-day affairs of the school; [3] open bank accounts to receive and manage funds, “guaranteeing maximum accountability and transparency ... making incomes and expenditures publicly available”; [4] prepare and submit reports to Village and District Council; and [5] “communicate to” and “sensitise” all “community stakeholders” with regard to the school (GoT, 2001b: 16).

Similarly, the Dispensary Committees created in 2002 in Tanzania were given ten specified legal responsibilities, covering four main areas: [1] approving dispensary plans and budgets, as well as reports prepared by the staff; [2] submitting reports to the District Health Board; [3] liaising with other health providers and potential donors; [4] assisting staff in carrying out “community based health initiatives” and ensuring “affordable health care services (GoT, 2002a: 1334). As noted earlier, Tanzania’s dispensary committees were created by central government alongside the introduction of user fees and a

Community Health Fund and were expected to play a role in “advocating” these measures (GoT, 2001d: 1).

In general, the management committees studied in the field research in 2004 had seen their formal responsibilities significantly increased over a few years.¹²² Worded in slightly varying ways, all management committees’ responsibilities essentially had come to cover planning and monitoring the delivery of public services including the pertaining financial planning and accounting and reporting to local government authorities. Moreover, with the exception of Uganda’s school committees, all management committees had explicit responsibilities for liaising or communicating with the surrounding community or local polity.

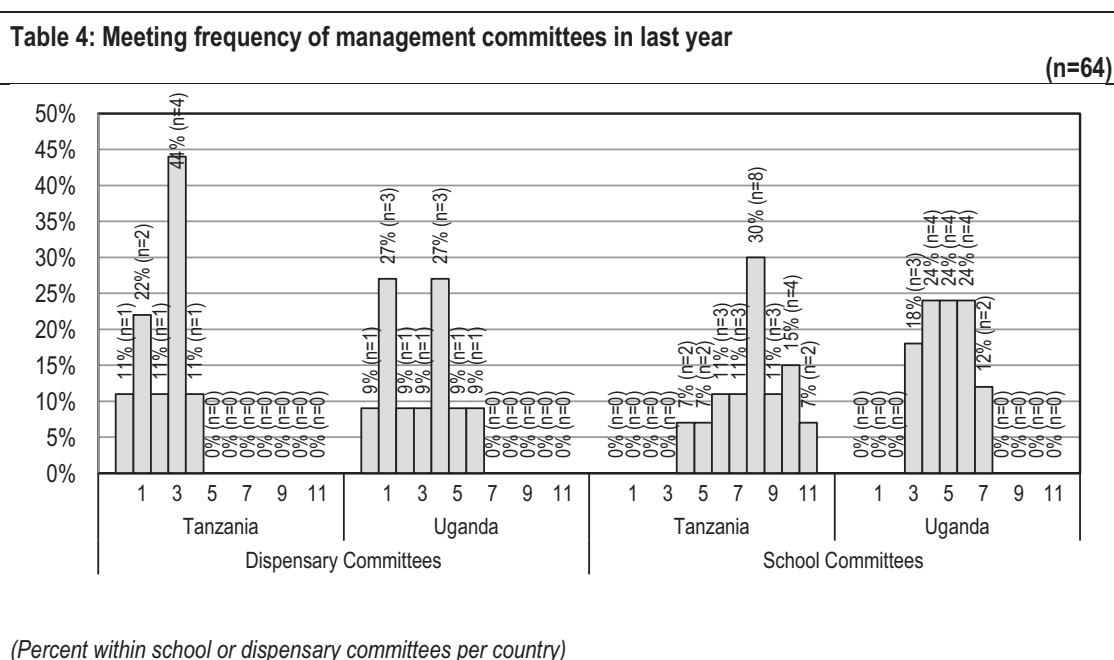
Meeting frequency

Against the above outlines of the formal responsibilities, Uganda’s school committees are expected to meet at least twice a year (GoT, 1969: 3), though Tanzania’s school committees have no regulated meeting frequency. Uganda dispensary committees are by regulation expected to “meet at least quarterly to conduct health unit business” (GoU, 2003b: 4) and Tanzania’s dispensary committees are also bound by regulations to meet quarterly (GoT, 2002a: 1333). The daily practice of these management committees, however, shows quite a different picture.

In the group interview members were asked to determine how often the committee had met in the preceding 12 months. Against a comparable set of formal responsibilities it is clear from Table 4 that school committees have a significantly higher meeting frequency than dispensary committees. The number of meetings per year for dispensary committees ranges from 0 to 6, while the number of meetings for school committees ranged from three to 11. In fact, it is likely that members of school committees meet even more often, because the listed frequencies do not include members’ participation in meetings of sub-committees, such as a disciplinary sub-committee or a finance sub-committee.

¹²² Uganda’s school committees were the only committees not to have seen their formal responsibilities significantly expanded through law changes – they always had held wide formal responsibilities. However, like the other committees they only received direct responsibility over significant sums of money in capitation grants since the decentralisation policies of the late 1990s.

While it is hard to draw conclusions about a management committee’s discharge of their responsibilities per se on the basis of the number of meetings, it does seem fair to conclude that school committees are more actively engaged with their responsibilities. What can also be concluded is that each committee is quite autonomous in determining how often they wish to meet. The rather wide range in meeting frequency even among similar committees in the same country and in the same districts suggests local actors determine what happens – irrespective of regulations or expectations of district health or education officials.



Agenda items

A first impression of the agenda items and character of a meeting of dispensary committees and school committees emerges when looking at examples of minutes.¹²³ The Anecdotal Evidence Boxes 1 and 2 show examples of the minutes of, respectively, two dispensary committees and two school committees in Uganda.¹²⁴ These four examples are fairly typical of the collected minutes and illustrate that meetings of school and dispensary committees are predominantly about ‘hands-on’ affairs. In one dispensary committee the nurse in-charge presents the committee members with the need to repair the water tank. In another dispensary committee, the nurse suggests, “there should be shade provided in front

¹²³ See Chapter 3 for methodological considerations regarding the analysis of minutes.

¹²⁴ The Anecdotal Evidence Boxes are placed at the end of this chapter.

of the building”. A school committee decides after a long discussion that includes the morality of a teacher: “If a teacher does not use the house given to him properly, the house should be given to another teacher”. In general, a reading of all Anecdotal Evidence Boxes at the end of this chapter provides a detailed insight in committees’ daily responsibilities and activities. These activities range from dealing with elopement – “the teacher and the eloped girl were interviewed in an urgent SMC meeting” (Box 8) – to negotiating in a meeting of parents the levels of an – illegal – parental contribution to a school feeding programme (Box 10).¹²⁵

The examples in Box 1 and Box 2 also show how school committees can move beyond operational issues and discuss issues of strategic importance. No evidence of more strategic discussions was found in the minutes of dispensary committees. Box 2, for example, reveals how the school committee of an Islamic school strategises to regain access to government funding that it had lost the previous year. The chairman briefs the other committee members about a meeting he had with other chairpersons and the district Education Officer: “Their aim is to balance the education system”.

A more qualitative insight in committees’ responsibilities and activities emerges from an analysis of the answers in the 64 group interviews with management committees to the plenary question, “What are the issues you have discussed in your meetings last year?”¹²⁶ The committees listed their issues and they ranged from three to 15 issues. School committees generally listed more issues than dispensary committees, which is in line with expectations as they also meet more frequently. After the field research, the answers were clustered into three categories: a cluster of operational/internal issues (e.g. academic performance, disciplinary matters), a cluster of communication issues with government actors (e.g. periodic reports, requests for information or support), and a cluster of communication issues with actors in the community (e.g. meetings with parents, calling volunteers in a clean-up campaign).

¹²⁵ Legally, PTAs can ask for one-off donations from parents. However, there is little in stopping PTAs and SMCs to ask for one-off contributions on a regular basis, as long as non-payment is not a reason to refuse a child’s access to school. Individual interview #18 (12 Oct 2004).

¹²⁶ See Chapter 3 for methodological considerations.

Table 5 shows in the column “dominating the agenda” that operational or internal issues overwhelmingly dominated the agenda of both school and dispensary committees. This confirms the impression from an analysis of the minutes as reflected in the boxes with anecdotal evidence that there is a high level of ‘hands-on’ management by all committees in the discharge of responsibilities. Communications with either government representatives or actors in the community definitely do not dominate the agenda.

Table 5: Agenda items and biggest successes and biggest problems

		Topic	Dominating the agenda	Rated biggest success	Rated biggest problem
Uganda	School Management Committees (n=17)	Operational or internal issues	14	11	12 ^{c)}
		Communications with government	1	-	1
		Communications with community/non-state actors	2	6	4
		<i>Total</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>17</i>
	Health Unit Management Committees (n=9) ^{a)}	Operational or internal issues	8	6	5
		Communications with government	1	2	4
		Communications with community/non-state actors	-	1	-
		<i>Total</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>9</i>
Tanzania	School Management Committees (n=27)	Operational or internal issues	25	19	18 ^{c)}
		Communications with government	-	-	-
		Communications with community/non-state actors	2	8	9
		<i>Total</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>27</i>
	Health Facility Management Committees (n=6) ^{b)}	Operational or internal issues	5	3	6
		Communications with government	1	2	-
		Communications with community/non-state actors	-	1	-
		<i>Total</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>6</i>

Notes

- a.) The number of Health Unit Management Committees in the sample is 11. However, the members of two committees had been in their positions for less than a year and said they could not yet indicate 'successes' or 'problems'.
- b.) The number of Health Facility Management Committees in the sample is 9. However, the members of three committees had been in their positions for less than a year and said they could not yet indicate 'successes' or 'problems'.
- c.) A few school committees mentioned delays in the payment of grants as their biggest problem (3 in Uganda, one in Tanzania), while other committees rated delayed parental contributions (in kind) as their biggest problems (3 in Uganda, one in Tanzania). These cases were categorised as 'operational or internal issues' because they appeared of an administrative character, rather than related to character of the 'communications' with either government or parents.

However, when school committees and dispensary committees were asked to look back at last year's items on the agenda and determine their biggest success and their biggest problem, school committees and dispensary committees revealed differences.¹²⁷ On top of the list for school and dispensary committees, logically, still featured operational or internal issues. Common among the biggest operational and internal successes and problems for school committees were matters like:

"Discipline among staff has improved. They now start on time."¹²⁸

"The teacher houses are collapsing."¹²⁹

"We have a good School Development Plan."¹³⁰

"We had four pupils in F-1, now 18 pupils have achieved F-1."¹³¹

Dispensary committees in both countries listed similar operational or internal issues as their biggest successes or problems:

"We repaired the water tank."¹³²

"We repaired the maternity room ourselves."¹³³

¹²⁷ See Chapter 3 for methodological considerations.

¹²⁸ Group interview #18 (7 Oct 2004)

¹²⁹ Group interview #24 (15 Oct 2004)

¹³⁰ Group interview #42 (1 Dec 2004)

¹³¹ Group interview #47 (6 Dec 2004)

¹³² Group interview #12 (30 Sep 2004)

¹³³ Group interview #23 (14 Oct 2004)

“We have made an annual dispensary development plan.”¹³⁴

However, school and dispensary committee differed when choosing their second biggest successes or problems. School committees chose items related to ‘communications with the community or non-state local actors’ as second on the list of biggest successes and problems. For example:

“Many parents don’t see the importance of education for their children.”¹³⁵

“Parents believe politicians who say government now pays for everything.”¹³⁶

“Parents and teachers are cooperating again.”¹³⁷

“Parents have been unable to contribute as promised. We don’t send pupils away, but they get watery porridge instead of solid *ugali*.”¹³⁸

While issues related to ‘communications with the government’ barely featured on the list of biggest successes or problems for school committees, these ‘communications with government’ were second on the list of biggest problems or successes for dispensary committees. For example:

“We succeeded in convincing the Director of the Health Services to send us one more nurse.”¹³⁹

“We pestered the Director so they gave us a microscope and we can now diagnose worm disease in the dispensary.”¹⁴⁰

“They don’t send us enough medicines.”¹⁴¹

Explaining successes and problems

After listing their biggest successes and problems, the committee members were asked why they achieved these successes and how they thought they could overcome the

¹³⁴ Group interview #33 (24 Nov 2004)

¹³⁵ Group interview #02 (24 Sep 2004)

¹³⁶ Group interview #22 (14 Oct 2004)

¹³⁷ Group interview #32 (23 Nov 2004)

¹³⁸ Group interview #46 (3 Dec 2004)

¹³⁹ Group interview #08 (28 Sep 2004)

¹⁴⁰ Group interview #19 (7 Oct 2004)

¹⁴¹ Group interview #10 (29 Sep 2004)

problems.¹⁴² School committees and dispensary committees both listed, respectively, their relationship with local education authorities or health authorities as either a sources of their successes or their problems. School committees, for example, explained:

“The UPE system works, we get our money and without too many delays.”¹⁴³

“We always talk with the District Education Officer.”¹⁴⁴

“The District Education Officer is very busy and he can’t see us. So now we are talking with councillors on the Education Committee.”¹⁴⁵

And dispensary committees also explained their successes and their problems in relationship with the local health authorities:

“We posted our plan to the Sub-county and they are now supporting us.”¹⁴⁶

“People don’t trust us because government does not supply us with the promised drugs.”¹⁴⁷

“We get no allowance. The Sub-county says we should go to the district and the district tells us to ask the Sub-county.”¹⁴⁸

However, while dispensary committees exclusively refer to their relationship with local health authorities to explain success and problems, some school committees’ attribute their successes and problems also to two other categories; wider socio-economic or political issues and their relationship with non-state actors. Socio-economic issues referred to, for example, are:

“Orphans. Families have to take in too many orphans.”¹⁴⁹

“People have a heavy workload at home and no money.”¹⁵⁰

“Biggest problem is the tobacco trade. Parents and pupils see immediate benefit in tobacco, not in education, so many pupils drop out during peak times.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴² See Chapter 3 for methodological considerations on “explaining successes and problems”.

¹⁴³ Group interview #07 (28 Sep 2004). UPE is the acronym for Universal Primary Education.

¹⁴⁴ Group interview #26 (18 Oct 2004)

¹⁴⁵ Group interview #22 (14 Oct 2004)

¹⁴⁶ Group interview #13 (1 Oct 2004)

¹⁴⁷ Group interview #15 (5 Oct 2004)

¹⁴⁸ Group interview #19 (7 Oct 2004)

¹⁴⁹ Group interview #06 (27 Sep 2004)

¹⁵⁰ Group interview #11 (30 Sep 2004)

¹⁵¹ Group interview #16 (6 Oct 2004)

“The radio tells parents UPE grants provide for everything. That is not true. It’s just politicians talking, looking for votes.”¹⁵²

And some school committees also attribute success and problems also to their ability – or failure – to develop relationship with non-state actors, outside the local education authorities. This varies from local metal scrap dealers to schools in Europe:

“We have been able to sensitise the leaders in the local mosque and the Catholic church.”¹⁵³

“We raised a lot of money in a deal with parents and traders in scrap metal.”¹⁵⁴

“We have not yet found a partnership with a school in Europe as they have in [neighbouring village] and [another neighbouring village].”¹⁵⁵

Conclusions

Two general conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the operational practices of management committees. First, management committees’ formal responsibilities are defined quite broadly, generally encompassing ‘day-to-day’ management as well as matters like supervision, planning and strategy. In practice, however, the actual activities and agenda items of a vast majority of management committees revolve overwhelmingly around ‘day-to-day’ and ‘hands-on’ issues.

Second, when considering their successes and problems, both school committees and dispensary committees first and foremost mention issues in the operational sphere. However, school committees and dispensary committees clearly diverge when looking to explain their successes and problems. School committees clearly listed relations and communication with local and non-state actors as a source of success and problems, while dispensary committees listed their contacts with local and district government bodies as the source of their successes and problems.

¹⁵² Group interview #28 (19 Oct 2004)

¹⁵³ Group interview #20 (8 Oct 2004)

¹⁵⁴ Group interview #24 (15 Oct 2004)

¹⁵⁵ Group interview #59 (14 Dec 2004)

4.4 Control over and accountability for the resource flows

The earlier sections positioned the contemporary institutional framework of school and dispensary committees in an historical context and provided insights in committees' current responsibilities and actual activities. This next section presents analyses from the field research that relate to the question of how the institutional framework distributes control over the committees and the flow of resources around them. Most of the analyses are based on the group interviews with committee members.¹⁵⁶

It starts with highlights of committees' formal lines of accountability, before presenting findings on one key aspect: who actually controls the appointment process of members of management committees? Subsequently, it takes a closer look at the potential for control within a management committee; do the *ex officio* members – i.e. the nurse in-charge or the headteacher – dominate the committees? The last part of this section presents an analysis of the directionality of acts of accountability in management committees. Presuming that committees express their view about who is in ultimate control of the management committee in the directionality of their acts of accountability, a particular analysis of data asks how management committees balance upward accountability towards government with a downward accountability to people in the surrounding local polity? This last part also includes particular attention to aspects of financial accountability.

Formal accountabilities of management committees

Uganda's School Management Committees formally are "the Statutory Organs at the school level and they represent Government", managing schools "subject to any direction which may be given under the Ordinance by the Minister" (GoU, 1969: 4, 1998a: 17). And while school committee are expected to send copies of their minutes to the district education authorities, this does not necessarily imply subordination. The fact that since 1969 government formally controls the appointment of seven of the nine committee members leaves the school committee with a large degree of delegated autonomy in its operations. Importantly, the new education policy of Universal Primary Education in 1998 added a new reporting requirement for school committees: "Reporting regularly the

¹⁵⁶ See Chapter 3 for methodological considerations regarding these group interviews and research tools such as Venn diagrams and pairwise ranking.

financial and operational status of the school programme to parents and community leaders” (GoU, 1998a: 18).¹⁵⁷

Uganda’s Health Unit Management Committees manage the dispensary on behalf of the Sub-county Council, which appoints and removes committee members. The regulations do not contain instructions for the dispensary committee regarding its accountability – except for demanding the committee is responsible for ensuring that staff sends financial reports to the District Council. The regulations, for example, do detail that minutes have to be kept but not that they need to be sent to the Sub-county health authorities, nor does a committee have to present progress reports about, for example, its annual work plans. The fact that district authorities formally control the appointment of committee members suggests that, not unlike Uganda’s school committees, dispensary committees indeed act on behalf of government and are quite unencumbered by accountability obligations. The 1998 and 2003 regulations do, however, expect committees to “promote good public relations” and “to foster improved communication with the public thereby encouraging community participation in health activities” (GoU, 1998b: 9, 2003a: 3, 6, 7). Again, this is a hint at a line of accountability not unlike Uganda’s school committees.

Tanzania’s School Committees are formally “accountable to the Village Council” and must also forward their progress and financial reports to the education officials at the Ward and the District level. However, the regulations underline School Committees must also “effectively communicate educational information to all parents, pupils and community stakeholders” (GoT, 2001c: 16). Like Uganda school committees, Tanzania’s school committees must also make financial statements publicly available.¹⁵⁸

Guidelines for Tanzania’s Health Facility Committees point out: “The Dispensary Committee shall be accountable to the Council” (GoT, 2001d: 33). Later regulations detail that the committees are expected to be submitting “quarterly, biannual and annual reports to the Council Health Board” – which is ultimately accountable to the District Council. Dispensary Committees can also be directed “to do any relevant activity as may be directed by the Ward Development Committee”. However, the regulations also stipulate that, “a

¹⁵⁷ This issue will be taken up again in the later section on “Financial accountability”.

¹⁵⁸ This issue will also be taken up again in the later section on “Financial accountability”.

Dispensary Committee shall liaise with the community ... to ensure that community needs are adequately addressed and facilitate a flow of information from both ways” (GoT, 2002a: 1334).

In general, the formal regulations for all management committees either present these committees as part of government – with government formally appointing all or most of the committee members and presuming an accountability to the appointing body – or as explicitly accountable to sectoral government bodies.

Selection and election of management committee members

Obviously, in a context where (tele) communication and direct supervision are limited, controlling the appointment process of members of local management committees is critical. It is probably for this reason that central government keeps a near-full control of the formal appointment process. For each of the four types of management committees, this section will juxtapose the formal appointment process against the findings from the field research to determine how the control over the appointment process unfolds in practice.

In Uganda, the regulations stipulate that School Management Committees are composed of nine members, of whom only two are directly elected by parents, four are appointed by the District Education Committee and three are appointed by the District Education Officer as the representative of central government’s Ministry of Education. Government formal influence over school committees is not only expressed in the fact it appoints seven of the nine members, but the District Education Officer is also the authority that formally approves of the appointment of all members (GoU, 1969: 1). However, the field research found that the actual practice of selecting school committee members deviates markedly.

Anecdotal Evidence Box 3 provides copies of a sequence of four letters between a school committee and local authorities – revealing that contrary to the formal appearances, the school committee is in actual control of the selection of members. The sequence starts with an authoritative letter by the District Education Officer stating all school committees “have with immediate effect been dissolved”; their statutory tenure had ended. The ensuing correspondence reveals how the outgoing school committee negotiates respectfully the

formal requirements with the central government representative and with the Sub-county Council authorities. However, it is the outgoing school committee that ends up fully determining the list of candidates proposed as the new committee members. The last letter in the sequence is from the same District Education Officer who dissolved the school committee three months earlier. This time she formally appoints all nine members proposed by the out-going school committee.

The above case study should not lead to the impression that the selection of the proposed candidates is fully controlled by the members of the outgoing school committee. Anecdotal Evidence Box 4 shows evidence of a competitive selection process of candidates in a meeting of parents to elect members of the next school committee. For each of the three executive functions, there are three candidates. A total of 61 parents voted to produce a list of nine candidates who were then proposed to the District Education Officer. Unlike the example in Box 3, this school committee did not even go through the motions to pretend some of the candidates were endorsed by the local Sub-county Council; all nine candidates resulted from an electoral process in the school. The District Education Officer also appointed these nine candidates.

The above two case studies are fairly typical and indicate that local actors – and not government representatives – ultimately control the selection of the members of Uganda’s school committees. The actual inter-play between formal rules and informal arrangements, as well as the electoral process in each school, however, varied. A few quotes from the committee interviews illustrate this and underline that central government’s regulations do not guide the processes.

“We were elected in 2003. How? Well, the PTA called a general meeting and dissolved the previous SMC after having served two years. Then the founding body appointed four members and the PTA five. (...) I think the head teacher asked the DEO to approve.”¹⁵⁹

“We were elected two years ago, for two year terms and the chairman has a three year term, but if the parents are not satisfied with us, they can elect other members every year.”¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Group interview #16 (6 Oct 2004)

¹⁶⁰ Group interview #18 (7 Oct 2004)

“The school committee made a list of the nine candidates after consulting the PTA. This list was sent to the Sub-county Council for approval. After that, the head teacher sent the list of names with the letter from the Council to the DEO for checking education and criminal records. The DEO then sent a confirmation letter. Took about three months.”¹⁶¹

“All of us have just been re-elected in the general parents meeting earlier this year. There were three new candidates for the executive posts, but they did not get enough votes. This is our third term.”¹⁶²

Of special interest in the case of Uganda’s school committees is the role of the ‘foundation bodies’. Contrary to regulations and practice in Tanzania where foundation bodies have seat in school committees, Uganda’s central government does not allow a formal representation of foundation bodies on the school committee. In fact, when government suspects foundation bodies of having too much undue influence on the management of a school, it can and sometimes has, cut funding. Anecdotal Evidence Box 2 provides a reference to this. A local priest was also quite outspoken on the church’s relation with central government:

“The church built these schools, they’re on church land and we are still paying for books and maintenance ... But government does not want us to help managing the schools. They only ask and take money and give nothing. Now they want more land.”¹⁶³

However, in line with the earlier finding that local actors ultimately determine the selection of committee members, it comes as no surprise that in spite of the uneasy relation between foundation bodies and central government, local actors find ample room to circumvent central government’s regulations and ensure the foundation body is represented in the school committee. Most school committees talked quite openly about this:

“At the annual meeting of parents, the PTA proposed two members and the Lutheran church 4. Then the parents elect three candidates among themselves. These were proposed to the DEO and he approved.”¹⁶⁴

“No, the church cannot propose a representative in the committee. But we invite the priest to all our meetings.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Group interview #22 (14 Oct 2004)

¹⁶² Group interview #24 (15 Oct 2004).

¹⁶³ Individual interview #7 (25 Sep 2004)

¹⁶⁴ Group interview #20 (8 Oct 2004)

¹⁶⁵ Group interview #22 (14 Oct 2004)

“We cannot have the priest in our committee, but we received the school from the Bishop so we appointed Mr X coordination person between the church and the SMC.”

Question: “What would happen if the Sub-county council or DEO would appoint a Lutheran or Muslim to your committee?”

Answer (confidently): “That would not happen.”¹⁶⁶

“The church cannot nominate SMC members. That is forbidden. The DEO takes a close interest. But those members elected from the parents make sure the church is represented. It is the foundation body.”¹⁶⁷

“The Bishop has his own Education Committee and when needed, they assist parents in coming up with candidates for elections in school committees.”¹⁶⁸

Some school committees, however, did not bother to ‘circumvent’ the regulations. Anecdotal Evidence Box 5 provides two examples of school committees that almost challenge government’s regulations. These two school committees not only openly list more than nine statutory members for their committees, but they also openly present the chaplain as a committee member or introduce two persons who sit on the committee on behalf of the “Foundation Body”. (Furthermore, one of these committees saw its “chairman elect” rejected in an earlier communication by the District Education Officer for failing to meet educational requirements, but the committee now re-introduces the man as an ordinary member.)

The formal regulations for Uganda’s Health Unit Management Committees stipulate that all members are appointed by local authorities – there are no elections. Formally, the Sub-county Council appoints “a prominent educated public figure of high integrity and not holding any political position” as chairperson. In addition, the Sub-county council selects one teacher from a school near the dispensary to be a member. Subsequently, each of the lower ranking Parish Councils being served by the dispensary – usually two to four Parish Councils – appoints a representative on the committee. The nurse in-charge of the dispensary acts as the *ex officio* secretary to the committee of five to seven persons (GoU, 2003b: 1). The interviews with committees in the field research confirmed the control by government of the selection process:

¹⁶⁶ Group interview #24 (15 Oct 2004)

¹⁶⁷ Group interview #26 (18 Oct 2004)

¹⁶⁸ Group interview #28 (19 Oct 2004)

“We are the second HUMC. The first committee did not meet. So the nurse in charge talked with the health officials and she then selected nine new members. Us”.¹⁶⁹

“The Sub-county Council chairman was instructed there should be an HUMC for this clinic. So he selected us. I did not ask for this position, but I was appointed by the Council... it is an honour one cannot refuse.”¹⁷⁰

“Each Parish Council leader sent five or ten names to the Sub-County Council. These candidates did not know. The Sub-county then selected the members. It is an honour to be selected.”¹⁷¹

One recurrent – and consistent – claim throughout the interviews is that candidates did not ask or compete for appointment to the dispensary committee but were ‘hand-picked’ for the “honour” by Village or Parish Councils, or by the nurse in-charge. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity in the field research to investigate what criteria would guide the local councils’ selection of candidates, or the criteria by the Sub-county Council for selecting from the proposed candidates. However, a remark by one of the district health officials seemed to confirm that village councils can feel they ‘appointed’ candidates, but then rely on central government representatives to intervene in case of problems, which suggests central government is indeed the leading appointing body.

“If the Village Council has a problem with their HUMC member then they come and see me. In fact, that has happened a few times and my deputy is currently investigating such a complaint.”¹⁷²

The regulations for Tanzania’s school committees have changed significantly since the decentralisation policies of 2001. The current regulations stipulate there will be five members elected by parents and two members elected from the academic staff. In addition, the headteacher and the elected Ward Councillor are *ex officio* members and if applicable or desirable, a committee may have one representative of the “voluntary organisation if the school was originally established by that organisation” and a “patron” (*mlezi*) if the committee decides to have one. Tanzania’s regulations do not indicate the school committee members require government formal ‘appointment’ or elaborate details of the electoral process (GoT, 2002a: 1369). In all, the total number of school committee

¹⁶⁹ Group interview #15 (5 Oct 2004).

¹⁷⁰ Group interview 19 (7 Oct 2004).

¹⁷¹ Group interview #27 (18 Oct 2004).

¹⁷² Individual interview #8 (26 Sep 2004).

members will vary from nine to 11. The interviews with school committees, however, reveal a rather different picture.

First, field research found elected Ward Councillors were involved in the meetings of only a few school committees on an occasional basis. In fact, most school committees mentioned Councillors as an external actor with whom they interacted.¹⁷³ Second, most school committees had a *mlezi*, but with a few exceptions, these patrons did not live near the school and did not take part in meetings. (See section 4.5 for more details about the role of a *mlezi*.) Third, and most important, the interviews showed a wide diversity in the number of committee members (up to 16) but also in electoral processes: uniquely local agency and conditions were determinants, not government regulations, as these quotes demonstrate:¹⁷⁴

“There was a general parents meeting where several candidates introduced themselves. Voting was done by a show of hands and six were elected. Two of the old committee members got re-elected, two did not.”¹⁷⁵

“There are three churches, each appoints three representatives in the school committee. Then the parents also met and they and they elected five members.”¹⁷⁶

The Village Council issued an election notice for the school committee and candidates had three weeks to present themselves to the Council. At a public meeting seven members were elected by raising hands. But the chairman was chosen in a secret ballot. The teachers also elected two members.”¹⁷⁷

As in Uganda, the role of local churches – defined as ‘voluntary organisations’ in Tanzania – that have founded the school can play an important role in the selection of school committee members. And again, the selection processes appear to be different at almost every school:

“The meeting considered electing representatives for all religious organisations in the village: Catholics, Lutherans, Muslims and 7th Day Adventists. However, one of

¹⁷³ Case studies into school committees in Tanzania prior to the decentralisation of 2001 suggests some school committees would invite Ward Councillors if and when need arises, rather than consider the Councillor as a permanent member of the school committee (PAMOJA, 2002b: 15).

¹⁷⁴ A 2002 research among 95 school committees in the Kilimanjaro Region that found the number of committee members ranged from 10 to 17, “implying breaching the Act” (PAMOJA, 2002b: viii).

¹⁷⁵ Group interview #38 (26 Nov 2004).

¹⁷⁶ Group interview #46 (3 Dec 2004).

¹⁷⁷ Group interview #55 (11 Dec 2004).

them was chosen because he had the trust of the other religious groups. So he represents all.”¹⁷⁸

“We have one representative for the three, Lutherans, Catholics and Muslims. The parents chose the Catholic and the others trusted him and found him acceptable.”

Question: “What would happen if he became unacceptable to some of the others?”

Answer (puzzled): “Don’t know. We would probably have another election.”¹⁷⁹

“There are three churches around this school, each nominated a candidate for the school committee. In the elections only the Lutheran candidate got elected.”¹⁸⁰

The formal requirements for Dispensary Committees in Tanzania specify they are composed of five voting and three non-voting members. The five voting members comprise three members “from the community of dispensary users” who apply individually after the Ward Development Committee has “advertise [d] the vacant post for representation of health facility users”. The Ward Development Committee makes a selection from the applicants and proposes “the list of elected candidates” to the District Council for approval. The other two voting members are to be representatives from private health facilities in the area; one from a not-for-profit facility (i.e. run by churches or an NGO) and one from a private clinic. In addition, the dispensary committee has three “non-voting” members by virtue of their office: one member of the Ward Development Committee, a member of the Village Council and the nurse in-charge as the *ex officio* secretary” (GoT, 2002a: 1332). The field research in two districts showed the two districts had created – or perhaps allowed – different selection processes.

In one of the two districts, the health officials distributed application forms for “Positions in Health Committees in the district”, there was no information about responsibilities or requirements, except that applications were to be submitted to Village Council authorities. Anecdotal Evidence Box 4 shows a copy of the official form. The field research found that even though the starting point for all dispensary committees was the application form, there was still considerable variation in how the actual committee members were selected, including partial elections:

¹⁷⁸ Group interview #57 (13 Dec 2004)

¹⁷⁹ Group interview #58 (13 Dec 2004)

¹⁸⁰ Group interview #62 (15 Dec 2004)

“The District Medical Officer sent a letter and application forms to all Village Councils. There were 17 candidates in our village. The Village Council selected ten people from those 17 for a village meeting and the three of us were elected in a general meeting.”¹⁸¹

“The District officials distributed application forms. We all applied. Many people applied. The Ward Development Committee selected people for living near the dispensary and be a respected person.”¹⁸²

In the other district the selection of members for the dispensary committees was largely left to a ‘hand-picking’ by local government officials. Committee members all more or less went through this selection process:

“The Ward Executive Officer received a letter from the District Medical Officer to arrange for setting up dispensary committees. The Village Governments then selected two persons per village and proposed these to the Ward Officer, who selected us. We did not apply for the job but feel honoured to be selected.”¹⁸³

This selection process appears similar to the process for selecting members for dispensary committees in Uganda, and as in Uganda, the field research had no opportunity to investigate how Village Governments selected their candidates. With regard to the other two “voting members” of the dispensary committees – representatives from other clinics in the areas – the field research found none of the interviewed committees had these members on board:

We know the Catholic clinic and the private hospital were invited to send someone, but only the private hospital nominated someone. He has not yet had time to come to a meeting.”¹⁸⁴

“There’s no church clinic here. Someone from the private clinic is a also statutory member of our committee. But they never come when we call for a meeting.”¹⁸⁵

Similarly, there was no evidence or mention of participation by the statutory non-voting members of dispensary committees: representatives of the Ward Development Committee

¹⁸¹ Group interview #33 (24 Nov 2004).

¹⁸² Group interview #43 (2 Dec 2004)

¹⁸³ Group interview #61 (15 Dec 2004)

¹⁸⁴ Group interview #43 (2 Dec 2004)

¹⁸⁵ Group interview #53 (10 Dec 2004)

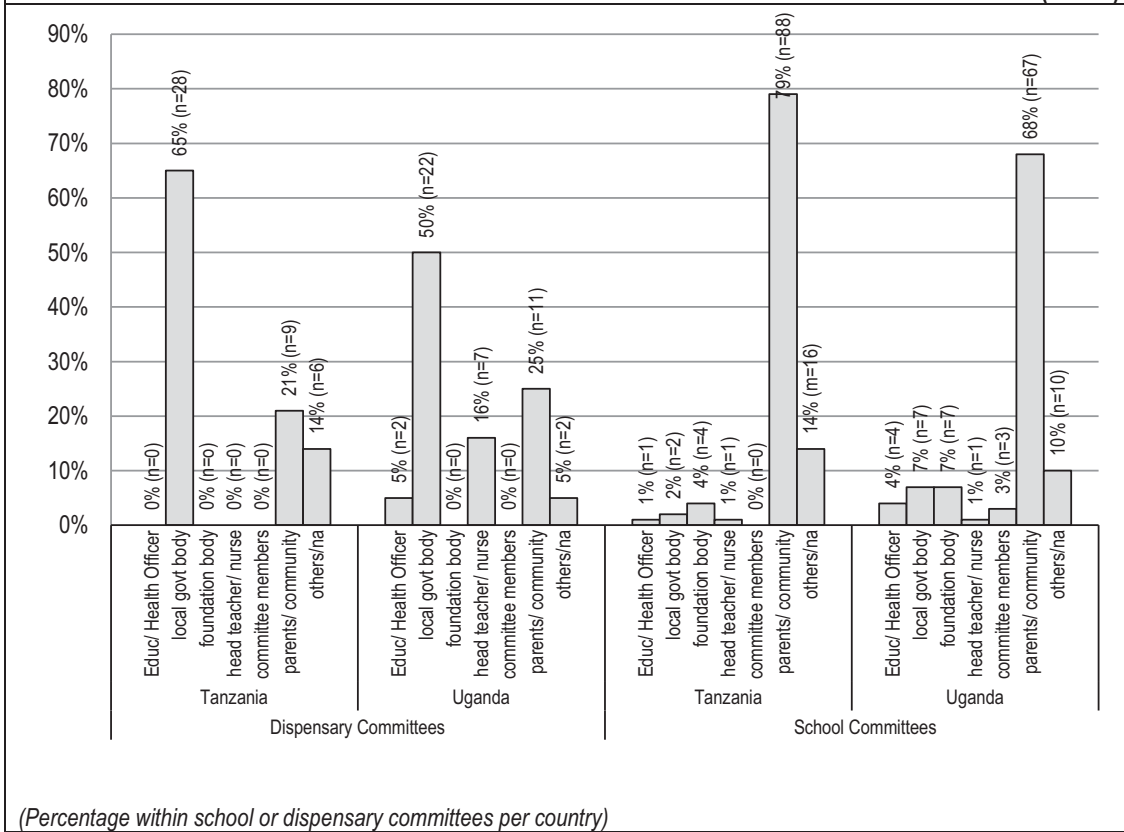
and the Village Council. Five of the 11 nurses in-charge, however, noted that they sent minutes of the meetings to the Committee and the Council.

In summary, it seems that contrary to the letter and intentions of its regulations, the government of Uganda does not control the appointment of members for school committees; in practice the parents and local polity dynamics determine the selection of the members. Tanzania's government has less express intentions to control the appointment process since the decentralisation policies, but regulates for the number of members and representational membership. In practice, however, parents and local polity dynamics not only determine the selection of members but also largely ignore central government regulations regarding numbers and representation. Dispensary committees, on the other hand, show a different picture. Candidates for Uganda's dispensary committees are pre-selected by the lowest tiers of local government and appointed by higher tiers. There may be some influence of local actors and local political dynamics in the pre-selection, but the appointing authority of the government is not contested. The appointment of members of Tanzania's dispensary committee seems to unfold under similar processes with government in clear control.

The analysis of the individual questionnaires filled out by committee members dovetails with the above pattern, as Table 6 on the next page shows. When asked "Who proposed you as a member of this committee?" large majorities of school committee members replied "parents" or "community" and a very small minority said they were proposed by local government bodies. In dispensary committees, on the other hand, a majority of committee members said they were proposed by local government bodies. A small minority, however, noted they were proposed by "the community". Ultimately, these trends may influence committees' decisions when it comes to the directionality of their accountability – as will be discussed in a few pages.

Table 6: Selection and election of committee members. Who proposed you?

(n=298)



Ex officio members of management committees

Effectively control over the flow of resources within a management committee is, of course, not equally distributed over all members. If only by virtue of their office, the chairpersons and treasurers would formally have more direct control over resources within a committee. And, perhaps more importantly, the nurse in-charge and the headteacher as committees' *ex officio* members and secretaries could quite possibly have more control over resources than ordinary members by virtue of their delegated or direct powers, as well as on the basis of better and more frequent access to information via their daily work contacts and their on average better educational profiles. (See section 4.5 for details on educational profiles.) Effectively, central government could thus exert control over committees and the flow of resources via the nurses and headteachers who are likely to have a primary loyalty to government as their employer.

The field research looked at the role of nurses and headteacher in management committees at two levels; formal powers and informal power dynamics. Formal powers over the flow of resources could be exerted via voting rights and the signing authority for cheques. With regard to voting rights, however, regulations exclude *ex officio* members from voting. In Uganda, the headteacher “shall not be entitled to vote on any matter” (GoU, 1969: 2) and the likewise, “the in-charge of the [health] unit shall have no voting rights” (GoU, 1998b: 7). Tanzania’s nurse in-charge is also explicitly excluded from voting (GoT, 2002a: 1333). The recent regulations for Tanzania’s school committees are not explicit on the voting rights of the headteacher, but the two representatives of teaching staff obviously do have voting rights. A potential for formal power over resources via the signing of cheques is only relevant for school committees in Uganda and Tanzania, as dispensary committees have no direct access to cash. For school committees in both countries, all cheques require the double signature of the headteacher and the chairperson or treasurer (GoT, 2003: 34; GoU, 1999: 82). A fortuitously witnessed unfortunate incident would suggest the practice of ‘double signatures’ is strictly adhered to, as this field journal entry recorded:

While waiting outside the office of a District Education Officer in the morning sun, I shared the bench with a headteacher who had come to the office to seek a solution to a difficult problem. The chairman of the school committee had just died and the treasurer as the second co-signatory was absent. He now wanted to ask the District Officer to co-sign the school’s cheque he was holding, or get an advance from the District. He went in the office before I did. When he came out five minutes later, he said:

“The man told me to find the treasurer. I don’t know what to do now.”¹⁸⁶

The potential for the exertion of informal power by nurses and headteachers is, as indicated, significant due to their advantage over committee members in terms of information, knowledge and status. Researching informal power dynamics within management committees would require an in-depth qualitative approach that could not be included across the board in this field research. However, anecdotal evidence from three perspectives on school committees in Uganda would suggest the informal power of headteachers is limited. In a first perspective, cooperation with another PhD researcher in Uganda in investigating the relationship between headteachers and chairpersons concludes

¹⁸⁶ Individual interview #13 (4 Oct 2004)

it is quite a balanced relationship, both in terms of check-and-balances in the control over the flow of resources, as well as in ‘steering’ or ‘dominating’ the proceedings in meetings of the school committee (Prinsen and Titeca, 2008: 158).

A second perspective to investigate the informal power of headteacher is predicated on an analysis of various documents emanating from school committees in Uganda. Anecdotal Evidence Boxes 6 and 7 present letters from school committee chairpersons to the District Education Officer, demanding their headteachers be removed for a number of reasons, one being “dodges giving information about UPE funds received”. Box 6 also presents chairpersons’ letters moving the contrary; asking the District Education Officer to annul the proposed transfer of a head teacher because the school committee is extremely satisfied with the headteacher. Anecdotal Evidence Box 8 provides an example of a chairperson summoning a headteacher “to account for the property you handled”. These examples suggest school committees’ chairpersons can – contrary to what appears to be stronger position of the headteacher – exert control and agency over headteachers.

Finally, in a third perspective, a closer look at the ‘low scoring categories’ in Table 6 shows that only very few – nine of 298 – of the committee members indicate they feel they are in the committee by proposal of the nurse or headteacher. Arguably, if the nurses or headteachers as *ex officio* members of management committees had a significant informal power, they would have been tempted to see associates appointed to the committee. There is no evidence for that. In summary, there seems no clear evidence to suggest that nurses or headteachers as *ex officio* members of local management committees exert significant or undue formal or informal control over the committees’ proceedings or resources. Particularly in the case of Uganda’s school committees, there is evidence suggesting the inherent authority and powers of headteachers can be checked by school committees.

Acts of downward and upward accountability

An understanding from a local perspective of who controls local management committees and the flow of resources can be gleaned by studying the directionality of acts of accountability by management committees. This, of course, is predicated on the assumption that committees will direct their acts of accountability towards those who they believe are ultimately in control – even though formal regulations, as concluded earlier,

state management committees are accountable to the government bodies that appointed them. This section presents analyses of the committees' acts of accountability from two sources: a collection of documents as anecdotal evidence and the post-fieldwork interpretation of the arrows in the Venn diagrams made by committees in the interviews. The Boxes 7 and 8 of Anecdotal Evidence show that determining the directionality of an act of accountability is not as straight forward as looking at sender and addressee. Three of the four letters are from school committees to District Education Officers, but none represents an act of upward accountability from school committee to the officer. In fact, all these letters constitute acts of downward accountability by the school committee to, respectively, the parents in general, four particular teachers, the local community and the parents of a particular pupil.¹⁸⁷ In all four cases, the school committees ask or almost instruct the District Education Officers to take a particular line of action. And in the cases presented as anecdotal evidence, as in many others, District Education Officers complied: "post a new headmaster" and "teachers have been transferred".

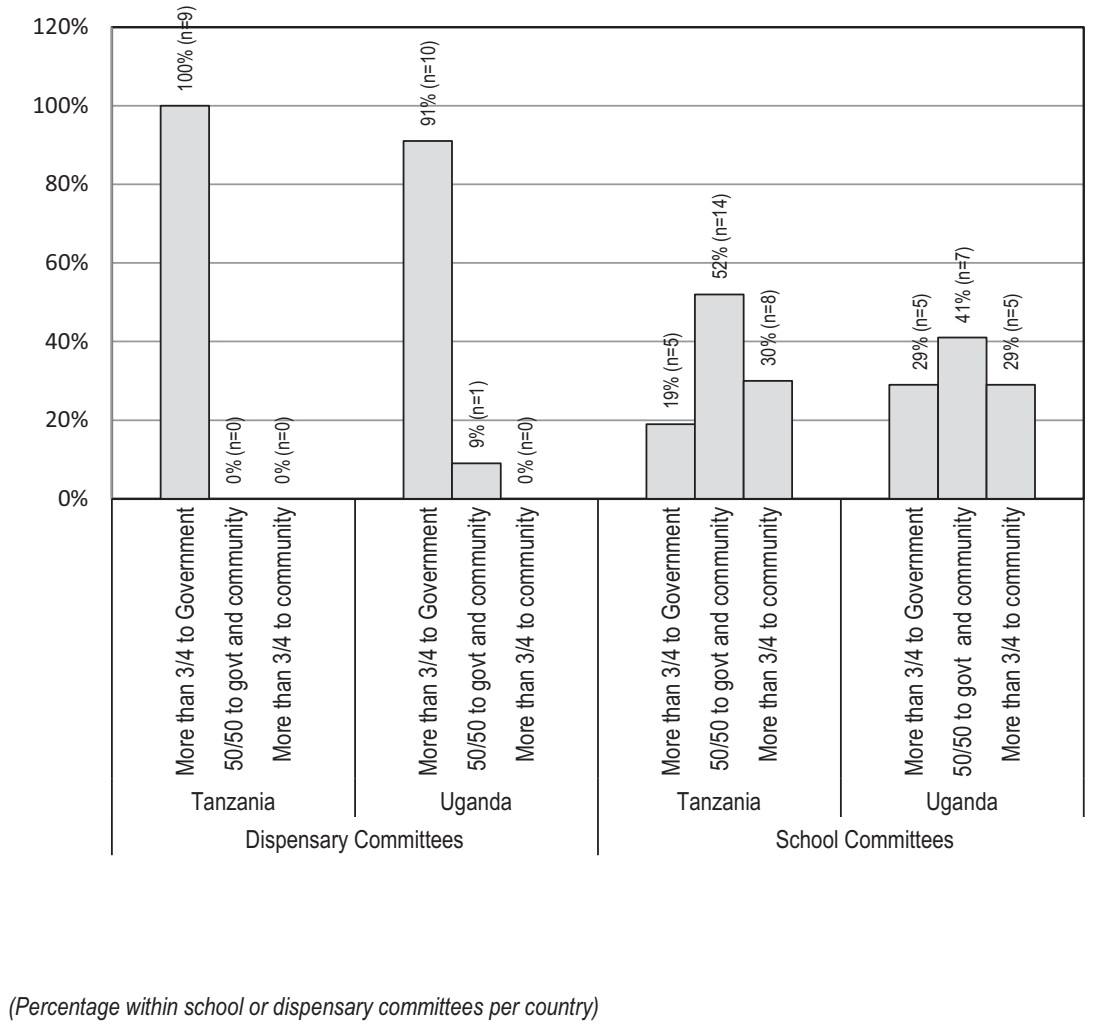
The second source of analysis of management committees' acts of accountability are the arrows that committee members filled in to connect the circles of the Venn Diagram during the group interviews in the field research.¹⁸⁸ A post-fieldwork assessment of the content and directionality of these arrows built up the data that leads to Table 7, presented on the next page. The table suggests that whereas dispensary committees in Uganda and Tanzania orient more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of their acts of accountability to government bodies, the school committees in Uganda and Tanzania show a much more diverse picture. The largest group of school committees tends to distribute their acts of accountability more or less evenly – on a 50/50 basis – between the parents or the local polity and on the other hand government bodies. But the table also underscores that as a group, school committees tend to make uniquely local choices. There are almost as many committees that direct $\frac{3}{4}$ or more of their accountability to government as there are committees that direct $\frac{3}{4}$ or more of their accountability to the surrounding local polities.

¹⁸⁷ Arguably, in several cases the school committees use their communication with the District Education Officer also to enhance their own authority when acting locally, 'with the approval of the district authorities' as in the cases, for example, of disciplining the thieving or eloping teachers.

¹⁸⁸ See Chapter 3 for key methodological considerations that of particular importance in this case where the risk of 'analyst bias' needs to be taken into account.

Table 7: Directionality of acts of accountability

(n=64)



Interestingly, a comparison between the data in Table 6 – revealing who proposed committee members as candidates for the committees – and Table 7 with data on acts of accountability shows the two tables correlate closely. This suggests committee members indeed orient their accountability to the bodies that they believe put them in charge. For members in dispensary committees, that is clearly local government. For members of school committees that certainly includes the surrounding local polity. As a member in one school committee said:

“We are elected by parents, if they don’t trust us anymore we won’t be re-elected.”¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Group interview #60 (14 Dec 2004)

Financial accountability

Control over and accountability for the use of resources is administratively often concentrated on the auditing of financial processes. This section summarises the regulations for financial accountability of committees. This will show that in practical terms only school committees in Uganda and Tanzania have effective access to income for which they must account, which leaves this section to concentrate on school committees only. Subsequently, this section presents findings from the field research about the practical obstacles and solutions at the level of local polities when it comes to auditing school committees, including the contentious issue of ‘sitting allowances’ for management committees. The section ends with findings about the role of publicity and visibility in auditing financial data in local polities.

The regulations for Uganda’s School Management Committees’ financial accountability were reformulated in the 1998 guidelines introduced the policy of Universal Primary Education. School Committees are expected to receive their entitlement in grants from central government via the District Council on a monthly basis and must be “ensuring that funds received by the school” as well as “expenditure of the school are publicly displayed near the school every month” (GoU, 1998a: 18). School committees are also expected, largely based on the 1969 regulations, to report on a quarterly basis to the district education authorities (GoU, 1969: 8, 9).

With the abolishment of user fees in 2001, Uganda’s Health Unit Management Committees no longer have direct responsibilities for revenues and expenses.¹⁹⁰ They are only expected to “supervise management of ... finances by ensuring that financial regulations and accounting instructions are observed” (GoU, 2003a: 1). Yet, as there are normally no finances coming into the dispensary it is doubtful that there actually is much to supervise in the financial handlings by the nurse in-charge.

Regulations for Tanzania’s School Committees leave the committees as the authority “to approve Whole School Development Plans and budgets” and instruct committees “to open bank accounts” in which they will receive grants directly from central government on a

¹⁹⁰ See footnote 73.

quarterly basis. A wider accountability goes both up- and downwards as school committees are expected to send these approved budgets upwards to local government authorities, “for scrutiny, coordination and consolidation”, as well as downward by stipulating committees will be “making incomes and expenditures publicly available” (GoT, 2001c: 16).

Tanzania’s Dispensary Committees do not have their own bank accounts and can only access funds via the resident nurse or doctor “in-charge” and “funds for the management of the dispensary will be administered through account no. 6 maintained by the District Medical Officer/Ministry of Health” (GoT, 2001d: 31). As in the case of Uganda’s dispensary committees, this practically leaves the dispensary committees without any finances to handle or account for.

Concentrating, then, on the findings from the field research regarding school committees’ financial accountability, the first observation is that very little is known about financial practices at the end of the chain. Generally, studies about financial accountability are driven by international donor agencies and these studies concentrate largely on the flow of resources in a chain that connects donors to the Ministries of Finance, the Ministries of Education and Health and the district authorities. Most studies stop at the door of the schools and dispensaries and very little research is available regarding the spending and accounting for financial resources within the schools and dispensaries (For Uganda, for example: Reinikka and Svensson, 2004; and for Tanzania, see: REPOA, 2005).¹⁹¹ Interviews with District Education Officers in both countries point at transport and lack of staff as the main obstacles to why they do not carry out audits or inspections:

“We have more than 400 schools, but four of the seven motorbikes have broken down and the Department has not much of a budget for to do inspections. So the auditors can only check the documents the schools send us.”¹⁹²

“The district has 112 schools and I have two inspector-auditors. They have motorbikes, but I only have 400,000 USh [GP: about 400 USD] per year for fuel and for maintenance of these two bikes and the car. We don’t do many school inspections.”¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ This ‘stopping at the door of schools and dispensaries’ probably has numerous reasons. One of the principal reasons would be – as I will show – that all paper trails stops at the level of districts or sub-districts and any auditing activity beyond that point would not only compare negatively with the actual budgets that individual school committees manage, but be practically a mostly futile exercise.

¹⁹² Individual interview #13 (4 Oct 2004)

¹⁹³ Individual interview #19 (19 Oct 2004)

“If there is a problem with finances, the Ward Education Coordinator [at sub-district level] must solve the problem. We do not have the staff to investigate.”¹⁹⁴

In effect, district education officials in both countries openly acknowledged that school committees are not audited. Practically, there is also no incentive – or penalty – in the system to audit schools. Irrespective of a committee’s financial probity or malfeasance, it is unlikely that their behaviour will be grounds to continue or cut the flow of resources:

“If there is a problem with a school’s accounts, I would not suspend payments to that school because once Kampala stops issuing cheques for a school, I can never get it started again. I would have to sort out the problem myself.”¹⁹⁵

The only ‘check’ against financial mismanagement that the district education authorities in Uganda have is open discord in the school committee:

“Schools get their next tranche of grants if they send me a copy of signed minutes and the signed form in which the committee approves of the past quarter’s expenditure.”¹⁹⁶

“As long as the school committee signs off on the past quarter and approves the budget for the next quarter, I am okay and authorise payment of the next tranche.”¹⁹⁷

Anecdotal Evidence Box 9 presents an example of the form that two members of the school committee and the headteacher have to sign, stating the expenditure for the past quarter was in accordance with the budget and regulations. To illustrate that a school committee can consider this a serious exercise, Box 9 also includes a page of the minutes of the same committee’s meeting one week prior to signing off on the form. In this meeting, the members of the school committee had compared budget and actual expenditure under guidance of three members of a Finance Sub-Committee.

Anecdotal Evidence Box 10 contains two more examples of school committees’ internal processes for financial accountability. One example details the deliberation of a school committee in joint session with a PTA about the next quarter’s budget, ranging from rat

¹⁹⁴ Individual interview #25 (8 Dec 2004)

¹⁹⁵ Individual interview #10 (28 Sep 2004)

¹⁹⁶ Individual interview #19 (19 Oct 2004)

¹⁹⁷ Individual interview #10 (28 Sep 2004)

poison to the sitting allowances for committee members. The other example is a page from minutes of a meeting where parents negotiate a budget for the parental contributions to a school lunch programme with 70 parents, which ultimately comes down to a vote.

In all, the district archives with minutes of school committees in Uganda and Tanzania found ample – if incomplete, inconsistent and untraceable – evidence that school committees endeavour to be financially accountable, or at least endeavour to leave a paper trail of decisions regarding budgets and expenditures. In view of the fact that inspections by the education authorities are very unlikely – and school committees must know that – it seems reasonable to assume that committees are at least partially recording in order to be accountable to parents or the local polity surrounding them. This conclusion is reinforced when considering some findings about the awarding of ‘sitting allowances’ for committee members. In Uganda, school committees are legally prohibited from receiving payments: “No remuneration shall be paid to any member of a management committee for his services as such a member” (GoU, 1969: 2). Yet, where school allowed a perusal of their records, there was open evidence of well-recorded “lunch allowances” to an equivalent of a day’s minimum wage. Anecdotal Evidence Box 11 presents two examples.

Finally, the fact that central government regulations for school committees since 1998 (Uganda) and 2001 (Tanzania) demand that committees make sure financial information is “publicly displayed” or “publicly available” could hint at governments’ acknowledgement that downward accountability to, or within, the local polity is perhaps the closest thing to financial accountability for school committees – given the practical obstacles to actual auditing. In practice, however, there are at least three practical obstacles for meaningful ‘auditing’ by parents in the local polity of the publicly displayed information.

First, the field research ascertained that the public display of income (grants) and expenditure in a school is generally done in places where parents would not go: behind the desk of the headmaster. Anecdotal Evidence Box 12 gives near identical examples from Uganda and Tanzania. Second, the public display of a school’s income – i.e. the amount on the capitation grant cheque issued to a school – is done on public notice boards at the District Council offices. Anecdotal Evidence Box 13 shows pictures of such displays in Uganda and Tanzania. While this is a publicly accessible space for parents, few parents

would travel a day to go to the district capital, look up the amount for their school's cheque, go home, and match the number with what is displayed in the headteacher's office.¹⁹⁸ Third, and from an auditing point of view most critical, none of these data constitutes evidence that the finances are actually spent on the allocated budget items and that each expense is placed in the appropriate category. Moreover, the rural environment where several purchases are made is not conducive to producing adequate auditing evidence. Receipts for the purchase of, for example, books or food are rarely issued and evidence seldom kept by the issuer. Auditing in rural Uganda and Tanzania is a creative art.

However, when it comes to downward financial accountability, the creative art of auditing in rural East Africa may not be critical. Ultimately, parents and stakeholders in the local polity are the best placed persons to verify whether some 'value for money' was achieved. Anecdotal Evidence Box 14 provides examples of 'Public display of results of financial resources' that are accessible, assessable and understandable to most people in the local polity surrounding the school: a repaired school hall, a stock of books, and a school lunch programme. Some school committees expressed a clear awareness of this form of 'financial accountability':

"Most parents paid their donation for the food programme as agreed. We have had a meal for pupils the whole year."¹⁹⁹

"Parents are impressed when they see the toilets. And the books on the shelves."²⁰⁰

Conclusions

Looking at the findings regarding the control and accountability over the flow of resources in the light of the research question – how are central government and management committees developing their institutional framework – three general conclusions come to the surface.

¹⁹⁸ Donors and NGOs in Uganda and Tanzania have tried to overcome this problem by printing the value of grants per school in newspapers and reading them on local radio stations (cf. Reinikka and Svensson, 2005)

¹⁹⁹ Group interview #45 (3 Dec 2004)

²⁰⁰ Group interview #46 (3 Dec 2004)

First, regulations and administrative processes clearly underscore that school and dispensary committees are accountable to central government and that central government has formal control over the appointment of committee members – with the exception of Tanzania’ school committees where government only regulates for the number of committee members and representational membership. However, in practice school committees in both countries openly ignore or elegantly bypass the regulations to determine who will be on the school committee, in what numbers and representing which institutions. Central government does, on the other hand, effectively control the appointment of members for dispensary committees in both countries, though it does rely on local government bodies and village councils to pre-select and select candidates in processes that must be opaque to central government. Committee members confirm this overall tendency. When asked “who nominated you?” a clear majority of school committee members points at the local community and parents and most dispensary committees members point at (local) government bodies.

Second, while it might be argued that central government has a controlling hand in local school and dispensary committees via the headteacher and nurse in-charge as *ex officio* members of the committees, there is no evidence in formal powers or the use of informal powers that headteachers and nurses control committees. While headteacher and nurse obviously have advantages in information and knowledge, there is enough evidence to suggest that formal and informal check-and-balances to limit exclusive control by *ex officio* committee members exist.

Third, the analysis of acts of accountability by management committees suggests that committees do not direct their accountability only or necessarily at the source of the resources. In fact, management committees appear to be driven by two other factors when it comes to directing their accountability. One factor is an inclination by committees to direct accountability at the party they feel has nominated them to their position. The other factor is a variable composite of uniquely local dynamics; in the same district, some school committees direct most accountability at government, others at parents or the surrounding community and yet other school committees divide their acts of accountability evenly between both. Dispensary committees, on the other hand, overwhelmingly direct their acts of accountability at government.

On a practical note unrelated to the research question; the field research also concludes that the scope for the auditing of local management committees' finances is very limited in a rural context where paper trails are short or absent. This leaves one to conclude that regulating school committees to make financial information publicly accessible is probably less useful than the initiatives taken by school committees to show the books that have been purchased, the walls that have been painted and the meals that have been dished out.

4.5 People, personal networks and elites in management committees

So far, the analyses from the field research focused on the formal aspects of the institutional framework between central government and management committees and the issue of control and accountability over the flow of resources. This section concentrates on the other key aspect of the institutional framework: the personal networks surrounding the management committees. Much of the analysis in the section is based on the individual questionnaires filled out by committee members.²⁰¹ In an opening part, the section presents data from the field research about the personal profile of committee members – who are they? The following part of this section analyses the character and density of the institutional – and the resulting personal – networks surrounding the different management committees at local level, but also at district and even national level. In the final part, the analyses investigate whether the committee members constitute a local elite, in economic and in socio-political sense, and whether they have captured the local management committees in a neo-patrimonial sense.

Gender and age profiles

With regard to gender; the current regulations for school management committees in Uganda and in Tanzania do not require that a certain proportion of the seats should be reserved for female candidates (GoT, 2001e; GoU, 1969). Uganda's operational instructions for school committees and the training manuals for local education officials with regard to the election of school committees make several suggestions with regard to prospective members' availability, interests, and character, but none to gender (GoU, 1996, 1999). Respondents in the group interviews and the individual interviews in Uganda did not once raise the issue of a gender balance among school committee members. In

²⁰¹ See Chapter 3 for methodological considerations regarding the individual questionnaires.

Tanzania, the Ministry of Education noted as one of the objectives of a nation-wide training programme in 2002-2006 for local school committees that the training should “ensure that school committees are gender-balanced” (GoT, 2001b: 13). All school committees in one of the two districts in the research had participated in this training. When talking about their elections, four of these 14 school committees indicated that women were exhorted to present themselves as candidates for election to the school committee, “to have a gender balance”.²⁰²

In contrast, governments’ legal frameworks for dispensary committees in both countries contain explicit requirements demanding a specified proportion of the dispensary committee members should be women. Uganda’s initial regulations for dispensary committees of 1998 – which triggered the establishment of most dispensary committees – stipulated that of a committee’s seven members must include “one woman representative from the Women’s Council” and states for the other representatives: “one of whom must be a woman” (GoU, 1998f: 7). The later regulations of 2003 are more ambiguous with regard to female members, stating the three representatives from the surrounding Parish Councils must be “taking into consideration gender responsiveness” (GoU, 2003b: 4). When interviewed about the election process for dispensary committees, two district councillors, were quite clear: “One third of the members must be women because they use health services more”.²⁰³ Tanzania’s legal regulations require that among the eight members of dispensary committees, “at least one third of the members shall be women” (GoT, 2002a: 1333).

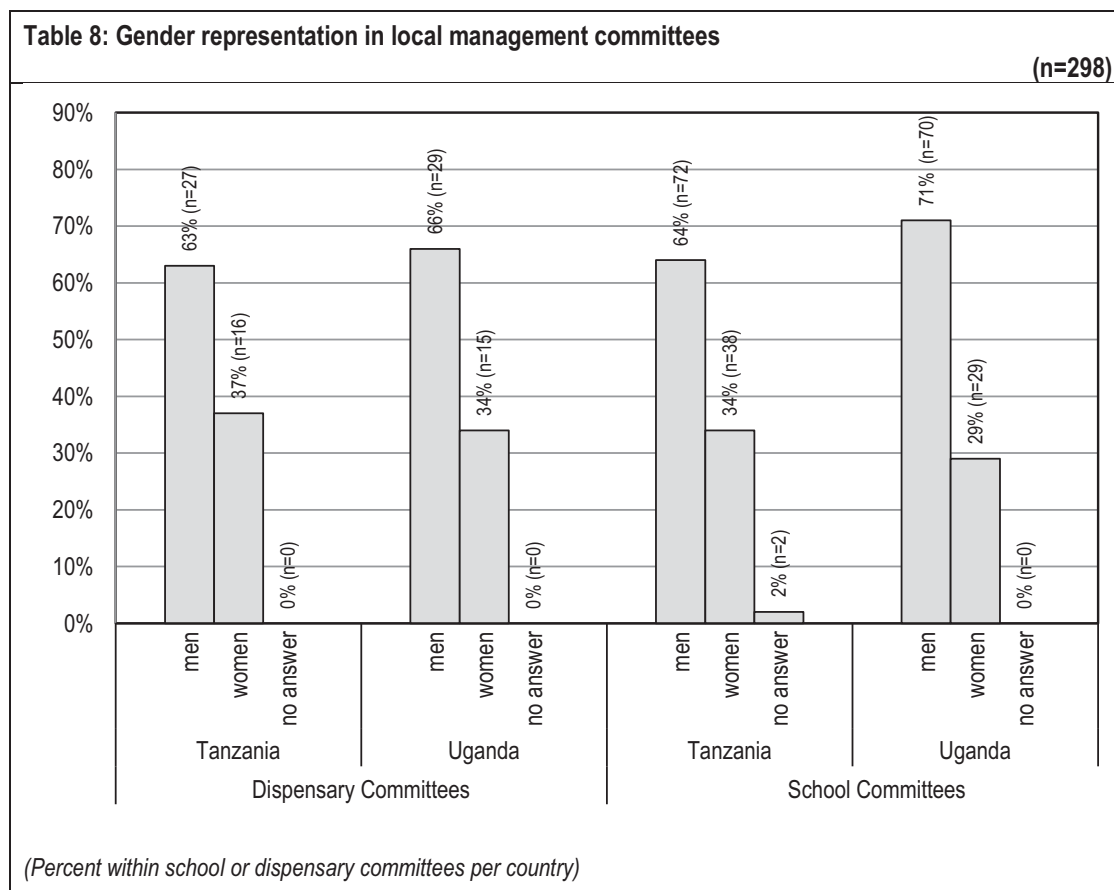
Interestingly, the analysis of the questionnaires from the 298 members of each type of management committee bears out that women make up about one third of the membership – there is no difference between school and dispensary committees (Table 8).²⁰⁴ The electoral processes for school committee members are free of gender quota, yet they lead to the same proportion of female committee members as the government controlled appointment processes in dispensary committees, which *are* directed by gender quota.

²⁰² Group interviews #44 (2 Dec 2004). Other group interviews with similar references: #40 (30 Nov 04), #60 (14 Dec 2004) and #62 (15 Dec 2004).

²⁰³ Individual interview #11 (2 Oct 2004).

²⁰⁴ This finding from my field research is similar to a research in 2002 among 95 school committees in the Kilimanjaro Region that found women made up 34% of the committee members (PAMOJA, 2002b: 16).

Apparently, when left to the political dynamics of local polities, women’s access to the institutional framework with central government is no better or worse than when central government endeavours to secure their access to management committees via regulations.

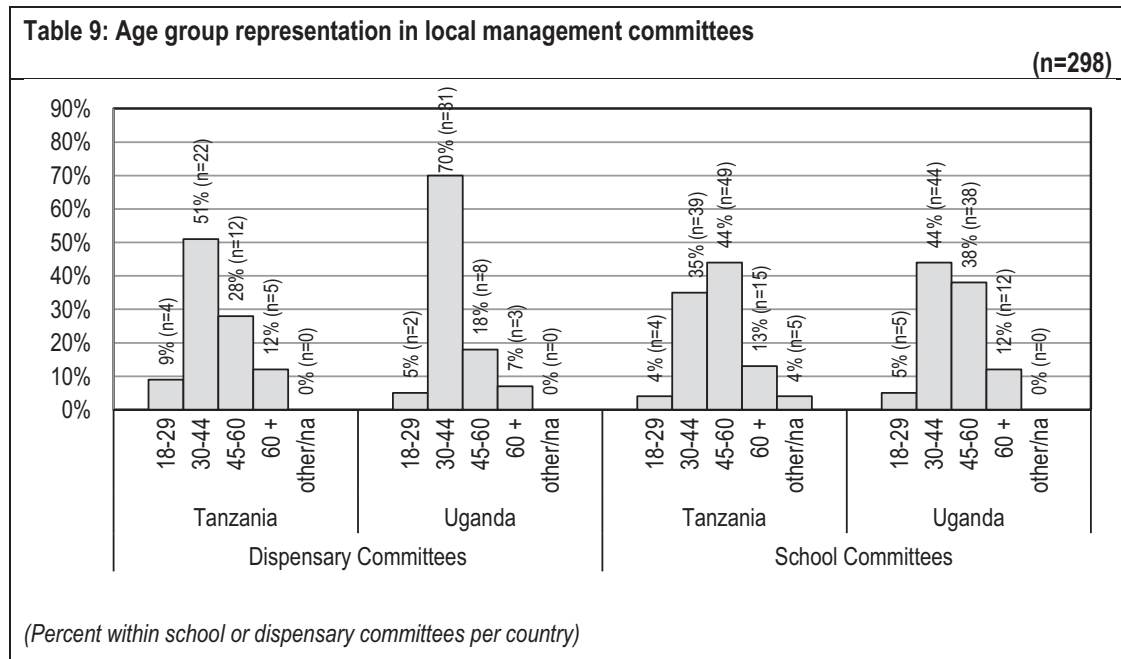


With regard to a second ascribed identity – age – the regulations for dispensary and school committees in Uganda make no reference to age. However, District councillors interviewed in Uganda – who have the potential to influence the selection of candidates for dispensary committees – repeatedly stressed they thought older people would be the preferred members of local management committees. “Only the older people are interested in development, the younger ones think more of money and personal gain.”²⁰⁵ In Tanzania, only the regulations with regard to dispensary committees make a provision of a minimum age of 21 years.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁵ Individual interview #11 (2 Oct 2004).

²⁰⁶ Interestingly, Tanzania’s regulations for candidates for local health management committees become increasingly stringent regarding age and education when going up the hierarchy. Local Dispensary

Data about age group representation from the questionnaires of the members of management committees give no reason to believe central government’s regulations are flouted in local polities. What stands out is that there are very few members under the age of 29 years, and there are few people over 61 years (Table 9). A difference between school and dispensary committees in both countries seems to be that people in the age bracket of 30-44 years form the majority of the members of dispensary committees – up to 70% of the membership of dispensary committees in Uganda. This contrasts with the composition of school committees in both countries, which is more or less evenly distributed around 40% each between the 30-44 years age group and the 45-60 years age group.



The data and interviews from the field research offer no suggestions to explain why people in the age group of 30-44 years clearly dominate the membership in dispensary committees, but hold an equal share of the membership in school committees. There could be various, possibly complementary, explanations. However, taking into consideration that members of dispensary committees have been selected by government officials while members of school committees are elected by parents, it seems that that candidates from

Committee members need to be 21 years and be able to “read and write”; members of a Hospital Committee need to be 25 years and have an education level of “primary school or above”; and members of the District’s Health Board must be 25 years and “have secondary education and above” (GoT, 2001c: 4, 7, 14).

the younger age bracket and the selecting government officials appear to be finding each other more easily in the selection process for positions in the dispensary committees and that candidates in the older age bracket of 45-60 years are either excluded or not interested in competing or standing for office.²⁰⁷ (If the latter is the case, then it would be interesting to investigate why the older persons would tend to stand for or accept positions in school committees and not dispensary committees.)

Educational and professional profiles

The field research collected data on two achieved identity profiles of committee members: their educational profile and their professional background. With regard to educational requirements, central governments of Uganda and Tanzania impose requirements with regard to candidates' education for local management committees along the same divide as the regulations for gender: minimum education levels are demanded for dispensary committees, but not for school committees. Uganda's regulations for candidates for dispensary committees demand they are an "educated representative" (GoU, 2003b: 4). Tanzania's regulations state, "a person shall be eligible to be a member of a Dispensary Committee if he ... can read and write in Kiswahili or English" (GoT, 2001c: 14).²⁰⁸ With regard to Uganda's school committees, there are guidelines for District Education Officers that recommend candidates are "literate enough" (GoU, 1996: 87).

In practice, the application of these regulations varies greatly, apparently dependent on the district health or education officials. In one district in Uganda, the District Education Officer refused to formally approve of already elected candidates for school committees because "they have not completed their primary education". Moreover, he added a personal criterion that the chairpersons should have completed four years of secondary education. Several school committees were thus forced to organise new elections.²⁰⁹ (See Anecdotal Evidence Box 15 for two examples.) In the adjacent district, the District Education Officer said the Ministry's guidelines were just guidelines, "Parents can elect and propose who

²⁰⁷ Active exclusion would go counter the opinions expressed by the two Ugandese district councillors who said they preferred older candidates (individual interview #11, 2 Oct 2004).

²⁰⁸ Guidelines for the Establishment and Operations of the Council Health Service Board and Health Facility Committees" expressly note: "members should have completed primary education" (GoT, 2001d: 28).

²⁰⁹ Individual interview #10 (28 Sep 2004).

they want.”²¹⁰ A district health official in Uganda stated that the official literacy requirements for dispensary committees were not realistic. What mattered for him was that “dispensary committee members are respected by the community”.²¹¹

In Tanzania, one District Education Officer said his guidelines recommended school committee members had at least four years of secondary education, “but in many areas there are not enough Form IV leavers. So we accept all candidates.”²¹² A Tanzanian district health official said, “being literate is good enough and it is more important candidates are committed and respected”.²¹³ Observations made during the group interviews with local management committees in both countries – particularly when members filled in the individual questionnaires – suggest that limited literacy skills were a problem for a few committee members, though never more than one member per committee. The problem was usually presented as “I have forgotten my reading glasses”, and solved with the assistance of the co-facilitator/translator.

The education profile of committee members shows two clear patterns (Table 10). First, the education profiles for both types of committees are distinctly similar *within* each country. The members of dispensary committees and the members of school committees in Tanzania have a very similar education profile. And the same goes for Uganda. It seems that within the local polities of Uganda and Tanzania, these committees attract candidates from the same pool of people and it does not seem to matter whether government officials select the members, or whether parents elect the members. In other words, it appears the conditions and dynamics in local polities under a specific central government determine who gets appointed to management committees, as central government officials fail to recruit or attract ‘better qualified’ candidates for positions in dispensary committees.

Second, the analysis reveals a stark difference in education profiles *between* the two countries. The average levels of attained education of committee members in Uganda are higher than in Tanzania. In Uganda, about half the committee members have a completed secondary education or more (47% of school committee members and 50% of dispensary

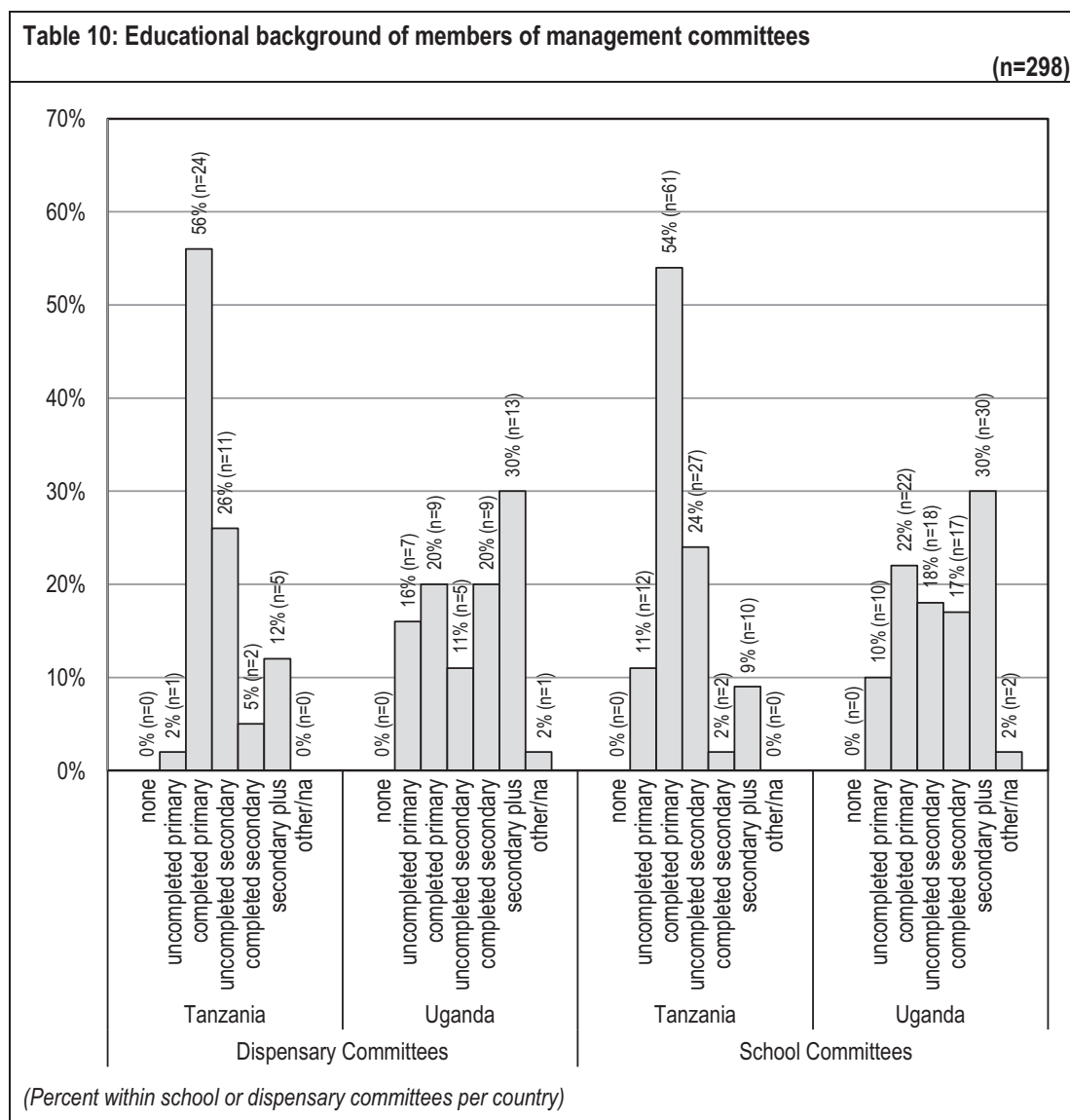
²¹⁰ Individual interview #16 (8 Oct 2004).

²¹¹ Individual interview #15 (5 Oct 2004).

²¹² Individual interview #26 (9 Dec 2004).

²¹³ Individual interview #22 (18 Nov 2004).

committee members). In Tanzania, on the other hand, about half the committee members have completed only a primary education and just a small minority has completed a secondary education or more.²¹⁴



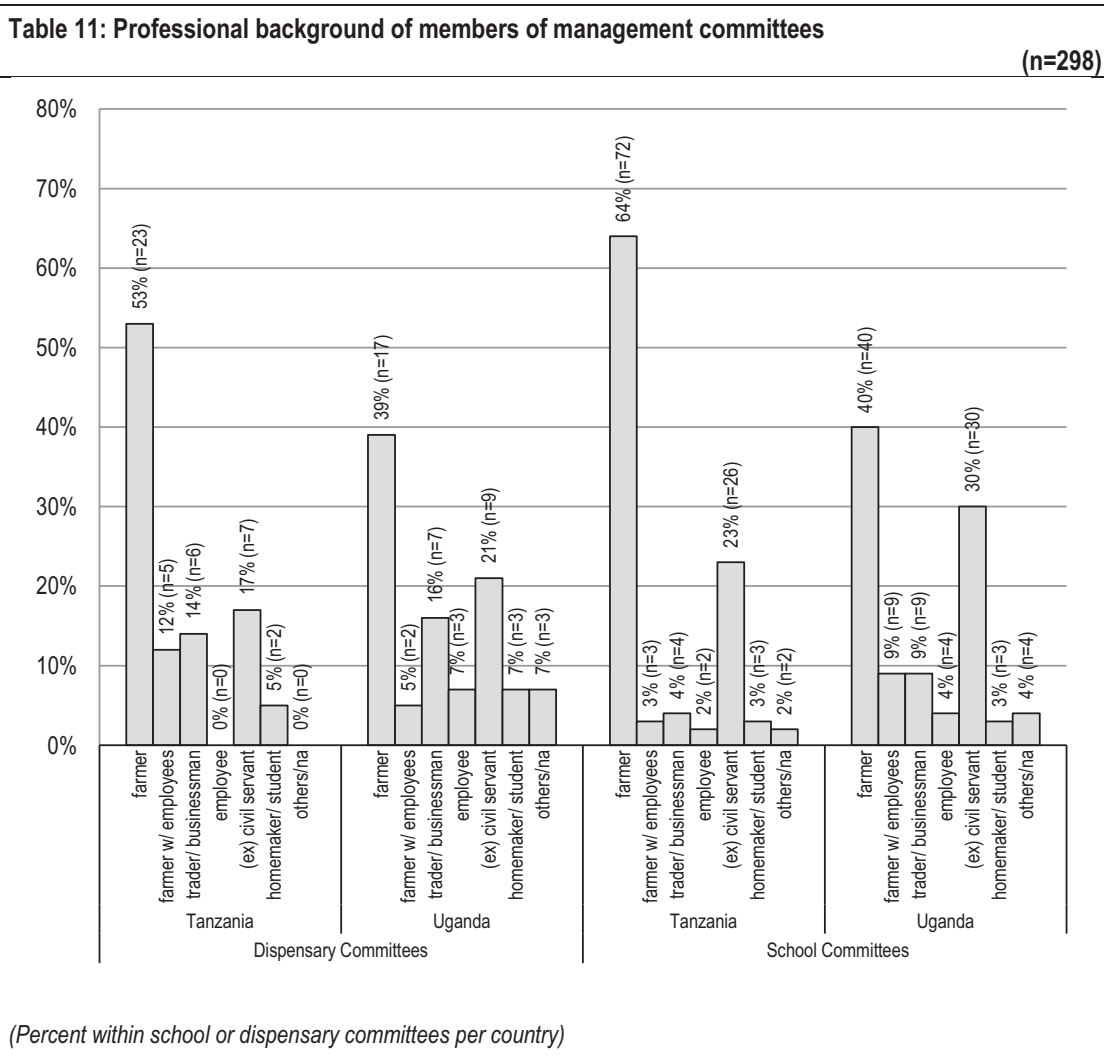
This difference cannot simply be explained by diverging national averages because both countries have comparable adult literacy rates.²¹⁵ Arguably, the analysis may suggest that

²¹⁴ Findings in my research for Tanzania coincide with those of research by a local NGO in 2002 among 95 schools in the same region. My research finds a total of 65% of the school committee members with a primary education or less, the NGO arrived at a total of 62% for this group (PAMOJA, 2002b: ix).

²¹⁵ In fact, Tanzania has a slightly higher adult literacy rate at 77% compared to Uganda's 69% (UNDP, 2004b: 178). If anything, this makes it even more puzzling that Tanzania's committee members are on average less educated than Uganda's, though differences in urbanisation rates may be the explanation.

for better educated persons in local polities in Uganda, local management committees are a far more attractive proposition than for similarly educated persons in Tanzania. Additionally, the analysis also shows that educational backgrounds are much more evenly distributed in management committees in Uganda than in Tanzania, for which the field research found no clear explanation.

With regard to committee members' professional profile, Uganda and Tanzania have no legal requirements. The individual interviews and observations during the group interviews did not reveal particular matters with regard to members' professional background. The analysis of the individual questionnaires, however, does reveal the committees are in large majority comprised of two professional groups: farmers and civil servants (Table 11).



Members describing themselves as “farmers” form the largest group in management committees in both countries. In Tanzania “farmers” are majorities in dispensary and school committees, with 53% and 64% respectively. The second largest group in all committees are members who recorded themselves as “(ex) civil servants”, ranging from 17% to 30%.²¹⁶ It should be noted that other professional groups that could represent ‘better off’ families in the local polity – i.e. the “farmer with employees” and the “trader/business(wo)man” – make up only a very small proportion of management committees.

Density of institutional and personal networks

A key research instrument in the group interviews with the management committees was the Venn diagram, because these diagrams provided detailed insights in the network of the other actors and bodies that surrounded each management committee – from the local perspective of the committee members.²¹⁷ The post fieldwork analysis of the Venn diagrams categorised each committee’s answers into three variables: direct or indirect contacts (defining an indirect contact as an actor that a local committee knew was behind one of their direct contacts and of influence on their work, e.g. the Ministry of Education behind the District Education Officer); contacts at different levels (immediate sphere, district level, national level); and the degree of importance (high, normal, minor) attached by committees to each of these contacts. Although the Venn diagrams visualise committees’ institutional contacts, these institutional contacts also represent or can easily be developed into a part of a committee’s personal networks.

Table 12 shows a summary of the analysis of the Venn diagrams revealing the density of direct and indirect contacts. There are two clear patterns.. First, the personal networks of school committees in Uganda and Tanzania are very similar in density; both have on average 5.9 direct other contacts. And, as is to be expected, the number of contacts decreases when moving to higher levels. The density of the personal networks around dispensary committees in Uganda and Tanzania is also quite similar – 4.5 and 5.3

²¹⁶ The original format of the questionnaire distinguished between “active civil servant” and “retired civil servant”, but the two are presented in the table under one category of “(ex) civil servant” because the responses nearly balanced (34 and 38 respectively).

²¹⁷ The Venn Diagrams actually had a dual purpose; they also provided insight in the character of the relationships between the committees and the bodies surrounding them. See Table 7 and the section “Acts of downward and upward accountability”). See Chapter 3 for methodological considerations regarding the Venn Diagrams and the post fieldwork analysis of the findings as presented here.

respectively – but when compared to school committees, the dispensary committees clearly possess less dense personal networks.

Table 12: Density of the institutional and personal network of management committees Summary ^{a)}

		Level	Average number of actors with whom a committee has <i>direct</i> contacts	Average number of actors with whom a committee has <i>indirect</i> contacts
Uganda	School Management Committee	National level	0.2	1.0
		District level	1.4	3.4
		Immediate sphere	4.3	2.7
		<i>Total</i>	5.9	7.0
	Health Unit Management Committee	National level	0.0	0.6
		District level	0.5	1.5
		Immediate sphere	4.0	2.1
		<i>Total</i>	4.5	4.2
Tanzania	School Management Committee	National level	0.2	0.7
		District level	1.3	3.3
		Immediate sphere	4.5	2.5
		<i>Total</i>	5.9	6.6
	Health Facility Management Committee	National level	0.4	0.1
		District level	1.3	1.1
		Immediate sphere	3.6	2.1
		<i>Total</i>	5.3	3.3

Notes

a.) This is a summary of two detailed country-specific analyses of the Venn diagrams produced by the 64 local committees in this research. This summary concentrates on the levels at which the management committees have their networks, The full and detailed Table 19 and Table 20 at the end of this chapter also provide data about two more variables, i.e. the type of contact at each level (e.g. a committees own sectoral department, other departments, MPs, councillors, NGOs, businesses, other school/clinics, etc), and the importance (high, normal, minor) that committees attach to each of these contacts.

The second pattern emerging from the analysis is that school committees have a much more detailed knowledge of the wider institutional networks behind their direct points of contact. School committees in Uganda and Tanzania identify on average, respectively, 7.0 and 6.6 indirect contacts, actors or bodies behind their direct contacts that have an influence on their school committee. The dispensary committees in Uganda and Tanzania only identify, respectively, 4.2 and 3.3 actors of influence behind their direct contacts. The comparatively limited knowledge – and therefore potential use – of networks by dispensary committees is underscored by the fact that they identify fewer indirect contacts than direct contacts, whereas school committees identify more indirect contacts than direct contacts.

Analyses of the two other variables – contacts at different levels and degrees of importance – do not reveal any distinct patterns that would distinguish school and dispensary committees, or reveal differences between Uganda and Tanzania. (One particular phenomenon regarding ‘upward networking’ is Tanzania’s school patron, which will be discussed next.) In general, that leaves the density of the personal network as the most differentiating variable between school and dispensary committees.

Patrons: are Tanzania’s school committees networked with higher elites?

The rather quantitative analysis of the density of the institutional and personal network around management committees can be expanded with a more qualitative analysis by taking a closer look at the phenomenon of the school “patron”, or *mlezi*, in Tanzania. Central government regulations explicitly allow for the appointment of “a patron of the school” as member of the school committee, without further specifying his or her role or function (GoT, 2002a: 1369). In the field research, 22 of the 27 school committees stated they had a *mlezi* and this was something most all actively pursued. In making the Venn Diagram, 16 of the 22 placed the *mlezi* outside the school committee, depicting him or her as an institution outside the committee, not part of it. (A treatment similar to the depiction of the Ward Councillor.)

Across the board, the principal selection criterion was that a *mlezi* should have “a link” with the village. That link was interpreted liberally; it could mean having been born near or in the village, or having a house or business in the village, or having had a house or business in the village in the past. As far as could be ascertained in the research, the selection process of a *mlezi* generally requires an active and sometimes prolonged involvement of the parents:

“A meeting of parents discussed ideas and they came up with a list of four candidates. These were then contacted by the school committee.”²¹⁸

“The parents came up with names, sometimes they had already asked if people would want to be our patron.”²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Group interview #40 (30 Nov 2004)

²¹⁹ Group interview #51 (8 Dec 2004)

“It took almost a year to agree on a list of three candidates.”²²⁰

Schools committees and parents seem to have two distinct motives when it comes to selecting a *mlezi*. Some of the *mlezi* are expected to be involved in the actual management of the school, providing counsel or advice on school management:

“A parents meeting discussed this, after asking one of the parents to leave the room. He was wanted as the *mlezi* because he has everyone’s respect. He was then called back in and asked to be the *mlezi*. He accepted.”²²¹

“We have asked the new doctor to be our *mlezi*. He is educated.”²²²

“Our *mlezi* is the former head teacher. He is able to give advice and knows about education.”²²³

However, a second motive for selecting a *mlezi* seemed more prevalent and revolves around hopes that the *mlezi* will provide material support to the school, or access to authorities that may help the flow of resources towards the school:

“Retired General X is our *mlezi*. He is one of us. He donated 200 bags of cement and the transport.”²²⁴

“Mr X works for an NGO and helps us to get in contact with important people in Arusha.”²²⁵

“Our *mlezi* lives in Dar es Salaam, she is the wife of a Permanent Secretary but was born in our village. She accepted our request and donated 50 bags of cement.”²²⁶

However, the donations of the above three patrons could be the exception rather than the rule. Though never quite open, most of the committee members suggested that finding and then getting acceptance of a *mlezi* was quite a time-consuming activity than not always led to the expected or desired results. In fact, the undertone of disappointment was often present, or groups simply did not want to talk any further about their *mlezi*. In the Venn diagrams, ten of the 16 *mlezi* identified as such, were labelled as of minor importance among the school committees’ direct contacts:

²²⁰ Group interview #64 (16 Dec 2004)

²²¹ Group interview #44 (2 Dec 2004)

²²² Group interview #47 (6 Dec 2004)

²²³ Group interview #63 (16 Dec 2004)

²²⁴ Group interview #34 (24 Nov 2004)

²²⁵ Group interview #51 (8 Dec 2004)

²²⁶ Group interview #55 (11 Dec 2004)

“We had four candidates, we wrote first the one on top of the list. He refused. Then we went to the next, and the next. The fourth one accepted. But we have not met him yet.”²²⁷

“Mr X used to have a business in the village, before he moved to Dar es Salaam. He has said he accepted the honour, but since then we have heard no replies.”²²⁸

“We asked the manager of [X business] to be our *mlezi*. But they have not helped us with fixing the school hall.”²²⁹

“We have written to Mr X who works for a regional office of the Ministry of Agriculture that he has been chosen as our *mlezi*. But he has not yet replied.”²³⁰

“Our *mlezi* is the regional police commander, he is the brother of our priest. He has agreed, but we have not heard anything else.”²³¹

The overall impression is that patrons at district, regional or even national level, are much sought after by schools; significant discussion and lobbying may be invested in finding a patron. However, the position may not be one aspired to by prospective candidates. Becoming a patron or *mlezi* to a school does not appear to be an instrument for higher level elites to build a neo-patrimonial local power base. Arguably, the experiences of Tanzania school committees suggest a process of ‘inverse elite capture’; local actors endeavour to capture one of these elites in the higher echelons for local purposes. However, these higher elites seems to be actively avoiding capture, and often successfully.

Are committee members the local elite and have they captured the committee?

The last part of this section investigates whether the members of school and dispensary committees could be characterised as ‘the local elite’ and, subsequently, whether committee members have ‘captured’ the committees as their personal or virtually permanent fiefdom in a neo-patrimonial sense. The last analyses in this chapter on the field research have another – ever closer – look at the way in which members of school and dispensary committees are part of personal networks in a local polity to investigate the, perhaps, more subtle ways in which elite capture may materialise and interact with formal regulations for accountability.

²²⁷ Group interview #40 (30 Nov 2004)

²²⁸ Group interview #41 (1 Dec 2004)

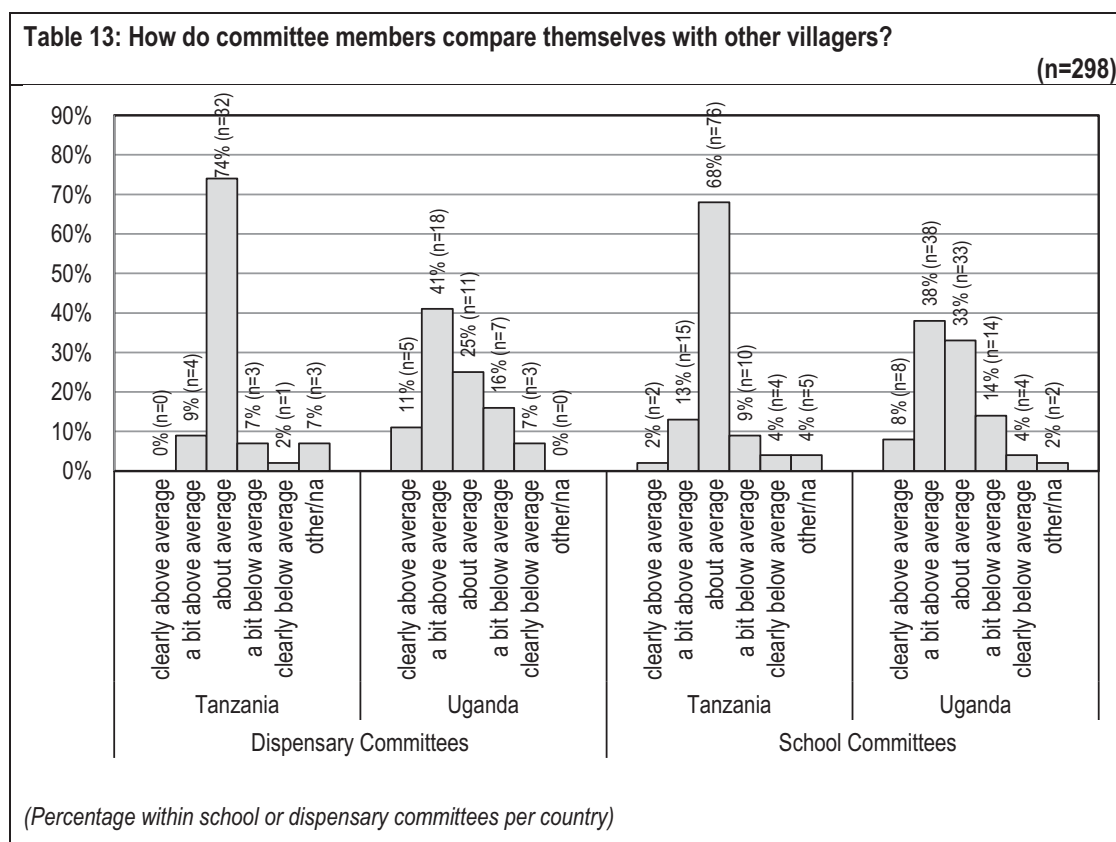
²²⁹ Group interview #45 (3 Dec 2004)

²³⁰ Group interview #50 (7 Dec 2004)

²³¹ Group interview #57 (13 Dec 2004)

While acknowledging that defining who belongs to an ‘elite’ and who does not is a complex problem that cannot be addressed by a simple questionnaire for a sub-section of the population, the field research endeavoured to develop an impression of committee members’ own perception of their relative position in the local polity by asking questions about three (proxy) indicators for belonging to a local elite: comparative economic position, physical mobility and feeling of prosperity. First, it asked committee members upfront to indicate their relative economic position: “Comparing yourself with other members of your village, how would you describe yourself?”

Table 13 shows the answers suggesting two patterns. Most visibly it shows committee members’ self-assessment differs from one country to another, but there are hardly any differences between school committee members and dispensary committee members within one country.



In fact, the answers to this question are exactly in line with earlier answers regarding committee members acquired identities in their educational and professional profiles,

which leads to the conclusion that within a given local polity members for management committees belong to a pool with identical acquired identities. The second pattern emerging from committee members comparing themselves economically with other villagers is that the largest group in Uganda identify themselves as “a bit above average”, while a clear majority of Tanzania’s committee members describes themselves as “about average”.

A second indicator to determine whether committee members’ belong to a local elite does not relate to committee members’ economic position per se, but rather to their mobility. Mobility is assumed to be a proxy indicator for pertaining to a local elite. Mobility – and particularly travel to a district capital – allows someone to access information and contacts that carry potential value, choice, and probably social status within a village as being the person to see about what goes on in the wider world. Committee members were asked: “How often have you travelled to [the district capital] in the last two years?”

Table 14 presents a picture of committee members’ mobility. First, it confirms a by now familiar pattern indicating that members for school and dispensary committees in Uganda are drawn from a pool of people with similar profiles – mobility this time. Likewise, members in Tanzania for both types of committees travel more or less in similar patterns. Second, looking at the actual mobility, Tanzania’s committee members are strikingly more mobile than Uganda’s. The largest group in Uganda has never travelled to the district capital in the last two years, whereas the largest group of Tanzania committee members has done so five times or more. The field research contains no data to assist explaining this difference, except that road and public transport conditions in two of the three districts in Uganda were definitely worse than in the two districts researched in Tanzania.²³²

The third indicator for determining whether committee members belong to a local elite was a question asking members to describe their household’s position now, as compared to two years ago. The underlying assumption is that people who feel their overall levels of prosperity and well-being have improved are more likely to belong to a local elite (or

²³² On a methodological note; the difference is interesting from a point of conceptual point of view as it proves that ‘relative economic wealth’ (as was established earlier for Uganda’s committee members) does not necessarily equate with ‘physical mobility’.

conversely, less likely to belong to the more vulnerable) and have a security from which to engage in innovative activities or activities that have no immediate economic benefit; i.e. behaviour that would characterise the relatively better off rather than the poorer people.

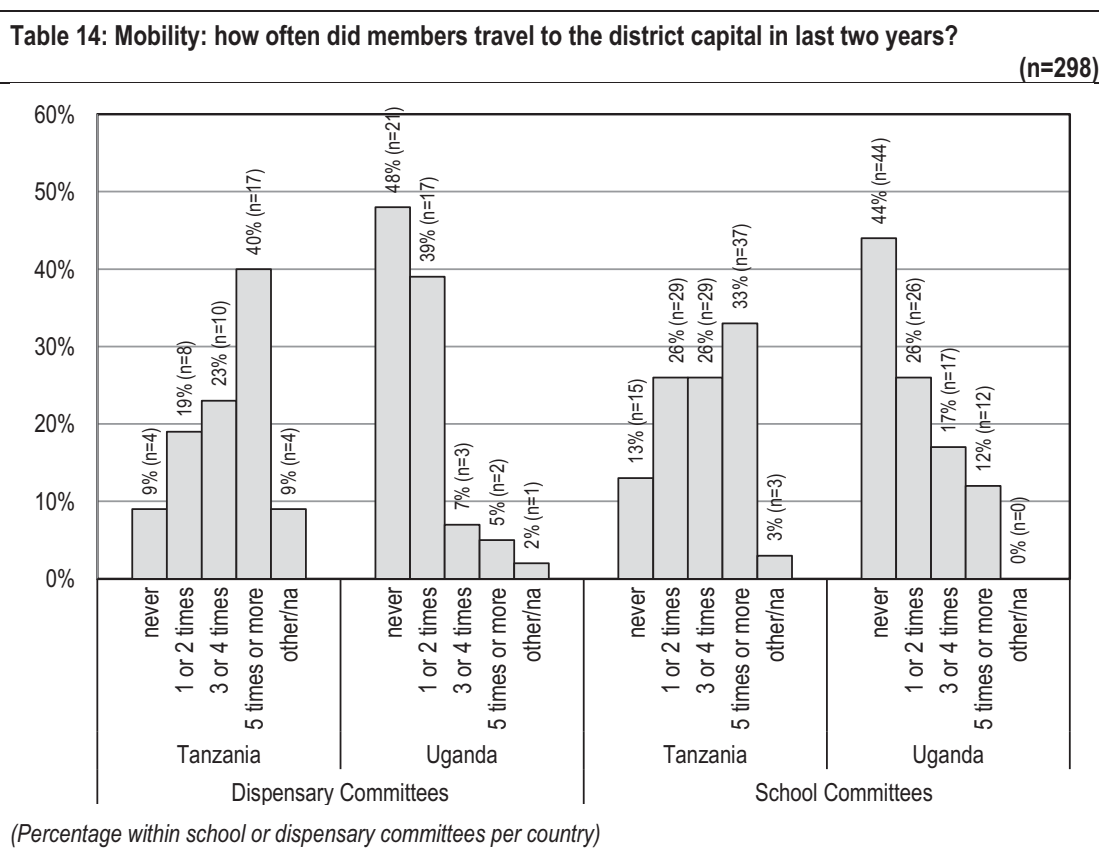
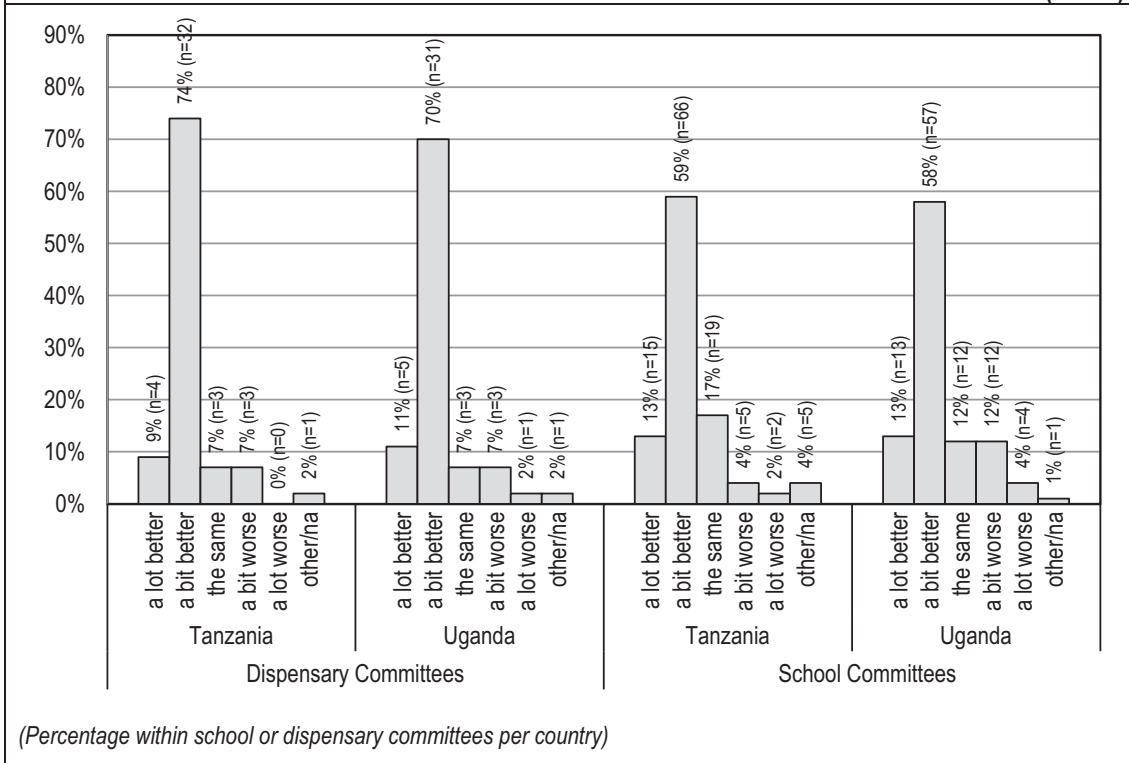


Table 15 reveals a remarkable sense of prosperity among committee members; differences that existed between the two countries have largely disappeared. Clear majorities in every committee in both countries feel their household’s position today is “a bit better off” than two years ago. Against the assumptions outlined above, these findings would suggest it is not unreasonable to assume members of local management committees belong to the local polity’s better off.

Table 15: How are committee members' households now, compared with two years ago?

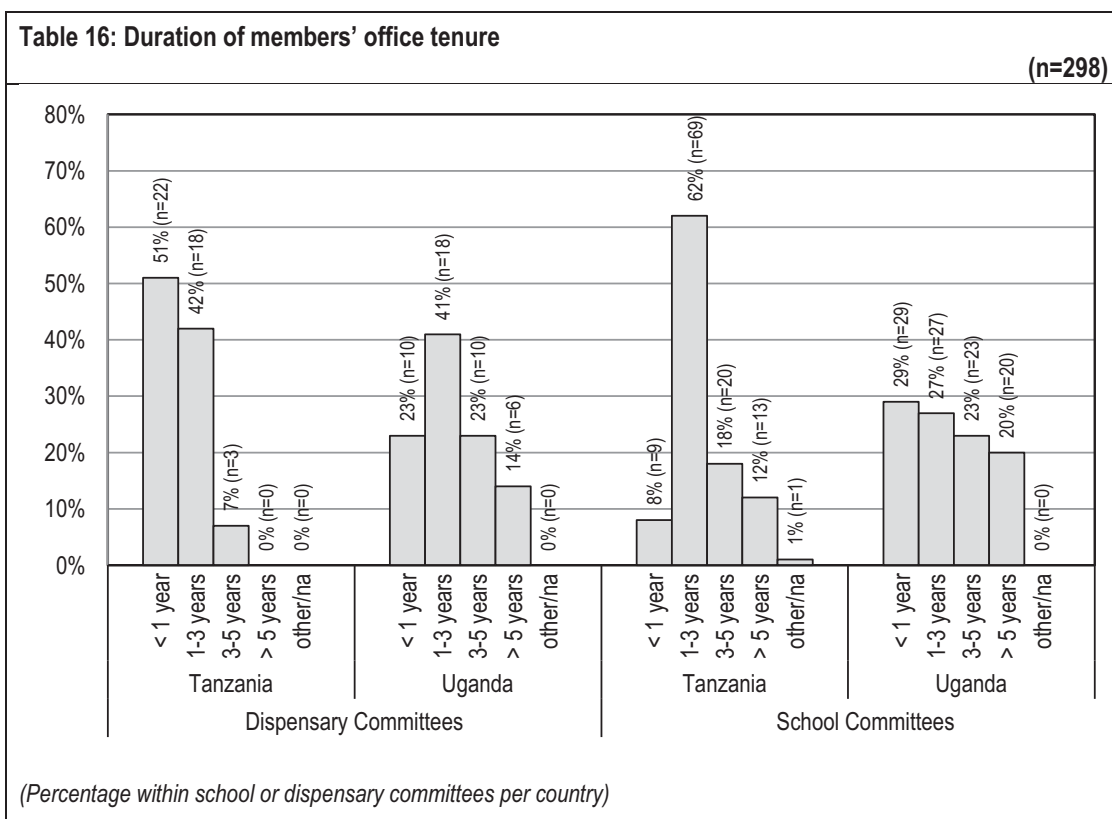
(n=298)



In summary; while data for each of the three indicators in isolation would not justify a claim that members of school and dispensary committees belong to the local elite, if taken together the three indicators do suggest committee members are likely to represent the local elite, or at least the comparatively ‘better off’. They may not belong to the top ten percent, but it is very unlikely they belong to the bottom half. This leads to the second question of this section: “Have committee members captured the committees as their personal or virtually permanent fiefdom in a neo-patrimonial sense?”

The official regulations for committee members’ “re-appointment” in school committees in both Uganda and Tanzania would legally allow for elite capture as there are no limits to the number of times a member can be re-elected (GoT, 2002a: 1370; GoU, 1969: 2). Regulations for dispensary committees in both countries do limit members’ terms in office to two terms of three years, potentially leaving a committee member in office for six years (GoT, 2002a: 1333; GoU, 2003b: 6). Members’ total office tenure was asked in the individual questionnaire: “How long have you been a member of this committee?”

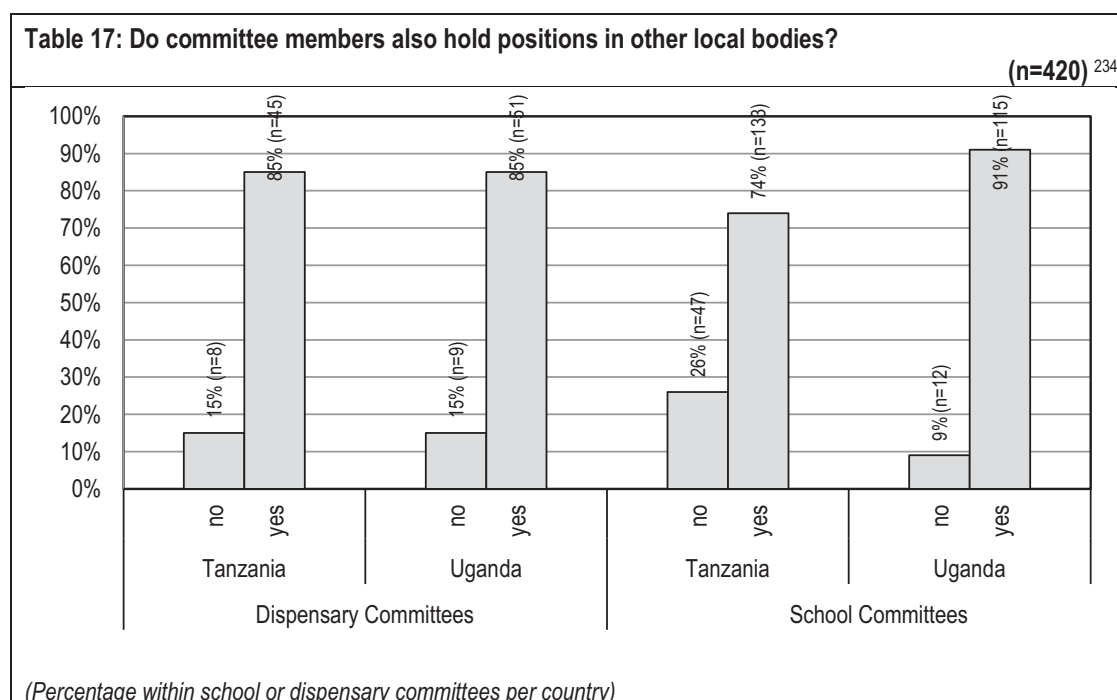
Table 16 presents the data on the duration of committee members' office tenure. Data for dispensary committees in Tanzania can be dismissed, as these committees were created, earliest, three years prior the field research. The data for the other three committees do not suggest members have 'captured' their positions as permanent or personal fiefdoms. In all cases, if all categories of less than five years are lumped together, then large majorities of members – ranging from 79 to 88% – held office for less than five years. If members' statements are truthful, and there is no reason to doubt this, then there is no evidence that members of school or dispensary committees on a large scale have captured their position as a personal and permanent entitlement or possession.



The last analyses in this section of this chapter on the field research take another look at the directly personal networks of committee members. With the neo-patrimonial image of the 'president-for-life' in mind, it was hypothesised that a few individuals might be occupying key position in several local bodies and thus creating a personal network that

tied various local bodies together, with themselves at the centre.²³³ To investigate the extent to which a few individuals might dominate the network around several bodies in the local polity, the individual questionnaire asked: “Are you also a member of a Committee or Board in other organisations?”

Table 17 shows that large majorities – ranging from 74 to 91% – of members of school and dispensary committees indicate they also hold positions in other committees or boards in the local polity. In fact, 82% of committee members (344 of 420) indicated they also were member of other Boards or Committees. Contrary to the hypothesis, there were not just a few individuals holding positions in other local bodies besides the school or dispensary committee; nearly every committee member did. Moreover, the data revealed that there are no differences between school or dispensary committees, or between the two countries.

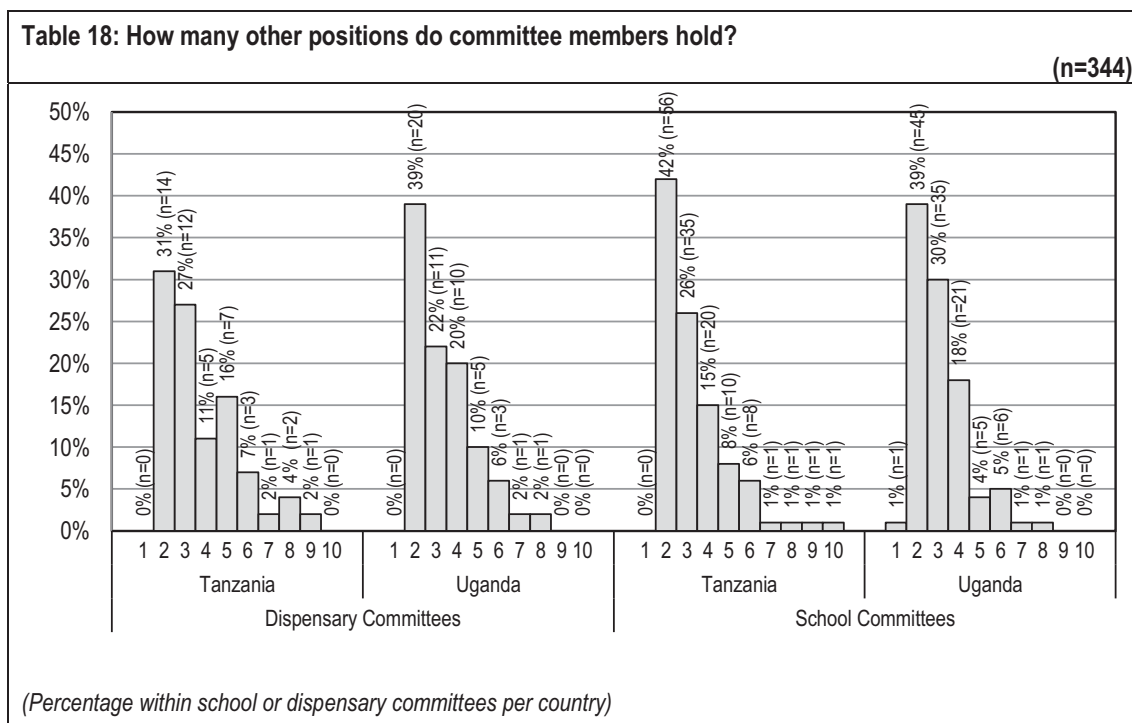


²³³ In fact, the visible minority – ranging from 12 to 20% – who reported in Table 16 they occupied their seats for more than 5 years could conceivably be that minority that had captured key positions in several local bodies. Even if elite capture does not take place on a large scale, could it be possible a few individuals had captured key positions in the local polity?

²³⁴ The total number of committee members who participated in the field research was 420. However, 122 of them were either *ex officio* members or – in the case of Tanzania’s school committees – representatives from the teaching staff. I have excluded these 122 respondents in most of the tables, because they do not originate from the local polity and have not been (s)elected by people in the local polity to be on the management committee. I did include these 122 members in Table 17 and Table 18 because I considered them integral part of the personal networks under analysis. See Chapter 3 for further methodological notes.

A next step in the analysis was to determine how many other positions these 82% of the committee members held. The questionnaire asked members who had indicated they were also a member of other committees or boards to indicate, “in which organisation are you a member of a Committee or Board?”²³⁵ The assumption behind this question was that the answers might hint at one or two organisations at the centre of a local polity’s institutional and personal networks, for example churches or the village council.

Table 18 shows how many other positions the school and dispensary committee members hold. Again, the findings show strong patterns. First, the patterns show no significant differences between school and dispensary committees, or between the two countries. This leads to conclude – in conjunction with similar patterns for ‘feeling prosperous’ as well as country-specific (and not sector-specific) patterns for achieved identity profiles in the spheres of education, profession, self-assessment of comparative wealth and physical mobility – that members of public bodies in local polities are drawn from a pool of people with similar identity profiles and similar personal attitudes.



²³⁵ Committee members could tick one or more of 14 boxes indicating local bodies – e.g. village council, youth organisation, sport organisation – and use an open space to add a local body not listed. See Chapter 3 for methodological considerations on the questionnaire.

The second – and perhaps most important pattern of all findings in the field research – is that a majority of school and dispensary committee members holds multiple positions simultaneously across several public bodies in the local polity. About 54% of the school and dispensary committee members (228 of the total of 420) hold three or four positions in public bodies in the local polity.²³⁶ An 8% of committee members (32 of 420) even hold seven or more positions. In fact, it might seem that for those willing to hold multiple positions, accumulation of positions is the norm because only single committee member of the 322 who held multiple positions limited himself to one other position.²³⁷

The accumulation of positions only became visible after the field research when the questionnaires were analysed.²³⁸ When the pattern emerged, a few notes in the fieldwork journal about comments by a school committee member during a lunch in Uganda proved to have been early anecdotal evidence:

“Parents asked me to be a candidate for the school committee because I was a head teacher before I retired. But it is getting a bit too much, because I am also a member of another school committee and chair the church’s welfare committee. (...) You should talk with Mrs X, she is a member of four school committees in town.”²³⁹

This man’s sighing “it is getting a bit too much”, may confirm what Chabal and Daloz described under the title ‘recycled elites’ when noting, “a person of substance will increase his authority if his constituents identify with him: if he, in other words, incarnates their hopes and aspirations. To do so, however, is hard work” (1999: 38).

Conclusions

With regard to the roles of personal networks and the potential for elite capture in the development of the institutional framework between central government and management committees, three general conclusions can be drawn from the field research.

²³⁶ I.e. the “3 or 4 positions” refers to those who indicated in Table 18 to hold 2 or 3 positions *in addition* to the membership of the school or dispensary committee in which they were interviewed.

²³⁷ See the data for school committees in Uganda in Table 18.

²³⁸ In fact, the finding of this ‘accumulation of positions’ led another PhD researcher with whom I had cooperated in Uganda to ask every person in the two villagers where he was doing his research whether he or she was a member of a local committee or board. He also found that those who were member of a local body had, on average, also accumulated 3 positions (Prinsen and Titeca, 2008: 157).

²³⁹ Related to group interview #2 (24 Sep 2004).

First, analyses of the profiles of committee members in both school committees and dispensary committees in Uganda and Tanzania show clear similarities between the members of school and dispensary committee within a country, and clear differences between the two countries. This leads to the conclusion that committee members from a particular section of the population in a local polity succeed in occupying positions in local management committees – irrespective of central government’s regulations, procedures, or criteria.

Second, analyses of the institutional and personal networks around school and dispensary committees show these committees are clearly embedded in wider networks. However, the networks of school committees are denser than the networks of dispensary committees, and members of school committees have a better knowledge – and therefore potential use – of the wider network beyond their direct network contacts.

Third, it seems safe to conclude that members of school and dispensary committees belong to the ‘better off’ in the local polities. However, there is no evidence that committee members have ‘captured’ the committees as their personal and permanent fiefdom; a large majority of members enter and leave committees on a regular basis and within five years. Yet, analyses also reveal that a majority of committee members accumulated at least three or four positions in other Committees or Boards in their local polity.

4.6 Conclusions

This chapter has presented several general trends and findings from the field research to answer the question, “How are central government and local management committees in Uganda and Tanzania developing the institutional framework for the decentralised management of schools and dispensaries?”

In general, it has become clear that while central government may appear fully in control of the process of shaping the institutional framework with local management committees, it is not. Quite often, central government may endeavour to shape the institutional framework by regulation, but it often does so as a response to events and processes in (some) local polities.

Moreover, even when central government endeavours to shape the institutional framework with detailed regulations, the members of the school and dispensary committees – in interaction with other actors and factors unique to every local polity – often can and do ignore the regulations. Committees use the institutional space created by central government regulations to manage the school or dispensary as they deem necessary. Central government may respond to that and redress the balance of power with management committees, but that just seems to give impetus to a seesaw motion of control over management committees and the exchange of resources used for the operation of education and health services.

In the formal institutional framework, it is clear that central government is the party who controls or dominates the appointment of committee members and to whom committees are expected to direct their acts of accountability. In practice, however, the field research finds that central government through its local government bodies only dominates the selection of members for dispensary committees. Members for school committees in Uganda and Tanzania are selected or elected by parents or the local polity, without influence of central government. At best, central government is left to formally endorse the proposed members. Similarly – or perhaps as a consequence – central government succeeds in seeing dispensary committees direct their acts of accountability in the institutional framework towards government. But the acts of accountability of school committees are oriented in diverse directions; some to government, some to the parents or local polity and are often evenly divided.

The most interesting conclusion of the field research is probably that a small group of the ‘better off’ people – three or four dozen – seem to occupy all local management committees in a local polity. Irrespective of regulations, it seems that the institutional framework for local education and health services is negotiated between central government and these few dozen people. In fact, the finding that a small group occupy all available positions in public bodies in a local polity on a rotational basis – and change, rotate or perhaps lose their seats in a process of failed or successful accountability to the people in the local polity – may contribute to solving the rather vexed problem discussed in the earlier chapter, “What is a local polity?”

A local polity is, perhaps, precisely the socio-political unit where a few dozen people control all local institutions and are principally accountable to the people living in the geographical area covered by those local institutions. And that, arguably, is also the answer to the research question, “How are central government and local management committees in Uganda and Tanzania developing the institutional framework for the decentralised management of schools and dispensaries?” The answer is that the institutional framework is developed as part of wider, and ongoing, negotiations between the people who represent the local polity and the people who represent central government. This is the focus of the next chapter.

4.7 Anecdotal evidence from the field research

Anecdotal Evidence Box 1: Activities of dispensary committees

Two sets of minutes from local Health Unit Management Committees (HUMC) in 2003 provide an insight in the activities of two local dispensary committees in Uganda.²⁴⁰

The first example (below, left) shows the meeting's agenda on the first of four pages of minutes of one dispensary committee, convened by the Clinical Officer as the *ex officio* secretary to the committee. The minutes show the meeting revolved, first, around reports from the health staff to the members about stocks and numbers of patients attended. Second, the meeting resolved to replace a member who had been "absent from the time the HUMC was formed" by nominating a replacement candidate who was deemed "active and hard working". Even though the meeting notes that members should be appointed by the Parish Councils as representatives it is decided the health staff will approach the candidate directly. Third, the health staff requests volunteers, as "there should be shade provided in front of the building". Members raised concerns about the lack of allowances or "at least only a cup of tea".

The second example (below, right) is the first of five pages of minutes from another dispensary committee. The agenda and content is similar; virtually all communication is reporting from staff to members, ending with a call to "repair the water tank, some windows and doors". Here, though, members resolve to report the matter to the authorities to ask for funds to carry out the repairs. Neither of the two sets of minutes refers to issues of strategy, funds, or activities or contact undertaken by committee members.

SUBJECTS HEALTH CENTRE III
SUBJECTS SUB-CENTRE
30th/12/2003.

ALL MEMBERS S.U.W.C.
RE: HEALTH UNIT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING.

You are hereby called to attend the above meeting scheduled to take place on wed. 17th/12/2003 at the Health Unit Premises at 9:00 Am. without fail.
Members to discuss any vital issues endeavour to attend personally.

WORKS IN SERVICE OFFICE
STANLEY K. MUKUNDA
Chairman S.U.W.C. Subsets.

1. this meeting on 7/12/04.

Agenda.

1. Prayers
2. Communication from the chair and Reaction.
3. Reading of the previous minutes. Adoption
(1) Minutes Arising/Reaction.
4. Report from the incharge health Unit
(incharge from the Health Assistant).
5. Reports from members in Relation with Service rendered by the Staff or in Relationship between Staff and the Community.
6. Any Reaction
7. Closure.

Members

1. Mr. P	C	- Chairman
2. Mr. Q	E	- Member/Secretary
3. Mr. R	F	- Member/Secretary
4. Mrs. C	G	- Member
5. Mr. S	A	- Member
6. Mrs. G	H	- Member/Secretary
7. Mr. I	J	- Member/Secretary
8. Mr. M	K	- Member/Secretary

Min I/04. Prayers - Prayers lead by Mr. Stanley Mukunda

HEALTH UNIT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
21st March 2003

AGENDA

1. PRAYERS
2. COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR
3. COMMUNICATION FROM INCHARGE / REPORT
4. REACTIONS TO COMMUNICATIONS
5. READING OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES
6. PATIENTS ARISING
7. PERFORMANCE OF STAFF AND ADMINISTRATOR BY INCHARGE.

MEMBERS ATTENDED.

1. Mr. K
2. Mr. B
3. Mr. R
4. Mr. A
5. Mrs. G
6. Mrs. F
7. Mrs. N
8. Mrs. H
9. Mrs. D
10. Mrs. T
11. Mrs. K
12. Mrs. R
13. Mr. L

ABSENT WITH APPROVAL
Mr. M (Chairman & Officer to the Committee)
Mr. N (Secretary)

Min 21/3/03 Communication from the Chair

The meeting commenced with a prayer at 11:15 A.M. The Chair started by welcoming the members who attended the meeting. He informed members that this was a regular meeting.

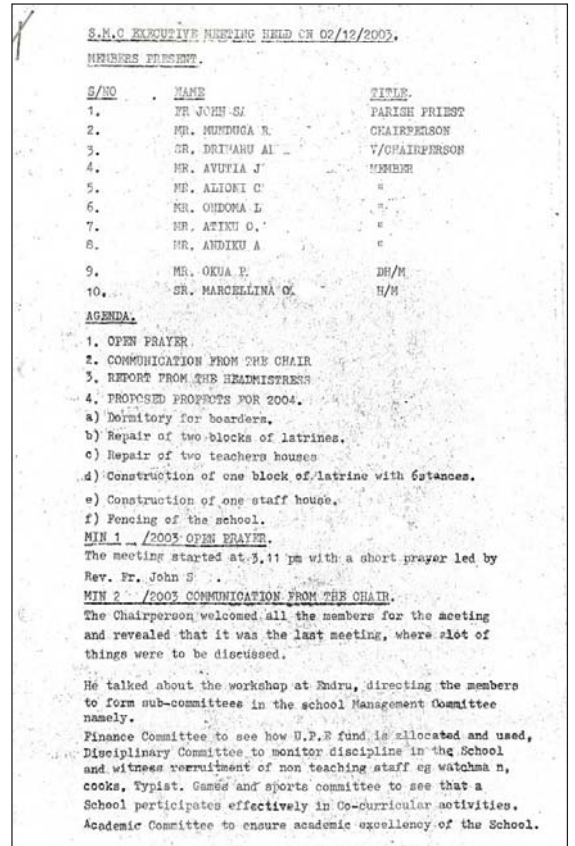
²⁴⁰ This box only contains examples of minutes of dispensary committees in Uganda. Minutes in Tanzania were written in Swahili and I only have their content translated in the form of brief, bulleted, summaries.

Anecdotal Evidence Box 2: Activities of school committees

Two sets of minutes from School Management Committees (SMCs) in Uganda in 2003 exemplify how meetings of school management committees unfold.²⁴¹

The first example (below, left) is the first page of four pages of minutes of an SMC. Though the agenda reveals no details, the actual minutes contain details of how this SMC of an Islamic school strategises to regain access to government funding that it had lost the previous year when central government discontinued funding to “private school”, unless “the school be handed over to the government” – as the minutes state. The chairman explains how he has been discussing a strategy with three other Islamic schools. He has also discussed matters with the District Education Officer (DEO) and concluded “government would like to have construction here” as well as noting, “their aim is to balance the education system”.

Likewise, the second example (below, right) is the first of eight pages of minutes from another SMC. While the agenda suggests a focus on construction, the minutes reflect debate about the establishment and responsibilities of four sub-committees: finance, disciplinary matters, games and sports, and academic affairs. The meeting also discusses a financial report. It concludes with “disciplinary matters” agreeing that “if a teacher does not use the house given to him properly, the house should be given to another teacher”.



²⁴¹ This box only contains examples of minutes of school committees in Uganda. Minutes in Tanzania were written in Swahili and I only have their content translated in the form of brief, bulleted, summaries.

Anecdotal Evidence Box 3: (S)election process of School Management Committees

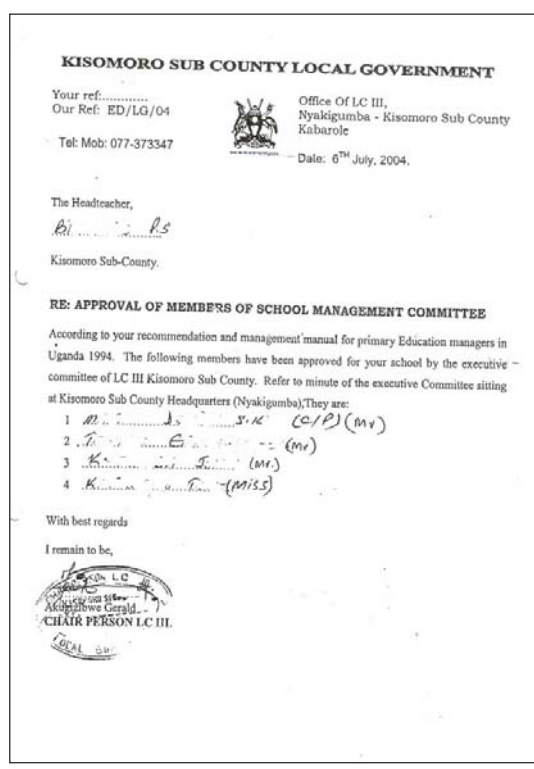
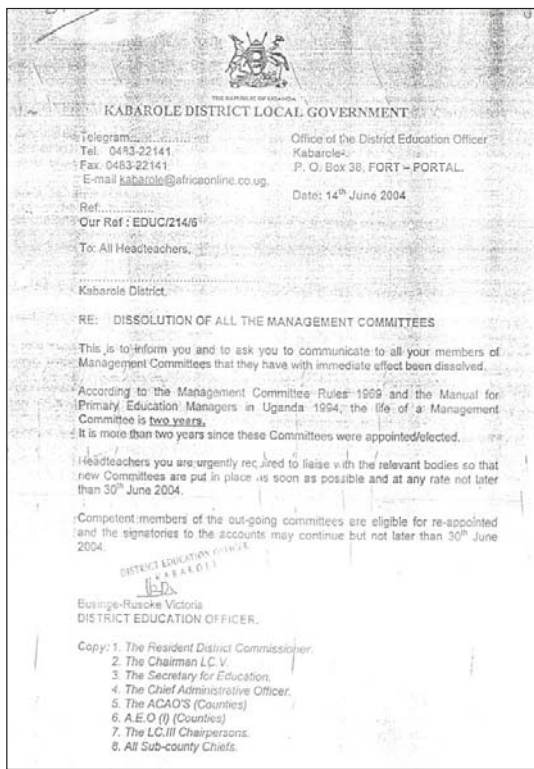
Four successive documents around the selection of candidates for a School Management Committee (SMC) in Uganda reveal how the formal processes portray a situation with central government in apparent control of the nomination and approval of candidates for SMCs, while in actual fact the local SMCs fully determine who the candidates are and leave central government to rubberstamp the result.

The first document (below, top left) is a letter by the District Education Officer (DEO) that initiates the selection process by informing the Committees that “they have with immediate effect been dissolved”. A new selection process must be started. (Formally, SMCs have nine members; four representatives from the sub-county’s Education Committee, three representatives for central government (the Commissioner for Education, represented by the DEO), and two representatives for the parents.)

The second letter (below, top right) is a letter from a Sub-County to an SMC, in which it approves the four candidates that the SMC has “recommended” as representatives for the Sub-County. The third letter (below, bottom left) is from the outgoing SMC to the DEO as representative of central government. It proposes ten candidates for the new SMC: the four it recommended to the Sub-County, two candidates elected by the parents, and four candidates it recommends as representatives of central government. The fourth letter (below, bottom right) is from the DEO to the SMC, approving of all the proposed candidates. (Except that the DEO omitted the last candidate on the list as surplus to requirement.)

In the end, while government agencies officially nominate and subsequently ‘approve’ of seven of the nine SMC members; it is the outgoing SMC that effectively controls the (s)election process for all nine candidates.

Interestingly, there can be significant variation among district when it comes to numbers and representation. Anecdotal Evidence Box 6 shows letters indicating that in Moyo and Arua districts it is not relevant to mention which party the candidates represent. Moreover, while an SMC is legally expected to have nine members, SMCs in Kabarole do, while some SMCs in Moyo and Arua unapologetically propose 11 or 12 members.



P. School
P.O. Box
Fort- Portal
14th July 2004

The District Education Officer
Kabarole District
P.O. Box 38
Fort- Portal

Dear Madam,

RE: NEW SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Below are some of the proposed school Management Committee members:

A. EDUCATION COMMITTEE APPOINTEES:

Approved list attached

B. PARENTS ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES:


Mr. B. G.
Mr. B. M.

C. COMMISSIONER FOR EDUCATION:

1- Mr. N. A. S. 4
2- Mr. M. S. Retired Hiv
3- Mrs. K. P. S. 3
4- Mr. M. U. P. 7
5-

Yours faithfully
K. [Signature]

K. [Signature]
K. [Signature]


KABAROLE DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Office of the District Education Officer
Kabarole-
P. O. Box 38, FORT - PORTAL.

Telegram
Tel. 0483-22141.
Fax. 0483-22141
E-mail kabarole@afrioonline.co.ug

Date: 30/9/2004

Ref:
Our Ref EDUC/211/1

The Headteacher
Bihondo P.S

As per your submission, the following were elected as Management Committee members of your school for a term of two years effective 7th September 2004 up to 7th September 2006.

A) EDUCATION COMMITTEE APPOINTEES:
Mr. M. D. Chairperson
Mr. T. E.
Mr. K. J.
Miss. K. T.

B) PARENTS -ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES:
Mr. B. G.
Mr. B. M.

C) COMMISSIONER FOR EDUCATION:
Mr. N. A.
Mr. M. S.
Mrs. K. P.

Please convey this information to the members and congratulate them on our behalf.

[Signature]
For DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
KABAROLE

Businge-Rusoke Victoria
DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER/KABAROLE.

c.c. All members.

Anecdotal Evidence Box 4: Election and selection in local management committees

Two documents, one from Tanzania and another from Uganda illustrate some of the different formal processes for selecting or electing members of local management committees.

The first document (below, left) is the form that the district health authorities in one of the researched districts distributed in 2001 among Village Councils. It calls for any interested person to apply for positions in local Dispensary committees. Applications were received and sometimes vetted by a Village Executive Officer and passed (or not) one level up to the Ward Development Committee for selection. This Committee pre-selected candidates on the basis of literacy and place of residence and passed these on to the district health authorities. Field interviews in this district could not ascertain the number of applicants, but there must have been "more than a hundred".²⁴² In these conditions, selection of the successful candidates is likely to have been determined by the personal networks of officials at village or ward level. (It should be noted that the district health authorities in another, adjacent, district followed an entirely different selection process.)

The second document (below, right) is a page from the minutes of a School Management Committee (SMC) in Uganda in 2004. It records the election process of candidates for the next SMC. There are three candidates competing for each of the three contestable offices: chairperson, vice-chairperson, and treasurer. The 61 parents elect three candidates by raising their hands and the number of votes is recorded. Subsequently, three of the six failed candidates are "nominated and seconded" for positions as ordinary SMC members. No mention is made of the regulations that allow parents to elect only two members of an SMC. Presumably, the SMC will present their elected candidates as 'recommended' to the District Education Committee and the District Education Officer and then see the recommended candidates 'approved' as their respective representatives (See Box 3.)

Serial No: A.....

HALMASHAURI YA WILAYA YA HAI Hai District Council

Special request form for an applicant

FOMU MAALUM YA MAOMBI YA NAFASI YA MJUMBE WA BODI YA HUDUMA ZA AFYA ZA HALMASHAURI

for positions in Health Committees in the District

KATA: KIJUJI: Ward .. Village ..

Jina la mwombaji Name of applicant

Umri Uraia Age .. Nationality

Elimu Jinsia: Education .. Marital status

Mafunzo Studies

Kazi Employment

Sababu za kuomba nafasi hiyo Reason for applying for this position

.....

Jina: Sahihi: Tarehe:

Application must be submitted to the Village Executive Officer
Maombi yatumwe kwa Afisa Mtendaji wa kijiji ambacho
By the applicant before the date of 27/12/2001
mwombaji anaishi kabla ya tarehe 27/12/2001.

Now the real thing started by nomination

1- Ahmed D	37 votes
2- Abdalla A	32 votes
3- Saibu M	18 votes

Chairperson

1- Abdalla A	32 votes
2- Saibu M	18 votes
3- Abdalla A	24 votes

Vice-chairperson

1- Emma A	49 votes
2- Joseph Y	40 votes
3- Saibu M	18 votes

Treasurer

From this elections we have come with the following SMC members

1 Chairperson	- Ahmed D	37 votes
2 Vice-chairperson	- Abdalla A	32 votes
3 Treasurer	- Joseph Y	40 votes
4 Secretary	- Madi T	Hfrc
5 Members	- Emma A	
	- Akuti S	
	- Concy Is	
	- Saibu M	
	- Abdalla A	

members were nominated and seconded without voting.

MIN YU A.O.B. one teacher asked the Hfrc about the school area, the Hfrc told him that they had been shown by the former SMC chairman the demarcation of the school, he showed us us some big trees where the school area ends, and to the North the area extends up to the seasonal river 'Oviba'. The Hfrc closed by thanking again the parents for their support.

Secretary

²⁴² Individual Interview #22 (18 Nov 2004).

Anecdotal Evidence Box 5: Representing the 'foundation bodies'

School Management Committees (SMCs) in Uganda are officially composed of nine members: four representing local government, three representing central government, and two representatives of parents. Representation of 'foundation bodies' – churches or mosques – is disallowed and when government deems a school under control by a religious body, it can and will discontinue its funding (see Box 2). Obviously, parents can and do informally elect someone who effectively represents the foundation body. Below, however, are two examples to illustrate that some SMCs challenge government's regulations with regard to foundation bodies and the number of committee members.

The first example (below, left) is from an SMC letter of 2004 to a District Education Officer (DEO) of Moyo district. In a thinly veiled defiance of regulations, the SMC presents the local chaplain as SMC member. It also ignores regulations by presenting a committee of 11 members. (The letter is a response to a refusal of the DEO to approve of a proposed candidate – the "chairman elect" in the words of the SMC – because he failed to meet educational requirements. The SMC presents the refused chairman again, now as an ordinary member.)


The second example (below, right) is taken from SMC minutes sent to the DEO in Arua in 2003. Here the 12 SMC members unapologetically deviate from regulations in presenting institutional representatives on the SMC that do not meet the legal requirements. Next to the four members the committee's executive, there are two representatives of the foundation body, two of the parents, two of the teachers, one of former students, and one of the local sub-county.

PRIMARY SCHOOL
24th MAY 2004

AMENDMENT TO SMC EXECUTIVES

Following the directives from the Education office for the re-election of the SMC in schools. Most of the executives elected before were found to possess no documents and below the required standards. Therefore the chairman elect Mr. L. O. could not qualify since he doesn't have the required documents. He therefore remains a member. The former SMC member Mr. M. S. therefore qualified as he has the required documents and standards.

NAME	TITLE	STATUS
01 Mr. S.	Chairman	S4 + AAH.
02 Mr. O.	Member	S1.
03 Mr. R.	Vice	S2.
04 Mr. D.	SEC	G.V.
05 Mr. L.	TREASURER	J3
06 Mr. A.	Member	J1
07 Mr. J.	"	S1
08 Mr. S.	"	Comm leader
09 Mr. O.	"	"
10 Mr. W.	"	J1
11 CHAPLAIN S.	"	G4 TR.

Secretary


SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1-CHAIRMAN: Mr. I. C.
2-VICE CHAIRMAN: Mr. I. M.
3-SECRETARY: Mr. E. A. Headteacher
4-FINANCE: Mr. A. M. M.

FOUNDATION BODY
Mr. B. F.
Mrs. M. S.

PARENTS REPRESENTATIVES
Mr. N. S.
Mrs. E. R.

TEACHERS REPRESENTATIVES:
Mr. D. J. S.
Mrs. A. A. M.

OLD BOY / OLD GIRL
Mr. I. J. N.

LC REPRESENTATIVE
Mr. A. S. K.

6

Anecdotal Evidence Box 6: Ex officio members

Two letters from School Management Committees (SMCs) to the District Education Officer (DEO) in Arua, Uganda, illustrate the diverse and complex relationship between the headteacher as *ex officio* member (secretary) of the School Management Committees (SMCs) and, on the other hand, the representatives of parents. In both cases the agency lies with the SMCs.

A first example (below, left) shows the first page of a seven-page letter by a School Management Committee (SMC) to the DEO in 2003. The letter details nine grievances and explains why pupils went on strike against the headteacher and why the parents support their children. The grievance range from the Headteacher's unilateral decision to pull the school out of a local "music, dance and drama competition" to allegations that the headteacher "does not freely associate with parents" and "dodges giving information about UPE funds received". The DEO recorded on top of the letter: "A new headteacher has been posted to the school".

A second example (below, right) is the first page of a nine-page letter of another SMC to the DEO in 2003. In this letter the SMC protests against the Ministry of Education's decision to transfer the headteacher. The SMC is very content with the performance of the headteacher and request the transfer be annulled. The letter presents the SMC's five biggest problems: poor academic performance, understaffing, and shortage of infrastructure, poor enrolment and lack of public recognition. The SMC argues the headteacher has quite successfully started to address most of these problems. The DEO recorded on top of the letter: "Transfer cancelled".

FILE A new headteacher 25-08-2003
 has been posted to school.
 PRIMARY SCHOOL MANAGEMENT REPORT OF
 PARENTS RETURN OF THE SCHOOL HEADMASTER MR
 K. H. K.
 To
 THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER, ARUA

Sir,

The pupils of Tava Primary School went on strike against the school headmaster on 11-8-03. They demanded from the headmaster keys to the office and store, the school stamp, an electronic calculator and shopping machine after the pupils had stopped the headmaster and forced him to get off his motorcycle. The headmaster then gave off the above items to the pupils after they had matched him to the school office and thereafter the pupils locked the office and ordered the headmaster to leave the school office and compound. The pupils then said they didn't want Mr. A. H. K. any more as a headmaster of the school. All this took place at about 10:30 am, 11-08-2003.

The S.M.C chairman and some members of the committee and P.T.A executives on learning this immediately went to the school to access the situation. On their arrival at the school most children were already on their way back home at about 11:30 am. Teachers who were present by then told the committee members that they were taken by surprise because of the strike. They had no knowledge of the course and cause of the strike. The teachers in their past condemned the strike. The pupils on their side said they struck because the headmaster caused their failure to participate in the 2002

MEMORANDUM

TO:- The District Education Officer,
 Arua.

FROM:- Parents of P 7 School,
 P. O. Box 11,
 Arua.

SUBJECT:- PARENTS STRONGLY OPPOSE THE PROPOSED TRANSFER OF THE SCHOOL HEADMASTER MR. A. H. K.

21st October 2003

Noted
 if any
 cancelled

25-10-03

Please find attached minutes of the parents consultative meeting which was held on Monday 30th October 2003 at the school. The meeting involved and drew the active participation of the school management committee members, P.T.A members, local authority leaders, elders, O.M. boys and girls of the school. The main purpose of the meeting was to establish the major reasons of transferring Mr. A. H. K. from P 7 school. And to assess whether we are ready to receive a new headmaster when we have gone half-way, with the implementation of our plans and projects best influenced by Mr. A. H. K. Therefore, it is not too late for us to sit down and accept any abrupt change that may retard or draw back the success of our developmental agenda at school. Hence, lessons and experience have shown us that, unexpected changes in management, or administration can discourage achievement. As such we therefore strongly oppose the new change in our school administration.

M.C. CHAIRMAN
 P.SCHOOL
 A. B.O.A. K.
 M.P. CHAIRMAN
 C.M.C. CHAIRMAN

MISSION OBJECTIVE:

The main objective of this exposition is to prevent the previous problems or challenges we faced because of un-expected change in administration. We mention but a few, we experienced great challenge of:

- Poor academic performance from 1996 - 2001.
- Under staffing 1996 - 2001 due to poor administration.
- Shortage of infrastructure due to the limited effort of parents/parents from the time the school started upto 2003.
- Poor enrollment from 1993 to 2003, due to poor services
- Lack of public recognition although the school was government aided.

MISSION ACHIEVEMENT

A lot of achievements have already been realized in the shortest term of office of Mr. A. H. K. and these among other things include:

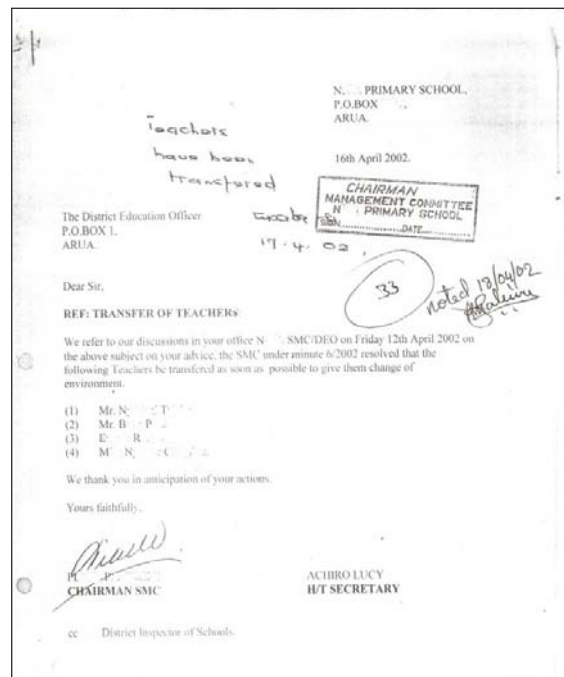
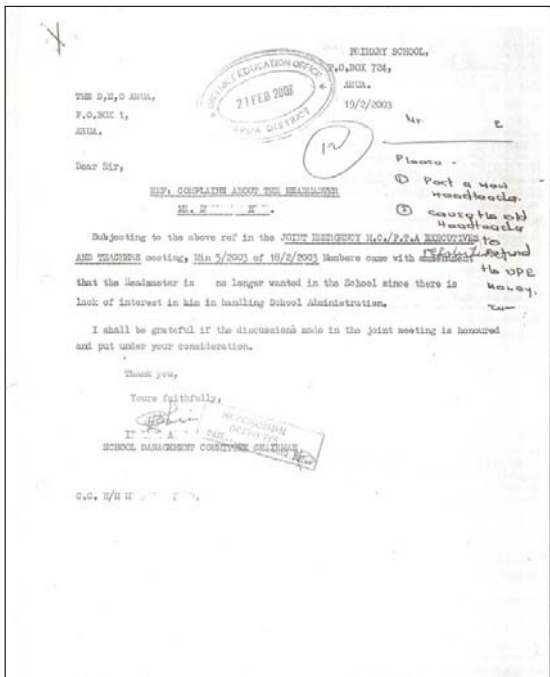
- New staff recruitment according to the government's need.

Anecdotal Evidence Box 7: Acts of accountability – requesting a transfer of staff

Sending communications to another party – for example from a School Management Committee (SMC) to the District Education Officer (DEO) – does not necessarily indicate an act of accountability from SMC to DEO. Two examples from Uganda illustrate that analysis of the content of the communication is required to determine the actual direction of accountability.

The first example (below, left) is a letter from an SMC to a DEO in 2003. It simply informs the DEO that there has been a “joint emergency ... meeting” of the PTA, SMC and teachers, which concluded, “the headmaster is no longer wanted in the school”. The SMC requests the DEO to honour and consider the results from the meeting. The DEO notes on the record “post a new headmaster”. In actual fact, the SMC’s communication to the DEO was an act of accountability towards the parents and teachers, following up on their decision.

The second example (below, right) is a 2002 letter from a SMC to a DEO asking for the transfer of four teachers. Here, however, the request for a transfer of staff is not motivated by dissatisfaction – quite the contrary. In fact, the SMC chairman had just days before visited the DEO and discussed with him that while satisfied with these teachers’ performance, they had been in his school for many years and deserved to be transferred to a school closer to their home regions. Hence the motivation of “a change of environment”. The DEO obliged.²⁴³ In this light, the letter from the SMC to the DEO was following up on discussions between SMC and staff and effectively an act of accountability towards the staff. (Note that the headteacher did not even sign the letter.)



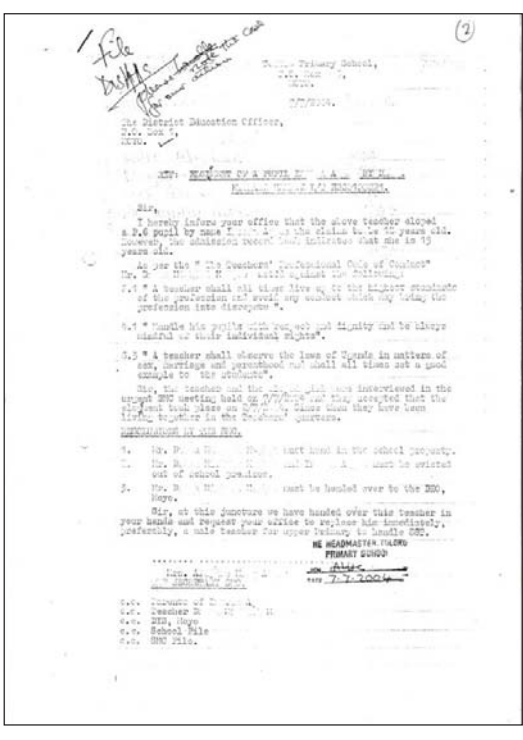
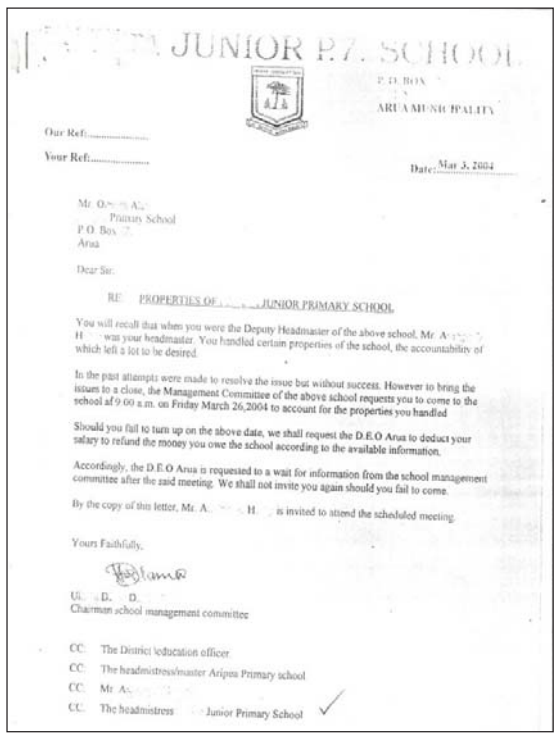
²⁴³ Individual Interview #13 (4 Oct 2004).

Anecdotal Evidence Box 8: Acts of accountability – theft and elopement

Two examples of School Management Committees (SMCs) in Uganda managing ‘disciplinary matters’ also illustrate how their reporting to the District Education officers in Moyo and in Arua districts is not an act of accountability to the DEO, but rather a show of accountability to the school’s parents. The SMCs merely solicit the DEOs to endorse lines of action already taken by the SMCs.

The first example (below, left) is a 2004 letter from an SMC in Arua to a former deputy headmaster of the school. The SMC summons the man to come to the school at a given date and time to account for missing property. The DEO is copied in, as he will be requested to deduct from the deputy’s salary if he fails to account to the SMC.

The second example (below, right) is a 2003 letter from an SMC in Moyo to the DEO, requesting him to follow up on “resolutions by the SMC” and “replace” a teacher who “eloped with a P6 pupil” who is 15 years old and living with him in the school’s teachers’ quarters. The SMC shows a primary accountability to the girl’s parents by copying them in.



Anecdotal Evidence Box 9: Financial accountability – accounting for expenditure

School Management Committees (SMCs) account to the District Education Officers (DEOs) for expenditure of their government grants. Grants must be spent according five specifically defined categories. Two documents from Uganda demonstrate how SMCs' accountability to DEOs can be preceded by an internal accountability.

The first document (below, left) is the first page of a standard form for SMC's quarterly reporting to DEOs, in this from an SMC in Kabarole district. The report is prepared by headteacher and the SMC Finance Committee on 21 December 2003 and then signed off by the chairman of the SMC on 22 December. A clear act of accountability from SMC towards government.

The second document (below, right) is a page from the minutes of 14 December of the same SMC. The document reveals the meeting of all SMC members had approvingly compared budget and actual expenditure prior to the preparation of the report to the DEO on 21 December.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS:
UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (UPE) GRANT

UPE FORM 1 SCHOOL EXPENDITURE QUARTERLY REPORT

FROM: The School M. P/S
TO: The DEO - KABAROLE DIST.
QUARTER 2nd FY. 2003/2004

1. Name of School M. P/S School Code 100091
2. county R.
3. Sub - County R.
4. School Enrolment at the end of the quarter:
P1 - P3 398 P4 - P7 438 Total (P1-P7) 836

5. Balance Brought Forward from Previous Quarter: SHS N/A
6. Amount Received this quarter: Shs 4,32,389= (Nov) Date 15/12/2003
7. Total Amount available for this quarter: 4,32,389=
8. Total Expenditure as at end of the quarter: 4,31,900=
Amount in words Four hundred thirty one thousand nine hundred only
9. Balance carried forward (8-7): Shs 486=

ITEM	Budget	Expenditure	% of Expenditure	balance
Extra Instructional Material		154,200=	35.6%	
Co-curricular activities		88,200=	20.3%	
Management		57,500=	13.2%	
Administration		43,000=	9.9%	
Others		89,000=	20.5%	
Total		4,31,900=	99.5	486=

Chairman SMC: Name N. J. Signature [Signature] Date 22/12/2003
Headteacher: Name K. G. Signature [Signature] Date 20/12/2003
Chairman school Finance Committee: Name M. J. Signature [Signature] Date 21/12/2003

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
KABAROLE DISTRICT

SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 14/12/2003

Members present:
1. Mr. N. J. J. C/M
2. Mr. B. J. J.
3. Mrs. T. J. J.
4. Mr. R. J. J.
5. Mr. M. J. J.
6. Mr. K. J. J. H/M
7. Mrs. K. J. J.
8. Miss T. J. J.

Agenda:
1. Prayer
2. Communication from the chair
3. Reading the previous minutes
4. Minutes arising
5. Budgeting for Nov. VPE funds 422897
6. A.O.B

Nov. 2003 Budgeting for Nov. 2003 VPE
Salutation grant of Shs 422369K
The VPEs were as follows:
35% Instructional materials Shs 151336.15
20% Co-curricular activities Shs 84777.80
15% Management Shs 64287.35
10% Administration Shs 42227.90
20% Contingency Shs 84477.85
35% Instructional materials Shs 151336.15

To cater for:
Bus payment of P4 3rd term exams by STEM Shs 154000
Exam Shs 2664
to be met from 20% contingency
20% Co-curricular activities 84477.85

To cater for:
1. Utility bill Shs 30000
1. Fuel bill Shs 35000
First Aid

Anecdotal Evidence Box 10: Financial accountability – budgeting for expenditure

Two examples from Uganda illustrate how School Management Committees (SMCs) are accountable to parents when it comes to budgeting expenditure.

The first example (below, left) is a page from SMC minutes in Moyo district in 2004. The executive of the SMC presents the full details of a budget according to the government's categories and maximum allocations per category to a joint meeting of SMC and PTA; 31 parents signed or thumb-printed a record of attendance. The itemised budget ranges from the watchman's salary to rat poison. The meeting "scrutinised the budget item by item", including the payment of allowances to committee members.

The second example (below, right) is a page from minutes of another joint meeting of an SMC and 70 parents from the PTA in Kabarole district in 2003. The SMC proposes a school feeding programme, but there is not enough money. The parents "lamented the lack of money", but then took a vote about the parental contribution: 3,000, or 4,000 or 5,000 shilling, or "food in kind". The amount of 3,000 shilling narrowly won the vote.

(c) MANAGEMENT	
(i) Report Cards	200,000/=
(ii) Calculator	35,000/=
(iii) Registers	20,000/=
(iv) Financial Record Books	30,000/=
(v) Bank charges	30,000/=
	305,000/=
(d) ADMINISTRATION	
(i) Imprest	10,000/=
(ii) Headteachers + Deputies Association Fee	30,000/=
(iii) Workshops + Meetings for teachers	20,000/=
(iv) Watchman Salaries	120,000/=
(v) Water Bill	20,000/=
	200,000/=
(e) CONTINGENCY	
(i) Primary Agriculture for Uganda	21,000/=
(ii) Hoes	52,500/=
(iii) Hoe handles	10,000/=
(iv) 4 Kg. Maize Grains	6,000/=
(v) 3 Basins of Groundnuts	15,000/=
(vi) Seeds - Onions	5,000/=
(vi) Cabbages	5,000/=
(vii) Labour	5,000/=
(viii) String	5,000/=
(ix) Travel	5,000/=
(x) Rat Poison + Ingredients	2,000/=
(xi) House-Repair of Mrs. Andruo	150,000/=
(xii) Chemical for termites	5,000/=
(xiii) Painting of Library wall	40,000/=
	380,500/=
MIN. 6/S/M/2004: REACTION ON THE BUDGET	
The members having scrutinized the budget item by item found out that the budget is in line with the guidelines on the use of UPE grants and it is within allocation percentages. They therefore resolved that the budget be blessed. It was then blessed for implementation.	
.....5/	

0. ... PLE JOINT SMC/PTA MEETING	
HELD ON 6/05/2003.	
AGENDA	
1. Prayer	
2. Communication from the Chair	
3. School feeding programme in the school.	
4. Internal Examination fees.	
5. PLE Registration 2003.	
MIN 1/2003 Prayer:	
A short and prayer was observed.	
MIN 2/2003. Communication from the Chair:	
The SMC Chairman welcomed the parents present to the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is for the next agenda in which the D.C representative Hon. Haji Sobi Lwiza briefed the SMC executive and Head Teachers in a separate meeting. It is the school feeding programme in the school.	
MIN 3/2003: School feeding programme in the school.	
The chairman briefed the parents on the school feeding programme which is a new programme to be initiated by each school in the sub county. It should be first begun with P6 - P7 pupils.	
Parents accepted the idea of school feeding in the school however they lamented for lack of money. A vote was conducted for the proposal of the fee contribution as	
5000f = 10 votes	
4000f = 4 votes	
3000f = 32 votes	
Food in kind = 24 votes.	
The parents accepted to pay 3000= per child	
The treasurer PTA should receive the money	

Anecdotal Evidence Box 11: Sitting allowances and lunch fees

The availability and heights of sitting allowance or lunch fees for local management committees is generally a bone of contention. In the course of the last 10-15 years, fees and allowances for local health and education committees in Uganda and Tanzania have been introduced, abolished, re-introduced, raised and reduced. School Management Committees in Uganda are allowed to pay their members a “lunch allowance”, as long as total expenditure on these allowances remains within given margins and does not exceed 2,000 shilling each time. Two documents show that some SMCs keep meticulous records of lunch fees.

The first example (below, left) is a record of payment of “lunch” to members of an SMC in Arua district in 2003. It is signed by the headmaster and added to the stack of records presented to the District Education Officer (DEO) in the quarterly reports. (See Box 9.)

The second example (below, right) is a record of payment of a meeting allowance to the members of an SMC sub-committee on finance in Moyo district in 2004.

The amount of 2,000 US\$ is about the equivalent of a day’s minimum wage (see watchman’s quarterly salary in Anecdotal Evidence Box 10.)

M. J. P. S. ...
P.O. Box ...
FULT PORTAL.
/14/12/2003

RE: LUNCH FOR SMC TO BUDGET FOR NOV 2003 UPE FUNDS

NAME	AMOUNT	SIGNATURE
1. MR. N. J.	2000	[Signature]
2. MR. K. J.	2000	[Signature]
3. MR. C. B.	2000	[Signature]
4. MRS. T. M.	2000	[Signature]
5. MR. M. J.	2000	[Signature]
6. MR. B. S.	2000	[Signature]
7. B. V.	2000	[Signature]
8. K. V.	2000	[Signature]
C-TOTAL	16,000	

[Signature]
HEADMASTER
FULT PORTAL DISTRICT

2ND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

NO	NAME	AMOUNT	SIGNATURE
1	[Name]	2000 ✓	[Signature]
2	[Name]	2000 ✓	[Signature]
3	[Name]	2000 ✓	[Signature]
4	[Name]	2000 ✓	[Signature]
5	[Name]	2000 ✓	[Signature]
6	[Name]	2000 ✓	[Signature]
7	[Name]	2000 ✓	[Signature]
8	[Name]	2000 ✓	[Signature]
9	[Name]	2000 ✓	[Signature]
10	[Name]	2000 ✓	[Signature]

Anecdotal Evidence Box 12: Public display of financial information in schools

School committees in Uganda are legally required to ensure that “funds received by the school” as well as “expenditure of the school are publicly displayed near the school every month” (GoU, 1998a: 18). In the same vein, central government regulations in Tanzania also require school committees to be “making incomes and expenditures publicly available” (GoT, 2001c: 16).

The pictures below show two typical examples of how school committees, or headteachers, comply with the regulations. The information is generally displayed on the wall behind the headteachers’ desk.



UPE Grants		
Date	Month	Amount
29-09-03	Jul/Aug	1,069,200
04-12-03	October	539,950
15-12-03	November	432,389
20-02-04	Jan	539,005
15-03-04	Feb	577,116
22-05-04	June	1,507,022
20-09-04	Aug	769,824

A Primary School in Arua district, Uganda (2004).

Januari – Marchi	
1. Capitation	-
2. Development	-
3. Ununuzi Wa Vitabu	-
April – Juni	
1. Capitation	2,955,000.00
2. Ununuzi Wa Vitabu (books)	2,303,422.50
3. Ununuzi Wa Chaki, Pens	619,805.34
4. Utawala (administration)	309,896.76
5. Mitihani (tests, exams)	309,896.76
6. Development	-
Julai – Septemba	
1. Capitation	-
2. Ununuzi Wa Vitabu	236,400.00
3. Utawala	38,932.06
4. Development	600,000.00



A primary school in Hai district, Tanzania (2004).

Anecdotal Evidence Box 13: Financial information displayed at District Council offices

District education authorities in Uganda and Tanzania receive the capitation grants for each school in their district from the Ministry of Education. The exact amount of the cheques issued to the school committee is displayed on public notice boards at the District Council offices.

Right:

A public notice board at District Council of Arua District, Uganda (2004). As in Tanzania, the grants paid for Universal Primary Education (UPE) to each school are listed on this board that can be read by the public without needing to make an appointment.

Below:

Public notice board at District Council of Same District, Tanzania (2004). The quarterly grants in the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) to each school are listed on this board that is displayed in a public space where it can be studied without appointment.



Anecdotal Evidence Box 14: Public display of results of financial resources

Even if school committees comply with regulations to publicly display the income and expenditure statements – as a school committee in Kabarole district in Uganda does in the photo below – most of these statements lack detail and ‘auditable’ evidence, even if parents wished to verify the accounts. However, the fact that the income and expenditure statement is displayed in a repaired and freshly painted school hall *is* evidence that the money was spent on the school and – by the looks of it – has been value for money.

In the same vein, parents will be impressed by the stock of books available at the school in Hai district in Tanzania (bottom, left) or the fact that children are getting a proper lunch every noon at the school in Arua district in Uganda (bottom, right).

QUARTERLY ACCOUNTABILITY OF UPE FUND 2003-2004										
Date received from the District	Monthly Quarter	Amount from the District/Kampala	Income withdrawn from the Bank	Extra inst materials 35%	co-curricula 20%	Management 15%	Administration 10%	Others 20%		
9/13/03	1st	1815684	1760500	644365	753682	2090	276156	751841	045	3682090
11/11/03	2nd	918564	910950	325862	61862	072	139655	493103	6	1862072
16/12/03	3rd	722256	712700	257544	71471	684	110376	373584	2	1471684
10/13/04	3rd Jan 04	918042	915100	320489	41831	368	137352	691568	4	1831368
20/3/04	3rd Feb 04	983754	984000	345013	91971	508	147863	198575	4	19711508
21/6/04	4th	2717247	2679600	951036	454344	944	407581	05271724	7	5A34494

Quarterly financial statement of income and expenditure in a repaired and painted school hall, Kabarole district, Uganda (2004).



Display of the stock of books bought by a school committee in a headteacher's office in Hai district, Tanzania (2004).



Free school lunch programme for over 800 children in the schoolyard in a school in Arua district in Uganda (2004).

Anecdotal Evidence Box 15: Profiles of members of local management committees

Two typical letters from 2004 demonstrate how representatives from government as well as local management committees in Uganda comply with the regulations with regard to the minimum requirements that prospective candidates for local management committees must meet.

In a first example (below, left), a District Education Officer (DEO) in Moyo district writes to a School Management Committee (SMC) that its proposed candidates are approved. The DEO most likely reiterates the importance of the requirements by tabulating the approved candidates' educational level. For good measure – though not formally required – he adds professional profile.

In the second example (below, right), an SMC writes to a DEO to inform him of the six candidates for the SMC and solicits his approval for their appointment. (See Anecdotal Evidence Box 3 for similar anecdotal evidence from Kabarole district.) Note that the DEO had disapproved of earlier candidates because some were illiterate.²⁴⁴

DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICE
P.O. BOX 1
MOYO
10/062004

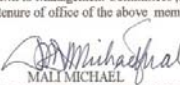
The Head teacher
I VALLEY
.....
Primary School

RE: APPROVAL OF THE NEWLY ELECTED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

After very careful analysis of your submission, we have approved the under listed as School Management Committee members for your School

Name	Sex	Qualification	Occupation	Position
M. A. ...	F	O level	Peasant	C/person
B. V. ...	M	O level	Peasant	Vice C/person
T. M. ...	M	O level	Peasant	Member
A. P. ...	M	O level	Peasant	Member
M. V. ...	M	J.3	Peasant	Member
T. S. R. ...	F	O level	Peasant	Member
K. K. ...	F	O level	Gr. 3 Tr	Member
M. P. ...	M	J.3	Peasant	Member
A. G. ...	M	O level	Gr.3 Tr	Member
A. S. ...	F	O level	H/Tr	Secretary

Your attend is drawn to Management Committees, Amendment Rules, 1969 No 224 page 2 in as far as the tenure of office of the above members is concerned

Yours faithfully,

 Muli Michael
 FOR DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER, MOYO

CC .Secretary for Education LC V
 CC. CFO
 CC .Area Inspectors - West Moyo
 CC. Area CCTs
 CC. File

L. PRI. SCHOOL
P.O. BOX
MOYO
1105104

THE DEO
P.O. BOX 1
MOYO


Dear Sir,

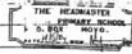
Re: THE SIX NEWLY ELECTED SMC

I wish to inform you that following the disapproval six SMC executive members of my school in 1105104 we held a general PTA elections and the below listed persons were elected:

1. Mr. Z. Z. O level Chairman
2. Mrs D. V. SI Vice person
3. Mr M. R. SB member
4. Mr A. J. J.3 "
5. Mr R. SB "
6. Mr S. M. P7 "

I will be very grateful if they are all approved.

Thank you
 Yours faithfully

 M



²⁴⁴ Individual interview #10 (28 Sep 2004).

Table 19: Density of institutional network of management committees in Uganda											
	Actor	Actors with whom local committee has <i>direct</i> contact				Actors with whom local committee has <i>indirect</i> contact					
		Importance			Total	Importance			Total		
		high	normal	minor	Average	high	normal	minor	Average		
Uganda	School Management Committees (n = 17)	National	Own sector Ministry	-	-	-	T = 3 Av = 0.2	9	1	1	T = 16 Av = 1.0
			Other govt departments	-	-	-		-	2	-	
			National NGOs	1	-	1		-	2	1	
			International donors	1	-	-		-	-	-	
		District level	Own sector department	13	1	-	T = 23 Av = 1.4	3	-	-	T = 57 Av = 3.4
			Other govt departments	1	2	1		7	9	5	
			District Councillor	-	1	-		5	1	5	
			NGOs	-	-	-		1	7	7	
			Member of Parliament	-	-	-		-	-	2	
			Businesses	-	2	1		-	-	3	
		Immediate sphere	Other schools/clinics	-	-	1	-	1	1		
			Nearest local govt bodies	9	10	8	T = 73 Av = 4.3	-	15	11	T = 46 Av = 2.7
			Staff (teachers)	11	3	-		2	-	-	
			Other local civil servants	-	-	1		-	1	2	
			Parents	13	3	-		1	-	-	
			Community in general	1	-	1		5	3	-	
			Local dignitaries	-	-	2		-	-	2	
	Mosques, churches	5	5	1	-	2		2			
	Average <i>direct</i> contacts per committee (T=99)				5.9		Average <i>indirect</i> contacts per committee (T=119)			7.0	
	Health Unit Management Committee (n = 11)	National	Own sector Ministry	-	-	-	T = 0 Av = 0.0	1	1	2	T = 7 Av = 0.6
			Other govt departments	-	-	-		-	-	-	
National NGOs			-	-	-	-		2	-		
International donors			-	-	-	-		1	-		
District level		Own sector department	2	1	-	T = 5 Av = 0.5	5	3	1	T = 16 Av = 1.5	
		Other govt departments	-	-	-		-	-	2		
		District Councillor	-	1	-		1	-	-		
		NGOs	1	-	-		1	3	-		
		Member of Parliament	-	-	-		-	-	-		
		Businesses	-	-	-		-	-	-		
Immediate sphere		Other schools/clinics	-	-	-	-	-	-			
		Nearest local govt bodies	10	6	2	T = 44 Av = 4.0	-	5	4	T = 23 Av = 2.1	
		Staff (nurses)	10	-	-		1	-	-		
		Other local civil servants	2	1	1		1	4	4		
	Patients	3	1	-	-		-	-			
	Community in general	4	-	-	2		1	-			
	Local dignitaries	-	-	1	-		-	-			
Mosques, churches	-	1	2	1	-		-				
Average <i>direct</i> contacts per committee (T=49)				4.5		Average <i>indirect</i> contacts per committee (T=46)			4.2		

Table 20: Density of institutional network of management committees in Tanzania

		Actor	Actors with whom local committee has <i>direct</i> contact			Actors with whom local committee has <i>indirect</i> contact						
			Importance			Total	Importance			Total		
			high	normal	minor	Average	high	Normal	minor	Average		
Tanzania	School Management Committees (n = 27)	National	Own sector Ministry	-	-	-	T = 5 Av = 0.2	6	1	2	T = 19 Av = 0.7	
			Other govt departments	-	-	-		-	-	-		
			National NGOs	1	-	2		-	2	1		
			International donors	1	-	1		-	5	2		
		District level	Own sector department	7	1	-	T = 34 Av = 1.3	13	4	1	T = 90 Av = 3.3	
			Other govt departments	2	2	3		9	11	9		
			District Councillor	2	1	-		1	3	-		
			NGOs	-	5	2		2	5	10		
			Member of Parliament	-	-	-		-	2	-		
			Businesses	2	1	2		1	5	9		
		Immediate sphere	Other schools	-	4	-	-	5	-			
			Nearest local govt bodies	30	5	1	T = 121 Av = 4.5	9	9	5	T = 68 Av = 2.5	
			Staff (teachers, etc)	20	1	-		-	-	-		
			Other local civil servants	2	-	1		-	2	5		
			Parents	23	1	-		2	-	-		
			Community in general	5	-	-		9	3	-		
			Local dignitaries	4	2	10		-	1	13		
		Mosques, churches	3	7	6	1		5	4			
		Average <i>direct</i> contacts per committee (T = 160)						5.9	Average <i>indirect</i> contacts per committee (T = 177)			6.6
		Health Facility Committee (n = 9)	National	Own sector Ministry	-	-	-	T = 4 Av = 0.4	-	-	-	T = 1 Av = 0.1
				Other govt departments	-	-	-		-	-	-	
	National NGOs			1	-	-	-		-	-		
	International donors			2	-	1	-		-	1		
	District level		Own sector department	5	1	-	T = 12 Av = 1.3	-	2	-	T = 10 Av = 1.1	
			Other govt departments	-	-	-		-	1	1		
			District Councillor	1	1	-		-	-	-		
			NGOs	-	2	-		-	-	2		
Member of Parliament			-	-	-	1		-	1			
Businesses			-	-	-	-		-	2			
Immediate sphere	Other clinics		-	2	-	-	-	-				
	Nearest local govt bodies		8	4	1	T = 32 Av = 3.6	1	2	4	T = 19 Av = 2.1		
	Staff (nurses, etc)		2	-	-		2	1	-			
	Other local civil servants		-	2	-		1	3	-			
	Patients		-	-	-		-	-	-			
	Community in general		4	2	1		1	-	-			
Local dignitaries	-	1	1	-	1		2					
Mosques, churches	3	3	-	-	-	1						
Average <i>direct</i> contacts per committee (T = 48)						5.3	Average <i>indirect</i> contacts per committee (T = 30)			3.3		

5. UGANDA'S INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF CENTRAL-LOCAL RELATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This is the second of the two core chapters of this thesis and it puts the findings from the preceding chapter about contemporary decentralised management of education and health services into a local and historical perspective by investigating:

How have central government and local polities in Uganda been developing their institutional framework over time and from local polities' perspective?²⁴⁵

Obviously, this question is asked with an awareness that Uganda is – like most Sub-Saharan African countries – a nation-state created by colonialism. In the context of this research an awareness of the colonial history has a particular relevance because it means that the analysis of the historical development of the institutional framework needs to take account of the fact that the nation-state represented by central government encompasses a diversity of pre-existing local polities.

This chapter is divided into six sections, each covering a particular period in time, varying from 15 to 30 years. The use of this particular sequence of periods is not unique to this thesis. Others have used a similar scheme, usually demarcating periods by significant changes in the character of central government (e.g. Kirk-Greene, 1980; Obbo, 1983). That works for the analyses in this thesis too, as significant changes in central government inevitably impact the relationship, the institutional framework, that central government has with local polities.

However, unlike many historical studies of Uganda, this thesis endeavours to take a local perspective in analysing the development of the wider institutional framework, guided through the prisms of resources and personal networks. In order to do this, the six sections in this chapter generally start by describing in some detail the general developments in

²⁴⁵ As explained in footnote 1, this chapter presents the analyses regarding this second research question only for Uganda. I have written a similar analysis of the development of the institutional framework between central government and local polities in Tanzania, which will be published in the peer-reviewed Working Papers Series of Development Studies at Massey University as an 'Occasional Paper'.

economy, politics and institutional framework. This description of general developments then forms the backdrop against which – subsequently – the perspectives and agency of local polities with regard to these general developments can be investigated and made visible.

The research in this chapter is largely based on a reading of historical documents. The description of the general developments is generally based on reading primary and secondary sources, mostly emanating from a central government perspective. The subsequent investigation of the perspectives and agency of local polities, however, is often based on a ‘reading between the lines’ of these sources. Chapter 3 provided the methodological considerations taken into account when ‘re-reading’ historical texts with the objective to find a local perspective between the lines. Suffice to reiterate here that the challenge is not just that virtually all available texts were written by people writing from a central government’s perspective and not by people writing from a local polity’s perspective. There is an even larger challenge in the fact that in the few occasions when people in local polities were informing central government’s scribes, they may have told a story with a particular objective, knowing it would be recorded.²⁴⁶

5.2 Pre-colonial relations between local polities and outside actors

Prior to the arrival of European colonial powers in the late 19th century, a range of different types of local polities had developed in the territory that later came to be known as Uganda. By the early 19th century a few of these polities began developing trading relations with actors beyond the immediate region. This section considers the impact that these trading relations have on the development of the politico-administrative structures within polities and between these local polities and the exogenous actors.

First local polities emerge

Several – and rather diverse – polities existed in area that was to be known as Uganda in the pre-colonial period. There were about twenty to thirty polities. As far as can be

²⁴⁶ In this thesis I will generally refrain from the temptation to double-guess Africans’ interests in telling a particular story at a particular point in time to a particular European, as well as a double-guessing a European’s interests in recording that version of the story for a particular audience.

ascertained, many had a high degree of population mobility, a fluid ethnic identity and political structures revolving mostly on local taxation, justice and religion. However, there were also a number of polities with more sedentary farming practices where more formalised institutions for ‘public administration’ emerged, generally controlled by ruling chiefly clans.²⁴⁷ Virtually nothing is recorded by the inhabitants themselves about the actual domestic institutional arrangements of these polities, so a local perspective of their politics cannot be made. Oral history dates ancestral lineages of several ruling elites in these early polities back to the 17th century (e.g. Atkinson, 1989; Connah, 1997; Kiwanuka, 1968; Robertshaw and Taylor, 2000).²⁴⁸ European anthropological research concludes, “most African kingdoms were not highly centralized polities, the king was in some degree *primus inter pares* ... In such a polity, the chief, while in one of his aspects an administrative subordinate of the king also held another role: that of representative of his people to the king ... Such polities tended towards either decentralisation or fragility” (Fallers, 1964: 4).

Some of these polities had, however, developed into a “proto-bureaucracy” where this representational function of chiefs towards the King was inversed and acquired more Weberian features. “In Buganda the government passed into the hands of chiefs who were appointed by the *kabaka* (king) and loyal to him alone ... A chief might one day stay at the pinnacle of wealth and influence ... next day, having incurred the monarch’s disfavour he might be stripped of property and office” (Fallers, 1964: 4-6). The first British reports note that ruling elites in these Kingdoms extracted wealth from their subjects via taxation, although taxation practices varied greatly. The Buganda Kingdom had developed administrative systems that qualified in some British eyes as the “most perfect system of taxation” that encompassed land, labour, produce and a monopoly or licenses on trade. The Bunyoro and Ankole Kingdoms taxed subjects systematically in cattle and smaller more acephalous societies merely taxed surplus harvest or cattle (Roscoe, 1923: 221).

²⁴⁷ A map in Newbury’s work suggests nine such polities (2003: 127).

²⁴⁸ Findings from my research into the development of the institutional frameworks around local polities in Tanzania – to be published separately, see footnote 1 – refer to evidence that local polities in the interior also emerged and traded in a wider region in the 16th and 17th century (see for example: D. Newbury, 2001; Rockel, 2000; Wilson, 1972). The local polities along Tanzania’s coast were part of a “fully articulated commercial system” along the coast of the Indian ocean that dates back even further, to the 9th century, according to written Arab, Persian and Portuguese records (Pouwels, 2002: 391).

First institutional framework for exchanging resources with outsiders

With high population mobility, trade was an integral part of interaction between neighbouring local polities and commonly traded resources seemed to have been consumables like grain, millet, salt and bark cloth or utensils like iron tools and pottery (e.g. Connah, 1997: 25). Until the mid 19th century, it seems that most ruling elites in local polities had only limited capability to regulate or control this trade. “Salt production and trade ... is always in demand and requires no investment. Its production is always and easily available. It is an open industry: one can enter and leave at will” (Barrett-Gaines, 2004: 19). However, when the production of these resources was not ‘always and easily available’, ruling elites began to build their domestic power base on the control of, for example, large-scale cattle breeding or iron smelting (Robertshaw and Taylor, 2000: 4).

After the mid 19th century, larger and permanent market places for the exchange of goods emerged in geographically well-situated local polities. Buganda’s and Bunyoro’s geographical positions made them central points for the transshipment of goods between regions. As volumes increased, processing industries emerged around these markers and blacksmiths and weavers often added goods to the stream. Markets became places where ordinary people exchanged resources – *munaku yegulira*, where “the poor man buys for himself” – and where ruling elites expanded their economic power base; the tax collector became a professional category (Uzoigwe, 1972: 423). In Kottak’s analysis, markets were “supralocal or intersocietal exchange networks” and controlling that exchange was generally a basis for the strengthening or centralisation of political power in the hands of a ruling elite (1972: 369). However, it should be noted there was no inevitability in this process. Turyahikayo-Rugyema, for example, describes how precolonial markets in the Bakiga polity developed standards of resource exchange – money – but also that these “market centres were controlled by no one” (1976: 288).

Trade as the exchange of resources took an increasingly long distance aspect in the second half of the 19th century as trade caravans began to extend trade lines from Uganda to Zanzibar. A handful of local polities, with Buganda and Bunyoro as the largest ones, now became the central points in an exchange of new type of resources, unique and hitherto unknown on the local markets: elephant tusks and guns. These new resources at the heart of the exchange trade between local polities in Uganda and a powerful actor in a remote

place like the Sultanate in Zanzibar, were very dissimilar to the other resources exchanged on local markets and had a unique character. Guns were highly valuable in the local polities, but could not be produced locally. Ivory, on the other hand, was abundantly available in local polities and had no value in the domestic economy, but was a highly valuable resource in Zanzibar (actually, Europe and the US).²⁴⁹ With their growing control over local markets, ruling elites in Buganda and Bunyoro held, from the beginning, a strict control over the trade in these two resources.²⁵⁰ It left guns – as a source of power – exclusively in the hands of the emerging ruling local elites and it also gave these elites a monopoly in the most lucrative trade imaginable.²⁵¹

The exclusive control over guns and the increasing wealth from the monopoly of the trade in ivory strengthened the militaries and expanded the centralising bureaucracies in a handful of well-positioned local polities, but particularly Buganda and Bunyoro. By the 1870s, traders reported that some of Uganda’s local polities maintained formal diplomatic agreements with each other – ranging from permanent emissaries to arranged cross-polity political marriages (Musisi, 1991; Reid, 1998: 85).²⁵² The same Arab or Swahili traders and hunters complained that they could only operate in Buganda with a license from the king, or as employees of the king. In fact, traders complained that Buganda and Bunyoro officials demanded “almost half of [their] goods, especially powder, lead, shot and guns”

²⁴⁹ My research into Tanzania’s local polities (to be published separately, see footnote 1) shows that while Uganda’s local polities in the 19th century developed their institutional framework with outsiders primarily around the trade in ivory, Tanzania’s local polities developed their institutional framework with traders from Zanzibar not only around ivory (Beachey, 1967), but also around copal (Sunseri, 2007) and wild rubber (Monson, 1993). All these resources had virtually no value in the local polities’ domestic markets, but attracted a high price on the international market.

²⁵⁰ This also meant that the emerging ruling elites in Uganda’s Buganda and Bunyoro polities did not have to negotiate with other domestic elites (such as blacksmiths, weavers or hunters) about control over this resource.

²⁵¹ “Ivory played the same part in the nineteenth century as do plastics in the mid-twentieth century”, it was used in Europe and the US in making cutlery, clothing (buttons, buckles), false teeth, in-lays, and boudoir accessories such as combs, fans, and statuettes (Beachey, 1967: 288). Iliffe records that prices for ivory grew sixfold between 1820s and 1890s (1979: 42).

²⁵² Obviously, the increasing power of some local polities could also lead to conflict. The Bunyoro King, for example, was initially less of an absolute ruler than the Baganda King (Fallers, 1964, 1965). He shared political and ritual power with others – including an un-related ‘queen mother’ who possessed authority of her own. However, as the Bunyoro King (*mukuma*) managed to monopolise the increasing exchange of guns for ivory and slaves with outsiders in the late 1870s, the kingdom saw “the emergence of a new kind of central power, in the hands of the *mukama*, based on access to firearms and trade”. Domestic competition for power was marginalised and in alliances with other neighbours of the Baganda polity, Bunyoro expanded militarily at the expense of the much larger polity of Baganda. In a single battle between Buganda and Bunyoro in 1862, the Bunyoro are observed to have fielded a contingent of 750 riflemen (Uzoigwe, 1973; Willis, 2006: 108, 109).

in exchange for accommodation and food (Beachey, 1962: 451). The power of ruling elites further expanded with growing control over transportation across Lake Victoria. There are records of formal requests by the Buganda King to the sultan of Zanzibar in 1871 to send craftsmen to build larger sailing vessels for trade over Lake Victoria. These “diplomatic entreaties” also prove that Baganda not only had access to practical and commercial information about powerful polities at a long distance, but also maintained formal relations with them (Hartwig, 1970: 543). The first institutional framework between local polities and outside actors was beginning to take shape.

The first personal networks with outsiders

Similar to their monopolisation of trade with major outside actors, the ruling elites in local polities also tried to monopolise their personal network with representatives from these outside actors within their polity. Moreover, their hold on these outside contacts was also used as leverage in dealing with neighbouring polities. The first European travellers, for example, reported they were generously welcomed and entertained at royal courts, but could not freely engage with local traders. When the first European trading caravans in the mid 1860s argued over trade with the Baganda King and left the court, they were invited by the Bunyoro King to visit Banyoro, offering attractive trading terms. And though the Bunyoro King failed to obtain a formal alliance with these early Europeans, the Baganda King was disturbed enough by the risk of European support for Bunyoro that he set out to spread rumours among the Banyoro commoners that the Europeans at the King’s court had come with evil intentions (Beattie, 1960: 18).

More intricate personal networks between ruling elites and outsiders developed in the late 1860s. The Baganda elite extended invitations to Muslim scholars in Zanzibar, and several of them accepted the invitation and became part of the Arab trading community in Buganda. Similar invitations were extended to French Catholic missionaries and the British Anglican Church Missionary Society in the 1870s. While the Baganda motives are not known, there are records of the way in which the Baganda used these personal contacts to get a better understanding of the motives of the major outside actors on the horizon. The court organised “competitive performances by the three religious groups,” with each order promoting their particular view of their religion and country, denigrating their opponents

(Apter, 1960: 49).²⁵³ For Baganda elites these ‘debates’ may have been as amusing as instructive about the background and rivalries of the advancing European and Muslim traders.

In the ensuing years, various British, French and German Orders established the first mission schools in several local polities. Local elites used these mission schools not just to educate some of their children in literacy and numeracy – skills they recognised as indispensable in their trading with outside actors – but also to integrate their children in the different personal networks that could tie them in with particular outside actors (Twaddle, 1988: 82). Particular personal networks became associated with particular local power struggles: ruling Baganda clans decided to adhere to the British Anglican church, marginalised Buganda clans tended to assume Catholic or Muslim identities, as did ruling elites in neighbouring smaller local polities hoping, for example, to use the Anglican and Catholic animosity as part of their opposition to the ruling Baganda clans (Summers, 2005a: 2).

Conclusions

The first institutional framework between local polities and exogenous actors seem to have developed primarily around the exchange of resources that were not locally available. The exchange of local resources – for example salt – between people from one local polity and people from another local polity was generally not controlled by ruling local elites. However, with the appearance of Arab traders from ‘far away polities’ looking for resources that had no local value – ivory – and offering in exchange resources that could not be locally produced – guns or iron implements – ruling elites did step in to control the flow of these resources. It was probably the control over traded resources from and towards exogenous actors – rather than control over core domestic resources like labour and land – that solidified the domestic position of local elites.

²⁵³ Twaddle’s references suggest that the missionaries’ “slanging-matches” at the Baganda court have been discussed by a number of researchers (1988: 82). There could be a historical continuity in the way representatives from missionary orders held ‘slanging matches’ in the royal Baganda Court in 1885 over ‘who knows god better’, and the sarcastic tit-for-tat over ‘who knows governance better’ in Uganda’s media between representatives of the Global Fund for Aids Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and USAID in Kampala in 2005 (GFATM, 2005; USAID, 2005: 46).

Moreover, while the control over relations with exogenous actors from far away assumed formal formats such as licenses and taxes, it also provided a basis for the first formal diplomatic relations with far away polities. Again, ruling local elites tried to monopolise these formal contracts as well as the personal contacts and exchanges of information. This not only left domestic competitors without much information about the trade with outsiders, but it also – and as important – left the exogenous actors with only one source of information about local political dynamics and local resources. The ruling local elites, on the other hand, were of course free to exchange resources and information with as many exogenous actors as they wished.

5.3 Early colonial central-local relations (1890-1920)

In the early colonial period, Britain presented itself to the local polities as a central government and entered into individual negotiations about institutional frameworks with a number of local polities. This section explores the motives of British colonial officials to make treaties. It also explores the varying motives and different responses from local polities to the opportunities and threats that the treaties with Britain presented. Subsequently, this section analyses the character and direction of the flow of resources to and from local polities and the impact these flows of resources had on the position of ruling elites. This section will also consider how the emerging institutional framework with central government affected the relations of local polities among each other; one of the local polities used its institutional framework with central government to dominate the ‘local government’ in most of the neighbouring polities. This, in turn, generated a varied response among elites in these local polities that formed the basis for their own institutional framework with central government.

An aspiring central government introduces itself

The British motive to go into the territory that was to become Uganda, originated in the Berlin Conference of 1885 where Europe’s most powerful countries negotiated spheres of political and commercial influence in Africa. However, the Berlin Conference also established that for the pencilled lines on the map to become effective, the European powers should establish an effective presence on the ground. For East Africa, the German and British government initially granted the right to establish this presence on the ground

and exploit the areas commercially to private companies. The British government had granted the right to exploit its spheres of influence to the private Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), while the German government granted similar rights to the Deutsche Ost-Africa Gesellschaft (DOAG) in 1885, which was established one day after the Berlin Conference (Austen, 1968: 25; Iliffe, 1979: 90). Both companies, however, were building on commercial efforts since the 1830s to extend British and German trade into East Africa in competition with each other and the Zanzibar government that controlled the East Africa trade in most of the 19th century.²⁵⁴

Both IBEAC and DOAG thus set off with expeditions into East Africa's interior to establish the required presence on the ground by treaties with local polities. The Germans started in 1885 and worked their way inland along the commercial trade routes, establishing 18 treaties and trading posts with local polities along the way (Iliffe, 1979: 91). In these treaties, local polities ceded their sovereignty to the Germans, in exchange for "presents and promises of protection" (Henderson, 1962: 13) and varying sums of cash-in-hand.²⁵⁵ Some analysts depict the local elites in these local polities as deceived or hapless victims (Gwassa, 1969: 98; Pike, 1986: 202). Coulson finds, "the chiefs cannot have realised what they were doing" (1982: 34). However, there is also enough evidence to suggest that local polities knew quite well they were trading in the institutional framework with the Zanzibar central government for an institutional framework with the ascending European powers (Meritt, 1976: 587; Wright, 1968: 625). Local polities that refused to sign a treaty with the Germans commented, "We cannot believe that it is his [the Zanzibar Sultan's] wish that strangers should come into his dominions and cut down his flag or hoist another one beside it". One local polity had had a very pro-active approach by sending emissaries to Berlin in 1889 and welcomed his first German guests in 1891 in "a cloak ... from the Berlin Opera House" and complained "you have brought me many wonders but none of the cannon which my people saw in Berlin (quoted in: Iliffe, 1979: 94, 100).

²⁵⁴ Leigh and Kirkman (1980a, 1980b) analysis of the 1830s diaries of British officials in Zanzibar are the 19th century equivalent of Wikileaks revealing the intensive personal networks that underpin the manoeuvring between British, German, French and American traders and diplomats on Zanzibar to obtain exclusive commercial trade contracts. Henderson (1962: 46) provides details of the manoeuvring of German trading companies, competing for exclusive contracts for the trade in cowrie shells to be bought on Zanzibar and traded in West Africa. Until the 1880s, the Zanzibar government succeeded in carefully playing off one European power against the other (Bennett, 1973, 1974; Kieran, 1968).

²⁵⁵ I could not access original texts of Tanzanian treaties, but similar treaties between Germans and local polities in Togo (Zimmerman, 2005: 1379) and Cameroon (Johnston, 1899: 254) included cash sums of hundreds or thousands of pounds to each local signatory.

A British IBEAC expedition under Lugard prepared for a journey to Uganda in 1890 in response to German claims that they had been invited by the Baganda King via the personal networks of Catholic missionaries at his court (Johnston, 1899: 239). Moreover, DOAG claimed a treaty of “special friendship” between the Buganda King and the German Emperor (Austen, 1968: 25). This created tensions, as the British believed they had earlier treaties with local polities in Uganda’s northern areas.²⁵⁶ However, a few weeks before Lugard actually set off the need for treaties with local polities in Uganda to establish effective British presence on the ground disappeared, because Germany and Britain had settled the matter of colonial borders in East Africa as part of wider international diplomatic arrangements.²⁵⁷ Lugard set off nonetheless and presented himself to the Baganda King as the British representative. The Baganda King received him well; he granted Lugard a “hill” near his court, adjacent to the hills granted to other foreigner representatives, on which the British IBEAC expedition duly built a small fort-cum-trading post in 1890 (Southall, 1966: 338).

Yet, as commercial companies IBEAC and DOAG failed to pay for their on the ground presence and operational costs far outweighed commercial benefits. The German government took over DOAG in 1891 and the British government assumed control over IBEAC’s operations in 1893 and formally declared Uganda a Protectorate in 1894 (Sharf, 2005: 23). However, with the need for treaties no longer relevant, the British delegation appeared to become hesitant to enter into an agreement with Buganda, obviously one of the leading local polities. Britain withdrew from the trading post on the hill next to the Buganda King’s court and set up a new post in Entebbe, 45 km from Buganda’s capital Kampala (Mengo) at an intersection of various trade routes, where they would have access to “a wide range of intelligence about events both inside and outside Buganda” (Twaddle, 1969: 311). Arguably, the British played for time to get a better understanding

²⁵⁶ An earlier British “special commissioner for Uganda,” Johnston, claims he himself “made treaties in the East African interior, in 1884, which laid the foundations of the rights of the BEAC” (Johnston, 1911: 229). I found no further reference to details of these pre-Berlin Conference treaties. Vincent notes that the British and a local chief made “a line of treaties” to determine Uganda’s northern border in 1898, but also for these treaties, “no written evidence” has come to light (1977: 144).

²⁵⁷ This wider arrangement was the Anglo-German ‘Heligoland-Zanzibar Treaty’ of July 1890 (Gillard, 1960: 631) as well as an Anglo-Italian Treaty in 1891 (Sharf, 2005: 22), which put Uganda in the British sphere of influence. I cannot escape the impression that there is historical continuity when I compare this process with contemporary aid agreements made at a local level. An analysis of Dutch bilateral aid over 1998-2006, for example, concludes that “despite statements to the contrary, decisions continue to be made in The Hague (and Brussels and New York) rather than in Bamako, Kampala or Maputo” (Lammers, 2008: 1).

of the local dynamics before associating too closely with one of the local polities.²⁵⁸ The aspiring colonial central government's hesitance towards Buganda is also revealed in the fact it refused the Baganda offer of troops, but chose to hire troops from northern polities, which it called "the best material for soldiery in Africa" (Leopold, 2006: 186).

What happened next in the negotiations between the British and the local polities throughout the 1890s has two contrasting perspectives. From one perspective, the British contingent actively imposed itself and actively shaped the future of the Buganda polity. Twaddle's account of events is exemplary. "Captain Lugard quickly *organised* a war by the two Christian parties against the Muslims, then *recruited* Sudanese Muslims as mercenary soldiers to support the IBEAC in Buganda and neighbouring kingdoms to the west, before *distributing* precision rifles which Ganda Protestants turned upon the Ganda Catholics in January 1892 [italics added]" (1988: 88).²⁵⁹ As Britain got involved with Buganda, the rivalling polities of Bunyoro and Ankole turned for their trade to Germans in Tanzania. One colonial official reported: "Ivory finds its way into German territory, so that not only do the British lose the ordinary profits of trade but the armed strength of the natives is gradually increased" (quoted in: Beachey, 1962: 458). Britain felt it needed to act. When the British mobilised their hired northern soldiers, these troops demanded a 500% wage increase. It was only then that the British accepted the offer of Baganda troops for, by now, 20% of the costs (Southall, 1975: 88). Paid for and armed by the British, the Baganda waged repeated and successful wars against their neighbours and gradually reconquered lands that they had lost, particularly to Bunyoro in the 1880s (Willis, 2006: 109). In 1899, Britain exiled Bunyoro's King to the Seychelles (Beachey, 1962: 458).

A closer look at these results leads to a second perspective – a local perspective – of the negotiations about the institutional framework between Britain and local polities. From this perspective, local polities have an active role in attracting, coaxing, confronting, or

²⁵⁸ The reluctance to enter into agreements with local polities did not stop the British from entering in agreements with other colonial powers. In 1894, the British leased the so-called Lado Enclave in western Uganda – occupied by polities with weak formal structures and according the 1885 Berlin Conference within British sphere of influence – to the Belgian King Leopold II. He then used the area for forced labour, ivory, and riverine transport until it was returned to the British in 1914 (Middleton, 1966: 2).

²⁵⁹ Twaddle's presentation in 1988 of the events in the late 19th century does not differ much from the accounts by British officials who noted in 1899 that Lugard "in an exceedingly able and courageous manner restored order ... putting down revolts of the Roman Catholic Christians and of the Mohammedans" (Johnston, 1899: 239).

avoiding the British. In the course of the 1890s, the Baganda proved to be particularly successful in building personal alliances with the British. Twaddle acknowledges the “highly personalised nature of many of their relationships with [British] officials as well as with European missionaries” (1969: 312). British officials began to file admiring reports describing Baganda, “in politeness, quickness of intelligence and appreciation of beauty ... the Japanese of Africa” or “the most progressive people ... of east Africa” (quoted in: Fallers, 1961: 678). In stark contrast, the Banyoro apparently failed to develop personal networks with the colonial officials, who reported about Banyoro’s “pretensions to civilisation” (quoted in: Doyle, 2000: 438).

Central government and some polities negotiate a new institutional framework

Against the backdrop of increasing personal networks between British and elites from a few local polities such as Buganda, these parties agreed to elaborate official agreements in 1900 and 1901 about an institutional framework that bound them.²⁶⁰ Historical sources are not clear about what or who initiated the negotiations for these agreements. Since settling colonial borders in diplomatic treaties with Germany and Belgium, the British had lost the initial motive for making treaties with local polities. Some of the local polities, on the other hand, may have had clear motives for making these agreements – as will be shown. Again, there are two diverging perspectives on these agreements. One view is, “treaty arrangements [were] often obtained by force ... the indigenous chief would sign over his land and most of what were later considered his inalienable rights without realising it, perhaps without even understanding the document he was signing” (Rotberg, 1966: 507). A more local perspective was expressed by the Baganda King in 1950: “The British had conquered all opposition, though not, of course, the Baganda, who had invited them into

²⁶⁰ My analyses of the development of the institutional framework around local polities in Tanzania (see footnote 245) provides a discussion about similar treaties or agreements between local polities and representatives of the German government. Gwassa, for example, suggests the DOAG treaties had standard clauses stating that the local ruler “hereby cedes all the territory of ..., belonging to him by inheritance or otherwise for all time, to Dr Karl Peters as the representative of the Society for German Colonisation, making over to him at the same time all his rights” (1969: 99). If correct, these text differ from the ‘Uganda Agreements’ – which state, “Her Majesty’s Government agrees to recognize the Kabaka of Uganda as the native ruler of the province of Uganda under Her Majesty’s protection and over-rule,” as I shall discuss next – but appear to contain elements similar to earlier British treaties like New Zealand’s Treaty of Waitangi of 1840: “The Chiefs of ... New Zealand ... cede to Her Majesty the Queen of England absolutely and without reservation all the rights and powers of Sovereignty which the ... Chiefs respectively exercise or possess” (Waitangi Tribunal, 1975). A comparative analysis of the text of colonial treaties would be a relevant topic of further research.

the country and shared their victories and reverses. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that this was a treaty between victorious allies, not conqueror and conquered” (quoted in: Southall, 1975: 91).²⁶¹ A closer look at the details of the Buganda Agreement of 1900 from a local perspective would indeed suggest that this institutional framework negotiated between the British and Buganda indeed has more of ‘a treaty between allies’ than of a ‘tutelage’ contract.

The Buganda Agreement presented the details of the institutional framework between central government and the Buganda polity, acknowledging the Buganda King and his Council of Chiefs (*lukiiko*) as the polity’s highest authority – “Her Majesty's Government agrees to recognize the Kabaka of Uganda as the native ruler of the province of Uganda” – even if this recognition is somewhat qualified by an “under Her Majesty's protection and over-rule”. The agreement also outlined in detail the exact boundaries of the Buganda polity, formally including several ‘counties’ that Buganda had recently conquered from Bunyoro (Beattie, 1960: 22).²⁶² The agreement also elaborated details of the jurisdictions of Baganda’s legislative, executive and judiciary institutions.²⁶³ The agreement also detailed new taxes for huts and guns, which the Buganda agreed to collect and transfer entirely to the colonial government in exchange for allowances for the king, ministers, chiefs and other officials. An essential element in the agreement is a table that specifies that 9,000 square miles of the kingdom’s “waste and uncultivated land” is to be controlled by the colonial government, but the ownership of the remaining 10,600 square miles are distributed, again in great detail, over various local elite groups (Johnston, Apollo et al., 1900: articles 6 and 15). This is bound to have secured the support of most of Baganda’s

²⁶¹ The concept of an imperial power being ‘invited’ into a territory rather than ‘invading’ it is – quite aptly – currently a topic of debate with regard to the Roman invasion of Britain in 43AD. Recent archaeological finds in Fishbourne, Sussex, could suggest that there were regular commercial contacts between some of Britain’s local polities and Roman traders in France decades prior to the Roman ‘invasion’. Moreover, a re-reading of ancient texts could also support the theory that some local polities in Britain invited the Roman army in to settle scores in wars between local polities. In exchange, the inviting local polities became Rome’s closest local allies and suppliers of auxiliary troops dominating an entire region (D. G. Bird, 2000; Hind, 1989).

²⁶² The enduring relevance of the agreement and the depth of historical awareness among Banyoro is visible in the fact that the issue of these “lost counties” was cause for violence in the area in the 1960s and continues to resurface in the political discourse in Bunyoro until today (Espeland, 2007: 4).

²⁶³ In spite of the details in the agreement, the Baganda King noted in 1950, “It became a charter of rights, almost a constitution ...[however] its imprecision allowed flexibility; its generalisations were open to interpretation” (quoted in: Southall, 1975: 91).

ruling elites for the agreement.²⁶⁴ When the negotiations over the agreement were concluded after “several months” (Southall, 1975: 91), one British official explained to the Colonial Office that this was the best deal. Baganda negotiators were “hard and sagacious bargainers” (quoted in: Twaddle, 1969: 312).

Buganda was not the only polity that manoeuvred to use the British resources and presence to its own advantage. In the ensuing months, the Tooro and Ankole polities also negotiated their own agreements. Of these, the Tooro Agreement is perhaps most interesting. Tooro was a polity resulting in 1822 from a breakaway clan of Bunyoro, still subject to some Bunyoro tribute and negotiating with Buganda as an ally. Tooro was re-incorporated in 1876, broke away again in 1891, was re-incorporated in 1893, and regained autonomy anew in 1894. It is not very clear what benefits the British derived from entering into an agreement with such a small and vulnerable polity or – from another perspective – how the Tooro succeeded in getting the British to negotiate one. In any case, the benefits for the Tooro elite were huge and came at no material cost. In exchange for the alliance with Britain, Tooro borders were officially demarcated and became inviolable. Domestically, the taxation, compensation and law enforcement aspects of the agreement accelerated the centralisation of power of Tooro’s ruling elite at the expense of the domestic competitors (Cahoon, 2000; Cohen, 1979; Steinhart, 1973).

A comparative analysis of the four agreements – the Baganda Agreement (1900), the Tooro Agreement (1900), the Ankole Agreement (1901) and later the Bunyoro Agreement (1933)²⁶⁵ – reveals they are quite different.²⁶⁶ For example, the latter three agreements do not, or only marginally refer to existing domestic legislation or institutions. Is this an indication that the Buganda political institutions were more established than those in the other polities? Furthermore, the Tooro and Ankole Agreements dedicate detailed attention

²⁶⁴ Without further reference, Newbury notes 3,945 chiefs received freehold property (2003: 128).

²⁶⁵ The Bunyoro came about after more than 30 years of continuous Bunyoro claims, after which the colonial central government finally agreed (Steinhart, 1977). Though the agreement hardly provides the Bunyoro elite with direct material benefits or influence over neighbours, it does secure their control over local administrative institutions. Moreover, even when the agreement was negotiated at the height of colonial power, British negotiators were acutely aware of the delicate balance of powers. Negotiators were instructed to make sure that when presenting the portrait of King George V to the Bunyoro King they should make sure that “Bunyoro must not get a bigger and better picture than Buganda” (Colonial Memo, quoted in: Willis, 2006: 106).

²⁶⁶ Strangely, I have not come across any comparative or content analyses into these four agreements, or any of the other dozens of agreements that were signed in the 19th century.

to the demarcation of the sub-divisions in the kingdom and their ruling chiefs. These chiefs are also named co-signatories to the agreements.²⁶⁷ Possibly, this suggests a less absolute power of the Tooro and Ankole Kings, in comparison with the Buganda and Bunyoro Kings. Another difference is that the Baganda and the Bunyoro Agreements are most detailed in outlining unique succession procedures; whereas the Tooro and Ankole Agreements simply state that the king and chiefs are entitled to nominate their successors.

Probably most important are the differences among the four agreements in the sphere of direct economic benefits for the ruling elites. The Buganda Agreement is specific in terms of allowances the British colonial government will pay ruling Baganda elites and the allocation of freehold land (Johnston, Apollo et al., 1900). The Tooro and Ankole Agreements do not include a payment of specified allowances, but rather specify retainers of local taxes (Jackson et al., 1901; Johnston, Kasagama et al., 1900). It seems the Tooro and Ankole negotiators preferred a variable income 10% of the new colonial taxes for the local elites and 10% of the overall amount for the king, whereas the Baganda negotiators decided to hand over all taxes in exchange for fixed allowances, which would however be renegotiated if collected taxes exceeded £45,000 per year. In the same vein, Tooro and Ankole negotiators obtained the right for chiefs to retain one third of the fines they imposed as judges, while the Baganda agreement remains silent on this issue. On balance, the Bunyoro Agreement is the least beneficial to the ruling elite in material terms; e.g. they receive tax exemptions rather than tax percentages (Bourdillon et al., 1933).

The four agreements have proven to be of continuous relevance as one expression of the institutional framework between these local polities and central government. Cohen speaks of the local elites using the agreements as part of “a struggle for political advantage or leverage, on occasions through violence or through passive opposition, or through negotiation and renegotiation” (1979: 592). Tooro, for example, successfully managed to renegotiate its agreement in 1906 to expand the allocation of freehold land to the royal clans (Kasfir, 1978: 156). Buganda cited the 1900 agreement as the reason for refusing in 1950 and 1953 to appoint a representative to a proposed Uganda Legislative Council;

²⁶⁷ The fact that each of the agreements is signed by a number of representatives for the local polities, ranging from 8 to 28 signatories, could well be evidence that the negotiating teams on the local polities' sides were carefully selected from the rules elites.

arguing its agreement meant it dealt directly with central government and not via a Council (Hailey, 1957: 293). Eventually, the 1900 agreement was renegotiated and Buganda's autonomy expanded in 1955 (Morris, 1978: 8). Bunyoro renegotiated elements of its agreement in 1955 (Beattie, 1960: 42) and polities that had hitherto not had an agreement, such as Busoga, lobbied strongly to get one in the run up to independence (Hailey, 1957: 483).

Finally, a look at the flow of resources between central government and local polities around the new institutional framework would suggest local polities – i.e. the ruling elites in these polities – gained more, at the expense of central government. The British Colonial Office sent a first grant-in-aid to the colonial central government in 1894.²⁶⁸ The grant was £95,000, in a year in which government collected revenues via local polities of £7,575.²⁶⁹ Central government continued to need grants from London to cover its operating expenses until 1915 (Keane, 1936: 312).²⁷⁰ From the perspective of the ruling elites in local polities, a considerable amount of this money flowed into their local economies. Much of central government's grant was used as wages to Baganda soldiers or African labourers working on roads. Although much of the labour required by central government was provided as tributary labour via local chiefs, on several occasions labour was scarce and central government found it was forced to negotiate additional bonuses or raise wages to get what it wanted. Road workers around Kampala, for example, successfully negotiated a 25% pay rise in 1905, ramping up central government expenses in wages for that year alone to £20,000 (Fuller, 1977: 80). In this light, the increasing presence of the central government in this early phase led to a steady stream of financial resources flowing from London into local polities. And while central government imposed new taxes on the general population in the local polities such as the hut tax, the ruling elites – several of them more secure and

²⁶⁸ This first grant-in-aid came with the expectation that “financial self-sufficiency” would be attained rapidly through “the strictest economy and that every effort should be made to eliminate as soon as possible the annual grant in aid” (Morris, 1978: 4). In fact, it would take another 25 years – until 1919 – before the protectorate would attain financial self-sufficiency (Abbott, 1971: 69).

²⁶⁹ On top of the money flowing into Uganda, the British Colonial Office also faced several additional costs. For example, it paid £10,000 to French Catholic missionaries as a compensation for their forced withdrawal from Uganda in the mid 1890s (Johnston, 1899: 240).

²⁷⁰ In my analyses of the development of the institutional framework around Tanzania's local polities (see footnote 245) I present evidence that the German Colonial Office in Berlin went down a similar path in Tanzania. By 1895, the German government had spent 8.5 million Marks, against total customs revenue of just over 200,000 Marks. The first tax (an annual hut tax) introduced in 1898 earned the colonial central government just over 50,000 Marks in 1903 (Coulsen, 1982: 35; Henderson, 1962: 20).

legitimate in their domestic dominance due to the agreements – actually earned a fee or commission collecting these taxes.

One local polity out-negotiates the others and central government

At the turn of the century, the colonial central government now had agreed official institutional frameworks for governance with three local polities – basically ruling via the ruling elites – but not with the other, often less institutionally stratified, local polities. Even if it had wanted to, the colonial central government did not have enough resources to position its own staff as administrators in these other polities. Though there are no reliable figures available about the number of European officials in Uganda in this period, extrapolations from a few available other sources would suggest that until the end of the First World War there were no more than 16 to 27 European staff in the entire country.²⁷¹ “Occupation was by no means yet synonymous with administration” (Kirk-Greene, 1980: 26). Moreover, a 1902 colonial report to London points out that none of the colonial staff spoke any of the local languages (quoted in: Twaddle, 1969: 311).²⁷² Baganda, on the other hand, spoke English in increasing numbers, as they sent their children to the rapidly expanding number of Anglican mission schools to learn to “jostle, network and manoeuvre within British administration, seeking to adapt it for their own ends” (Summers, 2005a: 2). Limited by numbers and language and mostly restricted to personal contacts with Baganda, colonial officials must have been quite uninformed and thereby impaired in their ability to ‘manage’ much of the political dynamic in the other local polities.

The tenuous presence of central government, even in polities like Ankole, was revealed when a disturbed lone murderer killed a British official in Ankole in 1905. A “political

²⁷¹ I could not find specific figures for Uganda, but this range is based on extrapolating from two sources. First, from the 1930s Uganda consistently had colonial staff of about 20% of Nigeria’s and as Nigeria had 80 colonial staff in 1906, this would suggest about 16 colonial officials in Uganda. Second, figures of 1904 on the total number of British employed by government in all of East Africa recorded 135 Europeans. Uganda’s proportion in the region through the years was less than 20%, suggesting a figure of no more than 27 colonial officials in Uganda (adapted from: Kirk-Greene, 1980). Actual numbers of effective staff in the local polities was probably further limited by policies of ‘transfers between duty stations’ for government officials and a high sickness and mortality rate.

²⁷² My research into the development of the institutional framework between central government and local polities in Tanzania (see footnote 245) found that British and German colonial government differed markedly in this field. The German government commissioned large-scale field research in Tanzania since the 1890s (Glauning, 1904; Lyall, 1986: 91; Redmayne, 1983: 22), and ensured that all colonial staff passed academic programmes in Berlin or Hamburg where they studied Swahili and Tanzania’s geography, cultures, trade and agriculture (Austen, 1968: 66; Crabtree, 1914: 14; Zimmerman, 2006: 435).

panic” ensued in equal measure among colonial officials and the local elite. The British feared “a conspiracy amongst the local elites,” as much as the Ankole elite feared the “British would punish them”. Willis’ analysis of the events concludes that both colonial government – that could only muster two government officials to sort out the case – and local elites were equally uncertain about their power and showed how much each group depended on the other” (1994: 380, 395). Central government needed a large number of proxy agents to mark its permanent presence and establish an administration in the local polities throughout the territory. As central government had been hiring large numbers of Baganda troops since the later 1890s and as the Baganda were developing ever-closer personal relations with the few central government officials, further cooperation between ‘victorious allies’ was obvious.

Yet, while such cooperation may have been obvious, it leaves a question mark over the motives to include explicit reference in the agreement of 1900 that Buganda renounce “any claims to tribute they may have had on the adjoining provinces,” adding for good measure that “the Kingdom of Uganda ... shall rank as a province of equal rank with any other province” (Johnston, Apollo et al., 1900: articles 2, 3) – when none of the other agreements had such references.²⁷³ Nevertheless, the military cooperation morphed smoothly into an administrative cooperation. One of the first examples probably occurred in the Bukedi polity where – after crushing a local rebellion – the British kept the Baganda general on the payroll, appointing him as the local administrator in 1900. To assist him, the new administrator appointed Baganda settlers as sub-chiefs, exempted them from taxes and effectively turned his commission into his personal fiefdom. Later, with support from Protestant missionaries, he further pleased central government by leading the introduction of coffee as a cash crop (C. Newbury, 2003: 129).

The cooperation between Buganda and central government in military and administrative spheres, gradually established a central government presence in all local polities. “Tribes which now make up the Eastern, Northern and Western provinces [were] conquered jointly by the British and the Baganda” (Fallers, 1961: 678). After conquest, Baganda officers

²⁷³ There are numerous questions for further research. Was the Buganda Agreement designed to assuage fears of Buganda imperialism? Was the text of the agreement public? Was the text made available to other polities? And who included it in the agreement, the British, the Baganda elite, or both in collusion knowing they were about to enter into a cooperation to ‘jointly’ administer the territory?

were generally appointed as the local chiefs. Central government's presence in many local polities thus had a distinctly Baganda character, and not just in personnel. The Baganda chiefs copied Baganda institutions for governance in the local polities they administered, with the endorsement of the British. The phenomenon of a chief who unified religious and political functions, as in Buganda, was imposed as a model, chiefs held a chiefly court called *lukiiko* and their immediate subordinate held *gombolola* (cf. Hailey, 1957: 481). The Baganda chiefs then set up a "new structure of government which existed under the supervision of the district commissioner and which drew heavily, in its terminology and form, on practices in Buganda" (Willis, 2006: 109). It can be argued that the weaker local polities were not only forcefully integrated into an institutional framework with the central government, but also via an "ethnicised bureaucracy" (Wimmer, 1997: 643).

Obviously, the Baganda elite's "primary loyalty lay with the *kabaka* and not the district Commissioner" and as "there was little intervention from the Protectorate Government until after the First World War" (C. Newbury, 2003: 129), the cooperation between Buganda and the British, from the perspective of the other local polities, was little more than "the perpetuation of Buganda's imperialist past" and turned the entire British Protectorate "into an appendage to Buganda" (A. Roberts, 1962: 435, 450). Ultimately, the careful political manoeuvring of one of the local polities in the territory vis-à-vis central government had given it dominance over most of its neighbours by 1910 (Hanson, 2003) – something which the formal Buganda Agreement had explicitly ruled against. However, the imposition of this Baganda-British institutional framework on local polities inevitably generated a response that varied from one polity to another. A few examples are illustrative of these varied responses.

Banyoro elites confronted the imposed Baganda chiefs – with a generations old enmity – and dismissive British officials – disliking Banyoro's 'pretensions to civilisation' – with repeated outbursts of violence. These outbursts led to repressive responses. Most of Banyoro's chiefly elites were killed, imprisoned or exiled (Beattie, 1960: 23) and punitive taxes and tributary labour imposed on Banyoro peasants. In effect, Banyoro's agricultural and pastoral production and population declined steeply in the 1905-1925 period (Doyle, 2000: 431). By the time central government came to see the Baganda chiefs as part of the problem and withdrew them in the mid 1920s, Banyoro villagers had lost all confidence in

local political institutions, even those remembered as ‘traditional’. The office of Banyoro chiefship and kingship had become “almost irrelevant” and “largely marginalised” (Willis, 2006: 110).

The cluster of Langi polities – culturally related polities without any over-arching political or religious authority – also resisted Baganda-British rule with violent resistance. When armed resistance had worn out in 1911, the Baganda military were appointed as administrators and started to impose Baganda institutions as the institutional framework for local administration. However, these non-Langi rulers and alien institutions of courts, councils and taxation were not entirely rejected by the remaining Langi elites. Several local elites negotiated positions in the alien framework and by 1919 the British District Commissioner began appointing Langi elites as chiefs, withdrawing the Baganda (Dahlberg, 1971: 618). Soon, the re-emerged Langi elites began adapting and modifying the institutions, regaining control through appropriation. In the process, the local chiefs’ and their subjects’ grappled as they mixed Langi cultural practices with the imposed Baganda administrative hierarchy and British guidelines: “The law at present administered by the native courts is a confused mixture of native laws and tribal customs ... tempered by British ideas” (A 1926 report, quoted in: Morris, 1967: 168).

Bugisu was also a polity that resembled a rather loose federation of clans, even with distinct linguistic practices. Baganda military occupied Bugisu without major resistance and imposed Baganda institutions for local administration, finding several of the local elites willing to be co-opted. However, these co-opted local elites continued to lack legitimacy and were resented by most peasants. Others local elites, however, chose to develop new cultural and political structures. Language and cultural practices were standardised and new arrangements established informal ‘chiefs’ with authority over several villages – unique to Bagisu (Bunker, 1991: 37). La Fontaine concludes that most of the fragmented Bagisu elites “united when opposed to non-Gisu” and in doing so gradually created a unified Bagisu polity (1969: 190). The resisting Bagisu elites thus began developing an institutional framework for the polity that partially “emulated the Baganda”

but also incorporated Bagisu features. They did so “to avoid cultural and political domination and to improve their own share of economic rewards” (Kasfir, 1979: 373).²⁷⁴

A fourth and last example is the response of the Acholi. Acholi never had a central or overarching authority, or a territory with fixed boundaries. The highest level of authority was formed by *rwodi*, who exercised influence over a few villages at most and then predominantly in the ritual and religious sphere; they held no administrative or adjudicating powers (Atkinson, 1989: 21). By the late 1910s, the British began to order the appointment of a few *rwodi* under Baganda oversight to “carry out the government requirement”. Some *rwodi* seemed to have taken up this opportunity with gusto and tried to establish themselves as a local authority. However, unlike in Langi or Bugisu, these *rwodi* in the Baganda institution of chieftaincy never succeeded in gaining legitimacy. Peasants and excluded clans called these chiefs “*kalam omia*” (‘made by the pen’) and none of these chiefs managed to assist effectively in the implementation of government policies or develop meaningful political power (Doom and Vlassenroot, 1999: 10).

In the end, while Baganda succeeded in imposing themselves as the rulers in most local polities by 1910, the varied responses of competing elites in local polities ultimately saw most of these elites regain some of their lost local authority – or actually build more domestic legitimacy and authority by organising the response to the imposed Baganda rule. The examples underscore Gartrell’s conclusion that there was significant “regional variation in ... reaction to colonial penetration” (Gartrell, 1983: 3). Most local polities were, for a time, dominated by the imposed Baganda-British institutional framework. However, the confrontation with colonial central government rule also triggered new opportunities. “Even if chiefless themselves, [many local polities] saw the possibility of independence on a tribal scale” (A. Roberts, 1962: 450). Many local elites proved quite adept at adapting or appropriating the structures of the alien institutional framework for their own local purposes, or succeeded in reshaping their own ‘tribal’ structures in such a

²⁷⁴ A similar dynamic in which local elites in fractitious polities opted for different responses to British-Baganda overrule is described in Vincent’s case study of Teso. She analyses the divide between those who opted for active collaboration and those who opted for armed resistance and how those initial choices impacted on later position of dominance within the polity (1977).

way they could eventually ‘slot’ in central government’s requirements to replace Baganda rulers.

Conclusions

The appearance of the British government around 1900 ultimately led to a series of formal agreements between the British as aspiring central government and some local polities. Against the backdrop of these agreements, three conclusions regarding the development of the institutional framework between central government and local polities are relevant.

First, these agreements were to become the bases for the institutional framework and local polities actively negotiated the details of these agreements; each of these agreements was different and reflected a particular ruling elite’s material interests and strategic calculations. Rather than resist or acquiesce to colonial rule, most negotiated a settlement that suited their material interests, strategic considerations and political practices. These agreements acknowledged and secured local elites’ control over local resources against competitors and, in fact, the colonial central government itself. Moreover, elites in the well-established Buganda polity used the negotiation process to develop close personal relations with government officials.

Second, the Buganda polity carefully manoeuvred to develop an ‘alliance’ with the new central government to expand nominal government control over other – non-agreement signing – polities in the territory by using Baganda troops and later by using Baganda chiefs as local administrators. These other local polities had an institutional framework for relations with central government imposed upon them. However, the elites in these polities gradually regained control over their polities by developing uniquely local, diverging, strategies of response. Most of these local elites resisted and began regaining control. The variation in local strategies and periods of Baganda occupation, suggest that there was a large role for human agency on the part of these local elites; each chose their own strategy and some were more, or more quickly, successful than others.

Third, in terms of resources, the new institutional frameworks between central government and local polities ensured government exclusive trading rights in Uganda’s resources against European competitors. The first avenue to approach these resources was the

introduction of new taxes on the population of the local polities – enshrined in the formal agreements. But for the first 20 to 25 years, the colonial government did not even manage to take sufficient resources out of the local polities to sustain itself. Rather, via the Colonial Office in London, there was a steady flow of funds towards Uganda. The local elites, on the other hand, benefited immediately and directly from the new institutional framework. They were not only exempt from taxation, but each local elite negotiated a varying percentage of the new taxes in exchange for their assistance in collecting it. Obviously, the local elites ultimately lost direct control over their resources and tax bases, but in this early phase they probably increased their income through the increased tax pressure and increased trade and production of cash crops.

5.4 Central-local relations during the colonial apogee (1920-1945)

By 1920 the British colonial government's regional hegemony had become unchallenged because the German presence was removed from East Africa after it lost the war in Europe and Britain took control of Tanzania. For the elites in the local polities this meant that when negotiating with the British central government, they could no longer use the subtle threat of shifting alliance to a competitor, as, for example, the Buganda King may have had in mind when signing the treaty of "special friendship" with the German Kaiser in 1890 (Austen, 1968: 25).²⁷⁵ Against this backdrop, the institutional framework between central government and local polities underwent two changes in the period up to the mid 1940s. First, the Baganda elite lost their privileged alliance with central government and thus the basis for their dominance over the other polities. Endogenous local elites, which had in varied ways been endeavouring to counter the imposed Baganda chiefs, now regained full control over their local polities. Second, with the reliance on Buganda for the administration of local polities gone, central government initiated an increasing local bureaucratisation of the institutional framework, starting with the establishment of the Native Civil Service in 1919. This section addresses these two processes of change.

²⁷⁵ Again, the thought of a remarkable historical continuity comes to mind. In the 1970s, Idi Amin would successfully play off the 15 rich countries against each in the context of the cold war (Gitelson, 1977: 362). And in the 2000s; to what extent are contemporary African polities able to play off the increasing Chinese and Indian presence and interest in Africa's minerals against the increasing influence of Western donor agencies on Africa's public budgets via General Budget Support, Sector-Wide Approaches and PRSPs? (cf. Manning, 2006).

Baganda elite are removed and local elites regain control

In the first change, central government broke away from its exclusive alliance with the Baganda elites to rule the other polities in the country. This change was driven by political motives, as well as a conflict over the control over resources. In the sphere of political motives, the government began to perceive the Baganda polity as a competitor, particularly as Baganda and the Anglican church struck an alliance that was challenging central government. The Anglican church ceased to be the venue where the Baganda elite and the colonial officials met to develop personal networks. Instead, Baganda used their contacts via the church to protest colonial government policies in London. This left the colonial government embarrassed, forcing it to back down on some policies and issue public statements that it was all based on “misconceptions of the actual [government] proposals” (quoted in: Hansen, 1993: 187). After this, government began to decline requests by churches for exemptions in taxes and duties or allocation of land. Central government also clamped down on increasingly successful efforts of the Anglican church to use its personal network with Baganda elites to acquire large sections of land for growing cash crops. Government legislated in 1914 that chiefly “gifts” of freehold land could not exceed five acres arguing land should be used to, “reduce the mission’s expenses, not as a means of earning an income”. The ultimate ‘line in the sand’ was drawn in 1919 when the central government explicitly excluded missionary orders from the first Uganda Development Commission (Hansen, 1986: 62). Protests and lobby efforts by churches were in vain.²⁷⁶

With the political influence of the Anglican church curtailed, central government also began to feel the need to limit its total reliance on Buganda for the administration of other local polities. Arguably, the personal experiences of a growing number of colonial officials ‘on the ground’ such as District Commissioners contributed to a re-evaluation of the assessment of Baganda as “intelligent agents” who could manage the “raw savages” in the other local polities. Reports from the District Commissioners now found Baganda chiefs showing “brutal and predatory behaviour” and made it difficult to implement central

²⁷⁶ In a historical continuity: local NGOs continue to be faced with efforts by central government to marginalise them from negotiations between central government and international donors in the 2000s (McGee, 2002: 20; Oxfam, 2004: 6; Prinsen, Feddes, Kuyate, and Muyzenberg, 2008: 357). And contemporary local NGOs in Uganda organise pressure on their central government in the 2000s via their international networks in much the same way as the Anglican church did in 1911. See 5.7.

government regulations (Gartrell, 1983: 4).²⁷⁷ Twaddle also concludes that as more European officials worked with Baganda chiefs, and worked more closely with them, they “no longer admired Buganda as extravagantly as they had” (1969: 313).

Among the first active measures taken by central government in 1919 to curtail or reduce Buganda’s political influence was a decision to stop hiring Baganda military units for purposes of law and order. A balance of power within the standing colonial army in Uganda (King’s African Rifles, KAR) was sought by actively recruiting non-Baganda like Acholi – the same troops that were initially recruited by Lugard in the early 1890s (Doom and Vlassenroot, 1999: 8). Second, central government established a “Native Civil Service” in 1919. This not only formally ceased the exclusive use of the Baganda chiefly system for the administration in other local polities, but also opened up formal employment of non-Baganda local elites in local administration (Summers, 2005b: 111). Then, Swahili was recognised in 1927 as an official native language, next to Luganda. This further opened up the public administration to non-Baganda (A. Roberts, 1962: 450).

Over and above these political motives, central government also broke its alliance with Buganda in the 1920s because it clashed with the Baganda elites over the control over the flow of the key resources from local polities to central government: coffee and cotton. These cash crops were initially forced upon the peasants in the late 1900s to pay for taxes. The first colonial legislation regarding the compulsory production and marketing of cash crops was the so-called “Cotton Ordinance” in Uganda in 1908, coffee regulation would follow shortly afterwards. The British Cotton Growing Association availed £800,000 in capital and credit to British colonies to reduce its dependence on American cotton and diversify its sources. Producers and traders in Uganda’s local polities were the single largest recipient with £320,000. Most of these credits, however, were never repaid and the British cotton industries ultimately bankrupted in the later 1920s, “deceived by African cotton” (Onyeiwu, 2000: 98, 106). In spite of the compulsory element, many peasant families also grew coffee and cotton – and often beyond the required volumes – because

²⁷⁷ Such a shift in ‘stereotyping’ by colonial officials not only happened over time. Southall provides an instructive anecdote when recording how a British colonial records of 1947 described the people of the Ulur polity as “very wild and woolly” and “uncouth”, while the Belgian colonial officials on the other side to the border described the Ulur in 1940 as the “civilizers of the hordes” (Southall, 1988: 1).

the cash not only enabled them to pay taxes, but also bought new imported consumer goods in the expanding network of small shops (Bowles, 1975: 51).

Cash crops came to produce huge revenues. In 1930, Uganda produced 10% of the world's cotton, second only to India.²⁷⁸ The colonial central government requested and received its last grant-in-aid in 1915, and tax revenues of coffee and cotton made Uganda's colonial administration break even by 1919 (Abbott, 1971: 69). Breaking even in 1919, after nearly 30 years of pouring British money into Uganda, marked an important turning point in the flow of resources between central government and local polities. In 1919, central government introduced a tax on locally produced cotton to obtain "additional revenue for the purpose of general development" (quoted in: Onyeiwu, 2000: 108). Revenues by 1934 amounted to 1.53 million pounds, against an expenditure of 1.37 million and the central government's reserve fund had amassed 1.41 million pounds (Keane, 1936: 312). "Peasants, rather than chiefs, were now the harbingers of progress" (Twaddle, 1969: 314). And central government clashed with the Baganda chiefs over the control over these 'harbingers'.

Baganda chiefs were well aware of the huge and growing tax revenues deriving from cash crops. Chiefs managed to negotiate increases in their percentages of the cash crop revenues from 6% at its introduction in 1910, via 10% to 15% to 21% in 1926 (Vincent, 1977: 152). In 1926 the Buganda Council of Chiefs legislated to increase tenants' tribute to chiefs up to 35% of their cash crops. This triggered a strong and violent response from peasants and lower clan-elders organised around cooperatives for cash crops in the so-called *Bataka* movement. They refused to pay. Baganda chiefs' capacity to resist central government and use cash crops as a lever against central government, was now beginning to be limited by the emergence of organised domestic resistance (Twaddle, 1969: 314). The colonial central government not only saw the increase in the chiefs' share of the cash crop tax as coming off its share of revenues, but it was also afraid the conflict between chiefs and *bataka* might push peasants away from cash crops. Central government therefore bluntly overruled the Council of Chiefs in 1928 with the 'Busulu and Envujjo Law' (Rent and Tithe Law)

²⁷⁸ This position was held into the 1950s. E.g. in 1955 Uganda was the biggest producer of coffee in the British commonwealth and the biggest producer of cotton of all European colonial territories (Youe, 1978: 176). Only with the civil war that starts in the early 1970s did Uganda lose its global positions in coffee and cotton.

that capped the rents and tributes that tenants needed to pay to chiefs.²⁷⁹ The Council of Chiefs' fiercely protested this undermining of their authority by the central government, but this proved futile. Central government refused to negotiate further and threatened force (Mamdani, 1986: 39; Twaddle, 1969: 314). The Baganda Council of Chiefs gave in, marking clearly how Buganda had lost its privileged position and leverage vis-à-vis central government.²⁸⁰

The removal of Baganda from positions of political control in other polities and – thereby – position of control over local resources, was completed by the end of the 1920s. Endogenous elites in most local polities had not only completed the process of appropriation or adaptation of Baganda institutions described in the previous section, but had also become effective in facilitating the introduction of cash crops (Bunker, 1991: 37; Tosh, 1978: 425). Once cash crops did take off, colonial officials discovered that local elites and peasants responded quickly to marketing conditions by increasing cash crop production – but were equally quick at withdrawing, or threatening to withdraw. Vincent describes how peasants and Teso chiefs withheld cotton from the market and “obliged [colonial officials] to negotiate at lengthy late night sessions with the chiefs’ spokesman” (1977: 153). Bunker describes identical processes in Bugisu where peasants threatened to cut down coffee trees, and actually did so in 1926 and 1929 (1983a: 753). Government needed the local elites to secure cash crop production, and the Baganda chiefs could no longer deliver. By the 1930s, colonial officials began to describe other local elites as tough and “difficult” to deal with (Vincent, 1977: 151) – quite like the 1900 colonial comment that Baganda’s elite were ‘hard and sagacious bargainers’.

Yet – there is a difference between the negotiations in 1900 between central government and the Baganda and, on the other hand, the negotiations in the 1920s between central government and the non-Baganda elites. The Baganda elites’ negotiating leverage in 1900 was predicated on their administrative and military capabilities – which the central

²⁷⁹ Over the years, the ‘Rent and Tithe Law’ has remained one of the points of conflict between Buganda’s local elites and central government. In 1998 central government would enter in an almost identical conflict with the Buganda King over rent and landownership and – in practice – central government reiterate the principles of the 1928 “Rent and Tithe Law” (Englebert, 2002: 353).

²⁸⁰ Baganda chiefs’ capacity to resist central government and use cash crops as a lever against central government was beginning to be limited by the emergence of organised domestic resistance by peasants and lower chiefly clan-elders organised around cooperatives for cash crops in the so-called *Bataka* movement. The chiefly elite now had opponents on two sides.

government needed to establish itself throughout Uganda. The negotiating leverage of the non-Baganda local elites in the late 1920s was based on their capacity to deliver the production of cash crops that central government wanted. In contrast, the Baganda elites were not only less capable of delivering cash crops, their administrative and military capabilities and presence in other local polities had also become a threat to central government's overall dominance and a hindrance for negotiations by central government with the non-Buganda elites. Central government began to support the opposition by various local elites to the imposed Baganda chiefs. Arguably, the decision to open negotiation about an official agreement with Bunyoro in the early 1930s may have been as much a signal to Buganda.

Although the local elites' strategies to regain control had differed, by the late 1920s most local elites found that they had manoeuvred the Baganda chiefs out of their polity. The 'new' Bugisu elites, for example, had proven they were much more successful in promoting coffee planting than the Baganda chiefs; the colonial government withdrew the Baganda chiefs and appointed the 'invented' Bagisu chiefs "as the basis for administration" (Bunker, 1983b: 188). However, these Bagisu elites and the other local elites that regained control over their local polities also found themselves fitting in the increasingly regulated bureaucracy of the 'Native Administration'.

Central government bureaucratizes the institutional framework

In the second change process in the institutional framework between central government and local polities in the 1920-1945 period, government endeavoured to get more control over the politico-administrative and judicial structures in local polities by standardising and bureaucratizing the diverging or variable local institutional frameworks that were emerging as local polities appropriated or adapted the imposed Baganda institutions. Moreover, the bureaucratization also meant a slowly increasing presence of European central government officials 'on the ground', which created opportunities for denser personal networks between groups in local polities and central government.

The bureaucratization of local political structures – or the actual creation of a local government bureaucracy in more acephalous polities – started with an African Authorities Ordinance of 1919 that accompanied the establishment of the Native Civil Service.

Formally, the colonial government distinguished three categories of local administration. First was Buganda – with the largest degree of autonomy – and second the other three polities with an agreement and a lesser degree of autonomy. In these two categories, the ruling local elites held executive, legislative and judiciary positions and chiefs were “titular heads of the Native Administrations” who formally appointed the lower-ranking chiefs. The third category was the local administration in all the other districts (covering more than half of the population) where the British District Commissioner presided over the Native Administration and chiefs at the lower echelons were appointed by him (Hailey, 1957: 479).

The bureaucratisation of chiefly positions accelerated, when from the mid 1920s onwards central government gradually started to pay all chiefs salaries that were tabulated according their position in the four-tiered hierarchy and period of tenure, while abolishing one-by-one the chiefly entitlements to subjects’ tributes in labour, crops, or money (Fallers, 1965: 149). Salary scales became ever more intricate. In 1929 there were 11 classes of chiefs, divided over four tiers of a public administration: Village, Parish, Sub-county and County (or District) level. While an annual salary for an unskilled labourer was about 60 shilling per annum, chiefs’ salaries ranged from 80 to 22,000 shillings per annum (Vincent, 1977: 151). Gradual and successive measures in the 1920s established a practice in which the central government, often in the person of the District Commissioner, formally delegated executive powers as well as judicial powers to these four tiers of chiefs. With approval of the District Commissioner chiefs and their councils could legislate for their districts as custom or modernity required, the so-called “A and B paragraphs” (Bazaara, 2003: 7).

Although central government succeeded in “the incorporation ... of extremely diverse pre-colonial polities” into the bureaucratised forms of a single institutional framework (Gartrell, 1983: 2), this control over the form of the administration did not mean that central government also controlled the actual politics and public administration in the local polities. The bureaucratisation led to an appearance of a uniform, Baganda-like, and centrally controlled local administration, but actual practices remained not only diverse, but are also likely to have ultimately strengthened the political and economic position of chiefly elites within their local polities for at least three reasons.

First, while the bureaucratisation and incorporation obviously meant the top tier of chiefly elites in local polities lost exclusive control over local resources like land and labour, the bureaucratisation and formal appointment of second, third and fourth tier sub-chiefs and assistants also meant the top tier acquired a more detailed and effective apparatus to control people and resources within the local polities (C. Newbury, 2003: 271). Central government's primary interest seemed to be securing a flow of cash crop resources and repressing law and order issues. The central government's belated decision in 1933 to negotiate a Bunyoro Agreement could be explained in this light (Willis, 2006). Similarly, clan leaders with a known and long record of resistance to the British in the Uganda's North-East were ultimately appointed in the colonial bureaucracy in the 1930s, simply because they "held inter-clan sway" and were – in the eyes of central government – therefore the most effective administrators (Tosh, 1973: 479).

Second, the local elites' loss of income on the basis of their 'traditional' control over resources – which in many cases had been precarious and subject to complex negotiations with competing domestic competitors – was offset by the much more secure financial income in salary and pensions. In fact, local chiefs' 'take' of local revenues went up steadily in the course of time. According to a 1915 record, up to 39% of a district's revenues could go towards remunerations, fees, and commissions for the Native Authority. As the bureaucratisation of the institutional framework expanded in the 1930s, new fees and fines were added and many at the discretion of the chiefs. For example, since 1927, a peasant could be fined a sum that equalled 6-12 months wages for smoking cannabis, drunkenness or absence of compulsory labour (Vincent, 1977: 151). Records of actual income and expenditure of the Native Authorities in the 1930s and 1940s seem unavailable.²⁸¹ Hailey, however, estimates that "personal emoluments" in the Native Authorities in the 1950s "have amounted to as high as 70%" of local revenues (1957: 483).

A third ground to conclude that local chiefly elites ultimately saw their domestic power base strengthened under the bureaucratisation is that it provided them with more executive, judicial and legislative authority and less downward accountability than before under more diffuse, 'traditional' public institutions. There are, for example, very few references to

²⁸¹ This is an issue that persists into the 2000s when auditing of the financial records of school and dispensary committees proves practically near impossible or 'a creative art', as was concluded in chapter 4.

formal procedures in the institutional framework to enable villagers to seek legal recourse against chiefs.²⁸² On the contrary, peasants' complaints made to touring British officials could easily lead to retaliation in the chiefs' court (Gartrell, 1983: 6). This left the "newly recruited chiefs relatively free to exploit their subjects" and only upward accountable to the District Commissioner (Burke, 1964: 34). Mamdani describes the institutional framework during the colonial apogee as "decentralised despotism" (1996: 62). Bunker's longitudinal research in Bagisu concludes that – from a peasant's perspective – "both Baganda and Bagisu chiefs had nearly despotic powers" (Bunker, 1991: 38).

Until the early 1930s, District Commissioners left most of the daily affairs of public administration and justice in the hands of chiefs. Most District Commissioners considered chiefs – even if they had appointed them – as the traditional and therefore legitimate authorities that required little supervision. Moreover, even though the presence of (European) central government officials at local levels increased, they had limited knowledge of local intricacies, did not speak local languages and depended on chiefs and chiefly appointees to carry out their duties in agriculture, health and education. The general approach was to "disturb them as little as possible" (quoted in: Gartrell, 1983). This may also explain why until into the 1940s, poll taxes varied widely from one district or country to another, ranging from eight to 20 shillings per person; these taxes were used for the Native Treasuries and central government left it to the local elites to determine how much, or how hard, they would collect (Hailey, 1957: 661).

This practice of *laissez-faire* would change in the later 1930s. In 1935, a new governor expressed concerns to his District Commissioners about – in his words – "the defects of centralised bureaucratic administration" and he referred in particular to "places outside the Agreement Countries".²⁸³ He called for vigilance against abuse by chiefs that were appointed by the colonial government but lacked accountability to local communities and

²⁸² Obviously, a peasant could take a chief in his executive capacity to court. However, he would then face the same chief as in his judicial capacity. Proposed reforms for more effective legal recourse in the mid 1930s floundered. Only in the 1940s when functions were somewhat more separated did peasants take chiefs to court. And they did so in large numbers (Fallers, 1965: 148-151).

²⁸³ I would highlight the fact that Governor Mitchell wrote of "Agreement *Countries*" [italics added] – underscoring the large degree of autonomy he still awarded to these four polities. In fact, as central government and Native Authorities in these 'Agreement countries' were having continuous arguments over central government interference, Mitchell instructed government officials in these 'Agreement countries' to take a low profile and limit themselves to "advice and guidance" of the Native Authorities (Morris, 1978: 8).

simultaneously instructed his officials to search for “genuine native authority”, explaining how the policy of indirect rule applied to these polities outside the ‘Agreement Countries’ (Quoted in: Gartrell, 1983: 8).²⁸⁴ Yet while District Commissioners in these local polities were instructed to look for the ‘genuine’ chiefs with strong local ties and legitimacy, they were – paradoxically – also instructed under the increasing professionalisation of the Native Authorities to look for candidates with literacy and numeracy skills who could operate as efficient civil servants (Obbo, 1983: 312). In practice, the bureaucratic requirements seemed to have prevailed. Appointed chiefs were often transferred from one area in a district to another, depending on the administrative needs and vacancies. In one case study, the District Commissioner had almost half of the chiefs in the lower administrative tiers working outside their birthplace (Tosh, 1973: 482).

In the governor’s own words, this “confusion of thought” of choosing between legitimate local representatives and capable local administrators would persist into the 1940s, when central government established District Councils as a new body in the institutional framework for central-local relations. In a bid to counter-balance the potential or actual abuse of appointed chiefs, central government started to experiment by organising elections for some members of District Councils. In the process, a new elite of “political entrepreneurs” emerged as candidates in these District Councils or applicants for clerical functions in the Native Authorities (Gartrell, 1983: 9). They were the newly educated persons and traders who participated in the personal networks around “missions, schools, markets and administrative centres” (Vincent, 1977: 152). They were also probably part of the personal networks of colonial officials too – or vice versa? The presence and political

²⁸⁴ The policy of indirect rule – arguably the first official development policy for Africa and advocated by the same Frederick Lugard who had served as IBEAC’s representative in Uganda in the early 1890s – began to be promoted by the Colonial Office by the mid 1920s. Lugard’s book became the core reference book for colonial officials, available at least at every provincial office in British colonies by 1929 (Nwabughuogu, 1981: 90). Lugard argued Britain had a so-called “dual mandate” by stating that “Europe is in Africa for the mutual benefit of her own industrial classes and of the native races in their progress to a higher plane”. Under this dual mandate, indirect rule means that the institutional framework between central government and local polities is based on “rule by native chiefs, unfettered in the control of their people ... but subordinate to the control of the protecting power in certain well-defined directions” (Lugard, 1922: 617, 197). Uganda’s four “Agreement Countries” are explicitly *not* part of this governance policy of indirect rule. Indirect rule is positioned by most analysts between on one side ‘direct rule’ and on the other side “native self-rule as in Indian states” (Perham, 1950: 237) or “a native state as broadly in Buganda” (Ilfte, 1979: 319). In these latter cases, domestic rulers surrender external independence but remain mostly autonomous in domestic governance, whereas under indirect rule the domestic rulers “are recognised as local agents of government” (Mair, 1958: 195). Perham acknowledges indirect rule as an “expedient by which a conquering people makes use of the institutions of the conquered is as old as history” (Perham, 1934: 321).

influence of this emerging group would increase in the 1940s. They became a local elite, distinct from the chiefly elites when one of them made a public speech in 1943 as a member of the Old Boys' Association of St Mary's College in the nation's cathedral that advocated nationalism, as opposed to autonomy for local polities: "Show me a nation under another nation and I'll show you a nation of slaves" (Summers, 2005b: 20).

In the final part of this section, it is important to look at the potential impact of another consequence of the bureaucratisation of the local politic-administrative structures in the 1930s: the increasing presence on the ground in the local polities of European officials who represented central government. Their increasing presence must have expanded the opportunities for personal networks between various – and sometimes competing – local elites and central government. Unlike the early 20th century, when personal networks between local elites and representatives from central government were jealously guarded by the former, the bureaucratisation of the 1930s and 1940s offered new opportunities for hundreds of second and third tier local elites to develop personal contacts and hone negotiating skills with central government. However – and rather surprisingly – looking for systematic or longitudinal data on the number of central government staff involved in this process at local level finds a dearth of records.

Kirk-Greene (1980, 1999) and Hailey (1957: 365) present some numerical evidence of the local colonial administration, though Kirk-Greene underscores that the sources are not "as complete as might be wished for" (Kirk-Greene, 1980: 33).²⁸⁵ Indeed, the presented data are a very mixed bag that does not easily allow comparative or country-specific analysis. The available data are unhelpfully divided into categories that separate administrative (managerial) and technical (sectoral) staff, cover different and diverging time intervals, list recruitment figures for some periods and tenure figures for others. A re-interpretation and extrapolation from the available data is presented in Table 21. These calculations suggest

²⁸⁵ Kirk-Greene bases his calculations on "staff lists" in London and "estimates of individual territories". These are not accessible from New Zealand. Even so, it is telling that 'insiders' like Hailey and Kirke-Greene (lauded by Porter (2000: 511) as "the historian of the colonial service") could not come up with precise figures. Kirk-Greene notes that the Colonial Office into the 1950s could only calculate total staff numbers by counting staff list names "one by one" (1980: 33).

that by the colonial pinnacle in the late 1930s, each of Uganda's 14 districts had on average about 27 (European) central government staff.²⁸⁶

	1920	1930	1939	1950	1960
Total number of central government administrative staff; i.e. District Commissioners or District Officers at senior, regular and assistant levels ^a .	55	75	83	85	104
Average number of central government administrative staff per district ^b .	4	5	6	5	7
Calculated average number of central government administrative <i>plus</i> technical staff per district ^c .	-	-	27 ^{d. e.}	-	-

Notes:

- a. Until the late 1950s, Europeans held all administrative (i.e. managerial) and technical staff positions. Staff with the functions of Provincial Commissioner and Senior District Commissioner are excluded from the totals in this row because they were not based at district level. The figures in this row also exclude European technical staff in fields of education, health, agriculture, public works, and police. See Table 22 in the next section or further details (Kirk-Greene, 1980: 39).
- b. Uganda had 14 districts in 1929 and after a reform in the 1940s (Brett, 1994: 70), ended up with 16 districts at independence (Gartrell, 1983: 9). This leads to working with a number of 14 districts as a basis for calculation over the 1920-1939 period, and 16 over the 1950-1960 period. The calculations underpinning these figures are based on: total number of staff ÷ number of districts. For 1920, for example: $55 \div 14 = 4$ (3.9).
- c. Data on the number of central government technical staff over the full colonial period could not be found. Clearly, there must have been few in the earlier period and more in later decades (e.g. an Education Department at national level was only established by the late 1920s). An impression of their total presence can be gleaned from the earliest known record that suggests that the total number of central government technical staff in 1939 in Uganda was 452 (encompassing staff in the departments for police, justice, health, education, agriculture, public works, railways and "others"). Then, Kirk-Greene notes that about 2/3 of the colonial staff worked in the rural areas, the other 1/3 at Entebbe headquarters. However this must refer to technical staff, and not to administrative staff like *district* commissioners and *district* officers (Kirk-Greene, 1980: 39, 42).
- d. Extrapolating from all sources, it is estimated that there must have been an average of about 27 Europeans per district in 1939: six administrative staff per district ($83 \div 14 = 6$) plus 21 professional staff ($452 * 2/3 \div 14 = 21$).
- e. A validation of the estimated 27 staff per district is obtained by comparing it with data from a case study. Carswell's study of Uganda's Kigezi district notes that the district in 1934 had five Europeans in administrative functions and five technical agricultural staff (2003: 526). She does not elaborate on technical staff in other departments at local level, but here Kirk-Green's

²⁸⁶ It would be an interesting exercise to compare the number of staff who represent central government at local level in 1930s and in 2000s in Uganda. Such a comparison would be difficult to make (e.g. locally present staff is more employed by local district councils, districts shrank in surface area, population numbers as proportion of staff changed, more precise data for past and present are scarce, etc.) but it wouldn't be impossible. In fact, Herbst's analyses of the relation between projecting state power and socio-geographical features provide a good starting point (2000: 15). In any case, such a comparison would be more meaningful than qualifications like "understaffed" or "overstaffed" which seem rather pointless without a point of reference.

figures for Western Nigeria's Public Service in 1957 may give an indication of relative staffing proportions among departments: Agriculture = 43; Education = 54; Health = 32; Public Works = 34 (Kirk-Greene, 1980: 31). These figures would suggest that aside from Carswell's five staff in the District Department for Agriculture, there would also have been about five for each of the other three departments. This would result in: 20 (4*5) technical staff, plus five administrative staff = 25 central government staff per district. Added to that should be a few policemen, for which proportional data are not available. Altogether, the calculated average of 27 central government staff per district thus seems validated.

Adapted from: (Brett, 1994; Carswell, 2003; Gartrell, 1983; Hailey, 1957; Kirk-Greene, 1980, 1999)

Whether or not the number of 27 staff per district is high or low is a moot point, but when several authors speak of a “thin white line”, “understaffed” or “short-handed” or “the minuscule number” as do, respectively, Kirk-Green (1980: 25), Gartrell (1983: 5), Willis (2006: 105), and Moore (1992: 14) they all take a decidedly central government perspective. From a local perspective, on the other hand, the number of 27 European officials must have represented an ample choice to develop personal networks. Moreover, unlike the Baganda chiefs of the 1910s and 1920, these European officials were transient, personal contacts made in the district would eventually become contacts at national level, or even contacts in Europe. From their side, many of the European officials also expressed an interest in “direct personal contact with villagers which they believed to be essential for good administration” (Gartrell, 1983: 7).

Unfortunately, little is known about these personal contacts. Vincent's 1977 case study of Teso district leads her to think that local elites “skilfully manipulated” the colonial officials to build or expand a patronage network (1977: 142). Austen also concludes that local elites had learned, “how to manipulate its [central government] local representatives to their own purposes” (1968: 122). Lugard himself, on the other hand, as one of those allegedly being manipulated, writes affectionately in the 1921 about “the single-mindedness of the African's friendship [in] the letters I continue to receive from chiefs in Uganda and Toro, though it is over twenty-nine years since I left the country” (Lugard, 1922: 71). Assuming such networking skills are not limited to the Tooro and Baganda chiefs, it is likely that further study into the personal networks that resulted from the bureaucratisation will show these personal networks between local elites and central government officials became a lot denser in the 1930s and 1940s.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ Careful research into personal diaries or memoirs of colonial officials would probably unearth a wealth of insights in the extent and effects of these personal networks. Examples of colonial officials' views would be

Conclusions

From a local perspective, three points can be made about the development of the institutional framework between central government and local polities during the colonial apogee. First, in this period government secure in its position, expanded the local presence of central government officials and tended to dominate the institutional framework. Local polities' negotiating room shrank. Local elites that had grown powerful in alliance with central government discovered that government would desist from further collaboration if the actions of the local elite contravened or no longer fulfilled government's core interests. These interests could be political, i.e. central government ceased collaboration with a local elite when it became a competitor for national dominance. An alliance of a local elite with an actor that has international personal networks – such as the alliance between the Anglican church and the Baganda elite – was definitely interpreted as a political threat to the colonial central government and responded to with force. The Anglican church was curtailed and the civil service was opened to non-Baganda elites. These interests could also be related to resources; i.e. central government withdrew support for a particular local elite if another local elite presented itself as able to deliver more of the coveted local resources or do so more efficiently.

The second matter that characterises the institutional framework in this period is a process of standardisation; the more unique frameworks – the 'agreements' – of the early colonial period make way for a bureaucratised Native Administration. Chiefs became part of a national bureaucracy to which officials from central government appointed them. However, this central government dominance over the general institutional framework was not full and complete at the local level. The institution of the Native Administration accumulated into the hands of the appointed chiefs' extensive executive powers, broadly defined judiciary powers, and some legislative powers. Most central government representatives at local level did not have the imperative, time or means to effectuate their

the diaries of District Officers in East Africa such as Barton (2004) and Lumley (1976) or the works of former District Officials who became anthropologists (e.g. Beattie, 1960; Brokensha, 1972; Culwick and Culwick, 1937) or diplomats, such as Posnett (see: Leopold, 2001). Similarly, commentaries or memoirs of African elites would also offer revealing insights, such as publications by Botswana's royal regent in the 1930s (Khama, 1936) or autobiographies such as the one by the Buganda king (King Mutesa II, 1967).

supervisory powers, nor were they motivated to hold chiefs whom they deemed ‘legitimate traditional authority’ to account, nor did they possess the required socio-cultural skills. In the end, local elites used the institutional framework gradually to increase their personal grip on resources in local polities – even if central government dominated the overall framework.

Third, the institutional framework began to involve increasing numbers of persons from diverse backgrounds – elites, peasants and traders in the local polity, as well as European administrators, agronomists and educators – and the density of personal network increased significantly. In this period there may have been on average about 27 central government officials in each district. Each of them offered an opportunity for second and third tier local elites to expand their personal network with persons who have information and access to resources beyond the district. Arguably, local elites benefited more from these personal networks than government officials, because the latter were regularly transferred and often failed to acquire an understanding of local language and practices and had simply less opportunity and drive to seek material gain from these local personal networks.

5.5 Central-local relations around independence (1945-1971)

In the fifteen years leading up to Uganda’s independence in 1962 and the first years after independence, the balance of power in the institutional framework between central government and local polities first tilted towards local polities before reversing back to government. The first part of this section concentrates on the period preceding independence and describes how the balance of power and the flow of resources in the framework was tilted towards local polities by the establishment of elected District Councils and the growing autonomy of the four ‘Agreement Countries’. There will be particular attention to the personal networks around the increasing number the local representatives of central government, as well as the network around emerging new local elites of civil servants. The second part of this section describes how the new – independent – central government moves to adapt the institutional framework to curtail local polities, local politicians and cooperative leaders and reverse the balance of power back to central government.

Late colonial central government increases local polities' autonomy

From a metropolitan perspective, the changes in Uganda's institutional framework were triggered by the end of the Second World War, when a newly elected British Labour Party introduced "vigorous development policies ... the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1945 and 1949" (Kirk-Greene, 1980: 27). These initiatives by the Colonial Office in London pushed the colonial central government in Uganda to consider "the ultimate transfer of power" for which District Councils and an increased autonomy for the four 'Agreement Countries' were preparatory steps (ibid, 1980: 29). From a local perspective, however, the establishment of District Councils in the late 1940s and the ensuing elections for District Council in 1951 and elections for Baganda's Council of Chiefs in 1954 were a "direct response to peasant uprisings of 1945 and 1949" (Mamdani, 1996: 201). The riots were driven by demand for lower consumer prices and higher prices for producers (Thompson, 1992: 607), but also included protests from the peasants and lower tier chiefs in the *Bataka* Party against the "unresponsive chiefly oligarchy" around the Baganda King that held near absolute control over Baganda institutions (Karlstrom, 1996: 493).²⁸⁸ From the colonial central government's perspective, the two pressures probably just added up.

The changes in the institutional framework between central government and local polities came at two levels: a reform of the administrative structures at district level and a reform of the relationship between central government and the four 'Agreement Countries', particularly Buganda. Reforms of the district level structures was initiated and led by central government. The number of District Councils was expanded to cover the entire territory – including the four 'Agreement Countries' – and built on earlier experiments with partially elected Councils. The 1951 Local Government Ordinance created a level of "lower councils" below the District Councils. The politicians elected in these lower councils elected among them a representative for the District Council (Bunker, 1991: 58). Arguably, this electoral mechanism created demand at district level – and later at national level – for a new locally produced resource: the vote. Those candidates who could mobilise the ordinary vote at the level of villages had become valuable middlemen in delivering these new resources that were ultimately needed for those aspiring to central government.

²⁸⁸ The *Bataka* Party was one of the organisers of the strikes and road block of 1945 and 1949 riots and had emerged from the same group of peasants and lower chiefs that had been opposing chiefly control over rent and cash crops in the 1920s (Rawick, 1963: 11). See footnote 280.

Between 1949 and 1955 central government also gave up direct control over local polities by reducing the hold District Commissioners held over the administration of the local polity. Beginning in the judicial sphere, the District Commissioner and his officials gradually lost their role into the executive, as they became “advisers” to elected or appointed council officials. In 1955, District Commissioners ceased to preside over meetings and ultimately only retained the right to attend meetings (Hailey, 1957: 480, 482).

The decentralisation in the public administration was accompanied by the transfer in financial resources and staff. Budgetary autonomy meant districts could set their own taxation levels or even their own taxes (Tukahebwa, 1998: 13). By the end of the 1950s, about 80% of all direct taxes collected in Uganda flowed toward the District Councils (Fallers, 1955: 300). This included graduated personal tax. As District Councils expanded, their services began to include education and health services, which required significant increases in staff. For senior professional posts, the colonial government started “crash-programmes for Africanising the administrative cadres”, virtually starting at zero and Makerere University in Kampala was the only professional training institute in East Africa (Kirk-Greene, 1980: 30).²⁸⁹ At operational level, districts seemed to have fewer problems as there were a reasonable number of secondary school leavers and the slow decentralisation since the 1940s had allowed for the training and recruitment of civil servants employed at local level: teachers, medical aids, bookkeepers, veterinary assistants, clerks, messengers, drivers and cleaners (C. Newbury, 2003: 133). The decentralisation process also opened up a path for the smaller local polities towards discussing wider, constitutional, mandates. Some District Councils began negotiations with central government over wider constitutional mandates, such as ‘Can the post of Secretary-General in Busoga District be hereditary?’ or ‘Can our elected District Council appoint tribal Chiefs?’ (Hailey, 1957: 478-484).

At the second level – reforms of the relationship between central government and the four ‘Agreement Countries’ – negotiations were a more complex and conflict-ridden tug-of-war

²⁸⁹ For example, in 1957 Makerere had only 89 students in its medical school coming from seven East and Southern African countries and only seven students graduated that year. Moreover, they were qualified as medical aids who could run small district hospital “under some supervision” (Kiwanuka, 1970: 306).

between the four larger polities and central government. Central government's approach to the decolonisation of Uganda was moving to establish a unitary independent state, in effect doing away with 'special status' of the four. Unsurprisingly, the four polities opposed this. Buganda was reluctant to join debate in the Legislative Council in 1953, as formal participation could be seen as supporting the process and reduce Baganda's voice to 'just another one'. After the British Colonial Secretary made an "unguarded statement" in London about the role of white settlers in East Africa, Buganda not only refused to join the Legislative Council, it also demanded to be negotiating with Britain's Foreign Affairs instead of Colonial Affairs and a time table for Buganda independence (Ward, 1998: 412). "The governor, before acting, took counsel with academic experts and others as to the *Kabaka's* popularity, and received testimony that the prestige of the king and kingship was in decline" (Crawford Young, 1977: 215). Central government demanded the king retract his position. In direct negotiations, the "basic problem probably became a breakdown of personal relations," and the king refused. In response, the governor declared a state of emergency and exiled the king (Pratt, 1955: 269).

However, the central government had been ill advised. Within Buganda all parties, including the oppositional *Bataka* Party demanded the return of the king. In addition, throughout the territory, central government faced unified opposition. An official delegation of six local polities travelled to London to protest the Baganda King's exile (J.T.S., 1955: 294). In the ensuing negotiations, central government acceded to the return of the king in exchange for institutional reforms. A majority of the Council of Chiefs – *lukiiko* – would be elected, Ministers made accountable to the *lukiiko*, and civil servants employed by a Civil Service Board rather than the chiefs (Pratt, 1955: 273).²⁹⁰ Even with some loss of administrative powers, the Baganda king returned from exile in 1955, and "the symbolic value of the Kabaka had increased by a phenomenal extent" (Sathyamurthy, 1975: 446).²⁹¹

²⁹⁰ The extent to which these 'concessions' in the formal framework were meaningful in the political practice can be debated. For example, Buganda also accepted introducing elections for District Councils. However, king and chiefs expressed reservations about these elections and the participating political parties. Voter turn-out in Buganda throughout the 1950s was less than 10% (Karlstrom, 1996: 493).

²⁹¹ Perhaps the importance of personal relations in the development of the institutional framework between a central government and local polities is reflected succinctly in these three events. An unguarded statement at an "after dinner speech" for white settler sympathisers in London is picked up by the Baganda King 6,500 km away within days. The King is then called to a meeting with the colonial governor whose European academic advisers appear to have poor personal networks as they ill-advise the governor that kingship is in

The conflict had not only expanded the local polities' relative autonomy, but also secured an increasing flow of resources. Until 1953, the Buganda local polity was only responsible for the judiciary, law and order and a part of the public works. By 1955, however, responsibilities and the pertaining budgets for all public services (i.e. primary and secondary schools, hospitals, dispensaries, extension work) were transferred from central government to Buganda. In three years, the budgetary transfers from central government to Buganda increased five-fold, to about a £500,000 per year (Hailey, 1957: 481). As a consequence, there was a significant recruitment drive in local polities – “a new establishment emerged with vast patronage at their disposal in the form of clerkships, messengerships, and minor technical posts ... tribalism and local service appointment were brought together as never before” (C. Newbury, 2003: 133). The other three ‘Agreement Countries’ went through similar negotiations and saw their administrative capacities increase. Bunyoro, like Buganda, also acquired the title of “Native Government”, while Tooro and Ankole settled for “Native Administration” (Hailey, 1957: 481).

The negotiated reforms of the institutional framework between central government and the local polities and the expansion of health and education services led to a significant – if unknown – increase in the number of Ugandan civil servants. Nevertheless, this decentralisation in a phase of decolonisation also led – perhaps counter-intuitively – to a significant increase in the recruitment of European central government staff seconded to work in the various sectoral departments of District Councils. Lonsdale and Low speak of a recruitment campaign so massive, they label it as “the second colonial occupation” (quoted in: Kirk-Greene, 1980: 27).²⁹² However, there seem to be no detailed records about the actual numbers of these European staff working at the level of the districts. Table 22 provides details of calculations based on extrapolation and proportional comparison to suggest that the number of European staff in the districts in the 1950s did indeed increase significantly; it nearly doubled from an average of about 23 in 19457 to about 44 in 1957.

decline. The meeting between king and governor ends in acrimony, due to a “breakdown of personal relations”. The king is exiled, all the king’s opponents within Buganda and among his regional competitors rally against the governor, and central government is forced to return the king and cede more autonomy to Buganda than ever before.

²⁹² This increase in the 1950s of the number of Europeans working at local level in Africa – or ‘developing countries’ in general – probably marks the birth of the ‘development workers’ as a profession along the US President Truman’s announcement in 1949 that that technical assistance will be offered, “to help build roads and universities but also to help develop the capacity to maintain or run them” (Berg, 1993: 243).

Table 22: Colonial central government staff at district level in Uganda (1947-1957)				
	1947		1957	
	Administrative	Technical (est.) ^{a)}	Administrative	Technical (est.) ^{a)}
Uganda total	84	±431 ^{b)}	130	±861
Average per district ^{c)}	23		44	
Tanzania	211	±1,083 ^{b)}	262	±1,735
Average per district ^{d)}	19		28	
Kenya	193	±991	350	±2,317
Total East Africa	488	±2,505	742	±4,913
Total West Africa	690	±3,542	728	±4,820
Total Central Africa	212	±1,088	312	±2,066
Other colonies	404	±2,074	580	±3,840
Grand total	1,794	9,209 ^{e)}	2,362	15,639 ^{e)}

Notes:

- a.) The numbers preceded by '±' are calculated on the basis of extrapolation from, and proportional comparison with, known numbers for administrative functions per country and include only European staff. Exact numbers per district could not be found for technical staff (e.g. education, health, agriculture, police) per country. However, Kirk-Green does specify that a grand total of 9,210 technical staff worked for these "Colonial Services" in 1947 and 15,640 in 1957, which provided the basis for this extrapolated estimate. See the bottom row (rounding errors explain the small difference) (1980: 29).
- b.) Assuming that the proportion of administrative versus technical staff is similar in all countries, an estimate for the unknown number of technical staff per country is made by multiplying the known number of administrative staff per country by the proportion between the grand totals of administrative staff and technical staff. For the year 1947 that proportion is: 9,210 : 1,794 = 5.134; i.e. there are about five technical staff for every one administrative staff. The number of technical staff in Uganda is thus calculated as: 84 * 5.134 = 431. For the year 1957, the proportion is 6.621. The veracity of these *estimates* for technical staff in 1947 is cross-checked by comparing them with *known* numbers of technical staff in 1939. The numbers should be 'reasonably' close because there was "virtually nil recruitment" during the war. Moreover, the colonial service lost "almost a quarter" of its staff to the army and these numbers could practically only have been replaced in the two years since the end of the war (Kirk-Greene, 1980: 27). The comparison shows that the estimates of 431 technical staff in Uganda in 1947 are very close to the known number of 452 in 1939. The comparison between the estimated 1,083 technical staff in Tanzania in 1947 and the known number of 837 technical staff in Tanzania in 1939 is not as close, but 'close enough' to make the estimates acceptable. There were no data to cross-check estimates for 1957.
- c.) I concluded earlier that about 2/3 of the colonial technical staff worked in the rural areas and that Uganda had 16 districts in 1947 and 1957. The underpinning calculation for 1947 is thus: 84 + (431 * 2/3 =) 284 ÷ 16 = 23 colonial staff per district. This is still deemed close enough to the calculated average of 27 of 1939 in Table 21. The calculation for 1957 is: 130 + (861 * 2/3 =) 568 ÷ 16 = 44.
- d.) Working on the same 2/3 principle as under c) and knowing Tanzania had 50 districts in the 1950s (Iliffe, 1979: 565), the 1947 average is calculated as: 211 + (1,083 * 2/3) 715 ÷ 50 = 19 colonial staff per district. The 1957 average is: 262 + (1,735 * 2/3) 1,145 ÷ 50 = 28 staff per district.
- e.) The estimates for technical staff is cross-checked by applying the proportional estimates to all colonial regions as provided by Kirk-Greene and then summing these estimates to match the known grand totals. For 1947 and 1957 the totals of the estimates are only one off the mark; see note ^{a)}.

Adapted from: (Kirk-Greene, 1980).

Surprisingly, very little is known about the impact of these on average 44 European central government advisers per district – this second colonial occupation – must have had on the character and working of the new institutional framework or the flow of resources between central government and local polities.²⁹³ Similarly, there are very few records or studies about the impact the inevitable personal networks between these dozens of European officials and local elites had, particularly for the newly emerging elite of the educated civil servants who began competing with the local chiefly elite.²⁹⁴ Bunker’s longitudinal research on the Bugisu polity between the 1900 and 1983, for example, concludes: “as the civil service grew ... this network grew larger and more powerful” and became “effective ideological innovators” because they could integrate “western style education” with “Bagisu ideas and values” and knowledge of “colonial administrative practices” (Bunker, 1991: 46). Undoubtedly, the personal networks with the dozens of the European central government officials who also worked in the veterinary, health and education departments must also have furthered the new local elite’s political capacity to reach beyond or over the formal professional hierarchy.²⁹⁵

Just prior to independence, the departing colonial central government and local polities engaged in “intense bargaining” over Uganda’s Constitution. Local polities – those that had just moulded into districts as well as Buganda, “extracted numerous concessions” (C. Newbury, 2003: 132). However, “the power and authority of the central government were ill-defined” (Oloka-Onyango, 1995: 158). The first elections after independence would show how much the balance of power in the institutional framework between central government and local polities depended on – rather unlikely – coalitions between local elites.

²⁹³ Some impressions of the impact can be gleaned between the lines in reports by colonial officials responsible for the training programmes under the banner of “Africanisation”. For example, Pasteur on correspondence courses for local government staff in Uganda (1969), or Bowring (1969) or Baker (1972) on local training programmes for civil servants in, respectively, Tanzania and Malawi.

²⁹⁴ However, this ‘competition’ should not be interpreted as one between clearly distinguished groups. The boundaries between chiefs, politicians and civil servants were blurred; civil servants were often children of chiefs who had had the opportunity to attend mission schools. Moreover, several civil servants moved into local politics, while other civil servants later became “high-level chiefs” (Bunker, 1991: 45).

²⁹⁵ I find this question interesting for further research. Novels like Naipaul’s *A Bend in the River* (1979), (auto) biographies and ‘society gossip’ in newspapers of the 1950s should provide insight in how personal networks between European officials and local elites developed. Autobiographies from the first ‘technical advisers’ to Uganda’s rebellious peasant unions against the colonial central government, like George W. Shepherd’s *They Wait in Darkness* (1955) or his *They Are Us* (2002) would also provide valuable insights, as would any writings by the first Ugandan teachers, health planners, or district accountants – if they can be found.

Early independent central government decreases local polities' autonomy

Just prior to formal independence, Uganda held legislative elections in 1961. These elections were won by the Democratic Party of Benedict Kiwanuki, a Catholic Muganda 'commoner' who opposed the Protestant Baganda chiefly top elites. He received most of his votes through alliances with Catholic elites in the local polities outside Buganda and a half-hearted boycott of the elections by many chiefs in Buganda. When elections were held in 1962 for the independent central government, the Baganda chiefly elites, united in the *Kabaka Yekka* (King Alone) party, set up an alliance with the Uganda's People Congress party of Milton Obote, a Protestant non-Muganda. Baganda chiefs agreed to mobilise the Baganda votes for Obote in exchange for his support to their drive for autonomy from central government. Obote won the 1962 elections and became prime minister (Hancock, 1970: 419; Karlstrom, 1996: 494). As agreed, the 1962 Constitution was adapted and "granted Uganda a superior status, while the remaining kingdom areas enjoyed a semi-federal status within the whole," and Buganda's dominance was underscored by a constitutional arrangement that saw the Baganda King appointed as Uganda's ceremonial president, next to the executive powers of a Prime Minister (Fallers, 1964: 357).

Bunker's analysis of the electoral process in Bugisu concludes, "competitors for national-level positions sought support through alliances, concessions and favours to local politicians. Struggles between national parties were played out at the district level" (Bunker, 1983a: 760). A research into political candidates' background and profile finds that 175 of the 198 candidates stand in the constituency where they were born – and stress their local roots and allegiance, rather than any political views (Byrd, 1963: 6). In the struggle over the role of the central government between the aspiring national politicians and the local polities' top elites, both sides needed the support of elites at the lowest tiers – the level of villages and parishes – to actually control the new 'commodity' that was locally produced and centrally coveted: votes. By now, elites at the lowest level were the key to ensure mustering of the local votes. Local elites and their personal networks with the higher echelons – via church or ethnicity – held sway in the balance of power with central government. Local polities not only negotiated wide autonomy, but again controlled the resource that had no value *per se* in the local polity, but had critical value in shaping the form of central government.

Arguably, the new central government's opportunistic 'agreement' of 1962 with the ruling Baganda elite was, politically, quite similar to the Buganda Agreement signed by the colonial central government in 1900. As much as the 'outsider' colonial Governor Johnston needed the Buganda Agreement to establish his authority as colonial central government before the other local polities, so did the non-Muganda, Prime Minister Obote need the agreement with Buganda in 1962 to establish his authority as independent central government. In addition, as the colonial central government had done in the 1920s once it felt more secure in its position, so did the independent central government: it began to gradually renege on the agreement.

Within the first two years, central government started to give a "narrow and restrictive interpretation on Buganda's privileged federal status" in a series of administrative issues. The election in 1964 for District Councils gave Prime Minister Obote's party an increased number of local councillors, which eventually could secure his party more votes in central government. In the same step-by-step approach, Obote's party convinced a few Members of Parliament from other parties to cross the floor, by confirming that the decentralised local government structures in their polities had powers of taxation, budgeting and policy making (Tukahebwa, 1998: 13), or by awarding district status to the smaller local polities of Sebei and Madi (R. Hopkins, 1978: 328). By the end of 1964, Obote's party had a majority in Parliament even without its alliance with the Baganda's *Kabaka Yekka* party (Glentworth and Hancock, 1973: 241). Moreover, Obote's central government succeeded in undermining the earlier thaw between Bunyoro and Buganda, which was expressed when Bunyoro joined a delegation of local polities to travel to London and protest the exile of the Baganda King. Central government offered to organise a referendum in Bunyoro's 'lost counties' to determine whether the population wanted to return to Bunyoro or remain as part in Buganda.²⁹⁶ Bunyoro won the referendum, but the Baganda King refused to acknowledge the referendum's legitimacy. Blood was shed (Southall, 1975: 96). In a final move to secure its position against the powerful major polities, central government significantly expanded the army with soldiers from the minor polities in the north (Brett, 1995: 135). Again, this was a move similar to the colonial central government's decision in 1919 to recruit Acholi for its colonial army.

²⁹⁶ The Baganda King had probably inflamed to issue by organising the settlement of thousands of Baganda in the 'lost counties' immediately after independence (Southall, 1975: 94). Also see footnote 262.

Facing increasing allegations from Baganda politicians about corruption, Obote's central government responded in 1966 by first suspending the Constitution that was predicated on a near federal model of the state and shortly afterwards replacing it with a new Constitution that abolished all hereditary positions and annulled the existence of the four 'Agreement Countries'. The Baganda King ceased to be the ceremonial Head of State. Instead, Obote was appointed as President with executive powers. In reply, the Buganda Council of Chiefs "passed a motion ordering the central government to leave Buganda" (Doom and Vlassenroot, 1999: 8). In itself, this motion epitomised the extent to which local polities considered themselves 'on a par' with central government. In fact, Buganda had issued similar statements to the colonial central government in the 1950s, which were largely ignored. The reply of independent central government, however, was quite different. Obote's central government sent troops led by soldiers from the northern polities under the command of Idi Amin. They burnt the Baganda King's palace and the king fled in exile. In a similar show of strength, central government repressed resistance among the other kingdoms and other local polities. There was more bloodshed (Glentworth and Hancock, 1973: 241).

The new constitution of 1967 unilaterally and in one stroke overhauled the institutional framework that central government and local polities had developed over the preceding decades: all executive, legislative and judicial power were concentrated in the presidency. The new Constitution also removed most powers from the elected district councils and re-established the District Commissioner – appointed by and accountable to central government – as the pivotal official who would chair most meetings of the District Council (Oloka-Onyango, 1995: 159), as well as key local economic platforms such as the cotton and coffee cooperatives (Bunker, 1983a: 762).²⁹⁷

The scheduled multi-party elections were cancelled in 1968 and a one-party state led by the President was introduced. Regulations for the electoral process were complex, but geared to give central government control and make sure candidates could only be elected if they mustered votes throughout the country, not just in a particular local polity (Sathyamurthy,

²⁹⁷ Obote's central government launched a "move to the left" in 1968 that included calls for a central government control or nationalisation of all major (foreign) enterprises (Brett, 1995: 136; Sathyamurthy, 1975: 456).

1975: 457). According to government statements, the new regulations worked to avoid that the electorate “regarded Ministers and senior officials as representatives of their respective tribes, whose function in government was to safeguard and plead tribal interests in matters of appointments, distributions of development projects and social services” (quoted in: Glentworth and Hancock, 1973: 245). Again, in one stroke, these regulations took away the lever of ‘mustering the votes’ that local politicians in local polities had held over central government since the 1950s. Central government, the party, now determined who of the local aspirants would appear on the list of candidates electable for office. Within a few years, central government had turned the table. Local elites were now dependent on central government for a position on the list of candidates for office. Local elites made it clear they were “displeased” (Brett, 1995: 136).

The response of local polities to central government’s efforts can probably be seen at two levels. First, some among the local elites responded forcefully and there were various assassination attempts on Obote’s life. Obote’s response was an expansion of the secret service and the presence of the military in political life (Southall, 1975: 99). It is unclear how most of the other elites in local polities responded; but it is likely that as the numbers of arrests increased, political dynamics within the institutional framework mostly ceased. Moreover, as many of the actual politico-administrative institutions for interaction and negotiation between central government and local polities had been disestablished, or come under exclusive central government control, there was no safe arena or platform left. Central government had initiated a process that Kasfir coined as “departicipation” (quoted in: Clayton, 1977: 172; see also: Kenig, 1978: 417; and T. M. Shaw, 1976: 544).

At a second level, there was the response of the peasants who produced the remaining resources that central government wanted, coffee and cotton. Uganda’s cooperatives had grown from only a handful in 1947 to 800 at independence (J.T.S., 1955: 296) and the rising coffee and cotton prices had created wealth as never before in most local polities (Crawford Young, 1977: 216). As central government was taking control over the political structures in local polities, it also took control over the cooperatives. Successive legislation in 1968 and 1970 dismantled the autonomy cooperatives had negotiated earlier. All cooperatives now had to submit budgets and reports to the Minister for Marketing and Cooperatives, who could unilaterally change budgets, and appoint managing committees,

supervisors and all staff.²⁹⁸ Moreover, all cooperatives had to sell their produce to respective marketing boards – cooperatives were back to the very early days of colonial central government (Bunker, 1991: 70). In a repeat of colonial history, the District Commissioner presided over the meetings of these marketing boards. The response of peasants was to gradually cease participation in the cooperatives and divert their production to informal markets and smuggling (Bunker, 1983a: 762). Arguably, Kasfir's concept of 'departicipation' as the results of agency by central government can be turned around and presented as an act of agency by local polities: they 'exited' from the institutional framework (A. O. Hirschmann, 1970).

On the eve of the coup by Idi Amin against President Obote in 1971, central government had reversed the balance of power in their institutional framework with local polities. It had taken ten years to invert a balance of power from an institutional framework in which local polities had a clear autonomy from, and influence over central government, into a framework where central government was in full control of the formal structures.

Conclusions

The developments in the institutional framework between central government and local polities in the decade before and after independence show the balance of power can fluctuate wildly and rapidly: from rather decentralised to highly centralised in less than 20 years. From a local perspective, four patterns emerge. First, once central government came under international pressure to change the institutional framework – decolonisation – local polities showed a capacity to capitalise quickly on the opportunity to increase local autonomy. Within a few years, local administrative structures had taken control of the local taxation and the flow of financial resources from central government to the new local administrative structures.

Second, the increasing personal networks between local polities and actors at central level and at an international level ensured many local elites had a detailed understanding of the

²⁹⁸ The legal framework for School Management Committees – a local body the centre of my fieldwork in 2004 – was also established in this period, in 1969. In a similar fashion as with the local cotton and coffee cooperatives, government also controlled – at least formally – the appointment of members of management committees for schools by appointing directly or indirectly seven of the nine committee members, leaving two seats for the parents.

wider forces in central government. Local elites not only travelled internationally and added directly to the international pressure on central government, but they also showed a capacity to overcome – or suspend – inter-polity rivalry and send joint delegations to London if that would serve common strategic local interests.

Third, when elections were introduced in the late 1950s, the votes of people in local polities became a new commodity that actors in central government needed and that local elites could produce. In a historical perspective, this means a shift or expansion of local resources. After ivory, local polities' lever over central government in the 1890-1920 period had been their administrative and military resources. In the 1920-1945 period, the principal lever of local polities was the ability to ensure the production of cash crops. In the 1945-1971 period, the lever of control over cash crop production was expanded with the local elites' ability to muster votes for a particular political party at the national level.

However, a fourth conclusion from this period points at the limitations of the local polities' capacity to negotiate with central government. After independence, the new central government quickly began to perceive local polities' autonomy and control over local resources as a threat – not unlike the colonial government's assessment of Baganda in the 1920s. When central government brought military force to bear on local polities and unilaterally re-centralised the public administration, local polities had no effective means or joint strategy to counter central government's use of force.

5.6 Central-local relations during civil war (1971-1986)

Throughout the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s, Uganda suffered from civil war. In 1971, Idi Amin took power by force and in the ensuing years Uganda descended into turmoil and terror. Amin was driven from power in 1979 by a military invasion from the Tanzanian army and Ugandan exiles led by Obote. After a brief lull, a second period of civil unrest then started after elections in 1980 saw Obote return as President until he was driven from central government power by military force in 1986. Throughout these fifteen years, most of Uganda's physical and social structures were destroyed. From Uganda's estimated 20 million inhabitants, perhaps up to 1.5 million people perished (Uganda Constitutional Commission, quoted in: Furley and Katalikawe, 1997: 243) and the citizens' per capita GDP was halved to 60 USD in 1986 (Saito, 2003: 51). This section examines the

two periods (1971-1979 and 1979-1986) for an understanding of how the conditions of civil war and collapse influenced the institutional framework between central government and local polities.

The next central government demolishes local polities

The army, led by Idi Amin, took central government power in 1971 when President Obote was overseas. Analysts find different or diverging motives for the coup. Some point to the personal rivalry between Obote and Amin; others suggest it originated in a disagreement over the distribution of central government's resources, or over the hidden spoils of a secretive intervention in Congo, or manipulation by Israel where Amin had close personal networks after having trained there in the 1960s.²⁹⁹ However, for this thesis' research question it is important to note that in all analyses a role for, or agency of, local polities is conspicuously and puzzlingly absent.

According to most sources, Amin's coup was initially received with some support at the national level. Political parties were probably pleased by Amin's release of dozens of political prisoners and a declaration that one-party rule would be ended. All major churches expressed support for Amin, especially after he committed central government cash to support churches' activities. There is some evidence that leading members of the Anglican church may even have supported Amin's coup from the beginning (Pirouet, 1980: 14). Many business elites were initially in support of the coup because Amin's central government reduced its 60% shareholding in major companies to 49%, effectively returning control to the business elites (Low, 1973: 223; Ravenhill, 1974: 231, 235). Some people in the Asian businesses community came in support of Amin because they had

²⁹⁹ Most analysts explain the coup by a mix of these motives, the most repeated argument being the personal rivalry between Obote and Amin and disagreements over the spoils from the secretive intervention of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda in the 1965 conflict in Congo's Katanga province (Brett, 1995: 135; Glentworth and Hancock, 1973: 250; Southall, 1975: 97). Amin's personal networks with Israel also led to extensive Israeli military, educational, health and economic support for Amin from his coup until the hostage drama at Entebbe airport in 1976 (Gitelson, 1977: 365, 375). As an aside; I am surprised that detailed studies of the involvement of Uganda and other DRC neighbours in the Congo wars since 1997 fail to point to a historical continuity between the current plunder of resources from the DRC and the Katanga ventures of Uganda's military in 1965 (cf. Clark, 2001; Reno, 2002).

opposed Obote's 'socialist' experiments and saw Amin reversing some of those policies (Gitelson, 1977: 364, 368).³⁰⁰

There are virtually no reports about a response from local polities to Amin's coup on central government. An active role of the Buganda polity was probably impaired because the king-in-exile had died in 1969 and his eldest son was still a minor in exile without a personal network in Uganda. Moreover, Amin may have attracted some of the former chiefly elites into passive consent because initially he held out a few olive branches. He appointed a Tooro princess as his Foreign Minister (Legum, 1975: 90) and organised a state re-burial of the Baganda king – though few would not have seen the political cynicism in the facts that the princess was also a fashion model and that it was Amin who had burnt the king's palace and forced him to flee in 1966. Among peasants, Amin initially found some appeal as he represented himself credibly as 'the common man' with whom many identified better than with the overseas-trained intellectuals who had ruled Uganda since 1962.³⁰¹ Yet, within months Amin dashed a potential alliance with local polities: "I want to take this opportunity to state clearly and categorically that kingdoms will not be re-introduced" (Ravenhill, 1974: 237).

On reflection, it seems clear that neither the national level actors nor the local polities played an active role in Amin's coup. The army was largely Obote's creation and one of its commanders had double-crossed him to take the top position in a centralised institutional framework. And as far as can be ascertained, this had happened without personal or institutional links with the local polities. The coup appears essentially as a move by the new military elite to take over central government. However, it left the central government without a personal network or an institutional network – such as Obote's political party had been – to govern the country. In the first few years, the new central government's actions on the institutional framework impacted on three spheres: local administrative structures,

³⁰⁰ The Asian (business) community would be the first to regret any initial sympathy they may have had as their mass expulsion in 1972 would make them among the first of Amin's central government victims. Shortly after that, of course, most Ugandans would be hurt by the collapse of the small business sector – from shops to small-scale manufacturing – that had mostly been owned and managed by the Asian community.

³⁰¹ Ravenhill notes the stark contrast (1974: 230). I couldn't help note that the same 'overseas trained intellectuals' would retake control of Uganda central government after Amin had been removed from power in 1979 when 27 of the 127 members of Uganda's new legislative council held PhDs (Gertz, 1980: 476).

central government's administrative structures and the local productive cash crops structures.

Having taken central government power while lacking "a channel of communication between the government and the people," one of the first – and few – legislative initiatives of President Amin was reforming the local government structures. The number of provinces and districts went up from, respectively, four to ten and 16 to 38 (Gertzel, 1980: 470). Awaiting a more detailed plan, central government appointed and promised to pay chiefs at village level as the representatives of government, while all higher tier officials continued to be 'disestablished' according to Obote's 1967 Constitution. However, when an election process at the level above village – i.e. Parish, Sub-county and County – in 1973 produced a large number of candidates that seemed to oppose central government, Amin announced elections were to be "reheld with only 'suitable' candidates being allowed to stand". In the meantime, military units were established in every district "to mobilise the people" (Ravenhill, 1974: 239). The central government's military units moved into the districts and effectively became the executive arm of central government – or their own interests – in local polities. Central government further eliminated potential opposition by removing most of the local police force, whose numbers dropped from 14,000 in 1971 to 2,000 in 1979 (Southall, 1980: 629). "Ironically," as Tideman notes, "since the district administration's revenue base was graduated tax and market dues rather than taxes on formal sector incomes, it survived the period largely intact – though by the end of it revenue was covering little more than salaries"(Tideman, 1994: 20).

In the sphere of central government's administrative structures, Amin's first cabinet had ministers from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and only two of the 18 cabinet Ministers were military officers. Most ministers were experienced civil servants and politicians. However, within months, Amin began dismissing civilian Ministers and replacing them with officers from the military. By 1973 most civilian Ministers had 'disappeared' or been put in jail and central government consisted almost exclusively of military officers (Ravenhill, 1974: 234; Southall, 1980: 644). And while many civil servants stayed on, if only out of fear, much of the public services gradually ceased to operate and local government services, schools and health posts operated on a shoestring in the second half of the 1970s (Brett, 1995: 56; Devas and Grant, 2003: 311).

The institutional framework for local productive structures – coffee and cotton cooperatives – was also taken over by the military. Bunker records how peasants initially applauded Amin’s coup, not only for his ‘common man’ image but also because they hoped it would roll back the government control that Obote’s government had imposed. Soon it became clear that Amin’s government would centralise as much as Obote’s. Government now appointed all members of the management committees and the military often took direct part in the management of cooperatives. Similarly, the district-based marketing boards for coffee and cotton were also taken over by central government’s ministries (Bunker, 1983a: 762, 1991: 212). In the end, most peasants withdrew from growing cash crops or smuggled their produce across the border in a network that often included the same military. Estimates suggested peasants produced 12,600 tons of *arabica* coffee in 1977, yet most of it was smuggled out of the country as only 2,600 tons was exported officially. However, in a stroke of luck, central government’s revenues were initially not affected too badly because poor global harvests saw international coffee prices skyrocket by 350% (Southall, 1980: 631, 635). Cotton production, Uganda’s most important economic resource, dropped from an average of about 500,000 bales per year in the 1960s to 80,000 in 1979 (Posnett, 1980: 150).

With domestic productive and political structures collapsing, Amin’s central government increasingly turned to the international arena, offering diplomatic support in exchange for aid. Within a few years, Amin managed to convince an additional 31 countries to set up embassies in Uganda, bring the total to 58. In comparison with other African nations, Uganda was “engaged most actively in international interactions”.³⁰² Amin proved to be astutely aware of the dynamics of the Cold War that directed decision-making of international powers. He successfully played off the British against the Russians, the Arab nations against Israel, and the Russians against the Chinese. While Russia had been the Obote government’s main source of bilateral aid, Amin’s government succeeded in obtaining most of its aid from the Arab world, without alienating the Russians, and increasing the total of international aid fourteen-fold (Kasekende and Atingi-Ego, 1999:

³⁰² Uganda’s chairmanship of the Organisation of African Unity in 1975-1976, the Israeli raid on a hijacked plane landed in Entebbe in 1976 and repeated antics towards Britain are all examples of Amin’s highly visible international profile.

625).³⁰³ When western countries suspended aid in 1977, other donors made up for the shortfall. Though records on the exact volume of aid may not be entirely reliable, central government definitely acquired enough military resources to secure its domestic hold on power (Gitelson, 1977: 362; Southall, 1980: 630).

By 1979, the institutional framework between central government and local polities revolved exclusively around the army. And while an appearance of normalcy was kept up in Kampala, a local perspective in 1979 would show life in rural local polities revolved mostly around subsistence farming and dodging central government's violent military (Gitelson, 1977: 373). Military commanders were in charge in local polities and had turned all "military, political, administrative, commercial and agricultural operations into composite fiefs" (Southall, 1980: 642). Where civil servants played a role in connecting local polities with central government, they did so within an environment that combined privileges and large salaries with utter physical terror (Brett, 1995: 139). Lonsdale's general conclusion that "Uganda in the wake of Amin resembles nothing so much as an institutionless arena" (1981: 205) echoes Bunkers' analysis of one particular local polity: "Local organisations ... became weaker and weaker" and contacts between local polities, peasants and central government "became less and less effective" (Bunker, 1991: 213). Nyeko analyses the Amin years with an almost explicit objective to dispel notions that the local population had been "passive observers throughout the years of dictatorship" (1997: 96). In addition, he does find some signs of local opposition to Amin's rule, but in the end he concludes that societal structures and the institutional framework had been so thoroughly destroyed and terror so violent, that local opposition was sporadic and isolated.³⁰⁴

In the end, Amin's central government was brought down by the fact that it also continuously threatened neighbouring countries Kenya and Tanzania. After a failed

³⁰³ Although figures are not exactly reliable, estimates are fascinating. Obote's central government obtained a total of 24 million USD in total aid, most from the USSR. Amin's government, however, managed to secure 332 million USD, most from Arab nations and World Bank (Kasekende and Atingi-Ego, 1999: 625).

³⁰⁴ There were several attempts by small armed groups of exiled Ugandans to dislodge Amin's government by force, but all failed to find or create a basis within Uganda. Obote mounted a military invasion from Tanzania in 1972, but was routed (Legum, 1975: 94). Similarly, a group led by the Ankole crown-prince based in Zambia failed to engender, or link up with, local resistance in Ankole (Nyeko, 1997: 107) and a handful of "young academics who were responsible for acts of sabotage" in the later 1970s also failed to connect with local polities (Tindigarukayo, 1988: 608).

'palace' coup against Amin, troops loyal to Amin pursued opponents into Tanzania. Tanzania's leadership decided that rather than merely expel Uganda's invading military, they would follow them into Uganda. President Nyerere used his personal network to get 28 different Ugandan opposition groups in exile together in Moshi and convinced them to establish a United Uganda Liberation Front. Early 1979 Tanzania troops and troops from the various exile groups entered Kampala routing Amin. However, the groups in the 'united front' were deeply divided along several fault lines and, most importantly, it was questionable whether any of these self-appointed leaders "represented any body of Ugandan opinion within the country" (Gertzel, 1980: 466). The institutional links and the personal networks between local polities and central government had collapsed and most of Uganda's local polities' structures had been destroyed. As Amin fled into exile, the hitherto exiled opposition was sworn in as Uganda's next central government.

And the next central government ignores local polities

This next central government faced three challenges regarding the institutional framework between central government and the local polities – each challenge critical for political stability. First, it needed to restore public safety throughout the country after a decade of lawlessness. Second, the new central government needed to rebuild a collapsed public administration and system of public services. Third, the incoming central government lacked an institutional framework to exchange information and negotiate a two-way flow of resources with local polities. In fact, many of the physical lines of communication with the rural local polities, such as roads or telecommunications, were dangerous or in disrepair. Between 1979 and 1986, Uganda would have five different regimes in central government, each facing these same three challenges.

Restoring public safety seemed the paramount priority. The remnant of the police force that was left by Amin was probably too compromised to have the public's trust. On top of the bands of armed soldiers, more than 4,000 ordinary criminals had been released from Kampala prisons as one of Amin's last acts in a country awash with arms. Gangs roamed freely (Posnett, 1980: 149). A modicum of public safety was upheld by Tanzanian troops, but Tanzania withdrew its troops within months, while central government was trying – and failing – to assemble a unified and trained army and police force. Almost inevitably, the hastily recruited new police became part of the law and order problem and large areas

of the country remained unsafe. Violence was only marginally less rampant than under Amin (Tindigarukayo, 1988: 610), with nearly 200,000 people dying in predatory violence in Buganda alone in the course of the next five years (Tideman, 1994: 21).³⁰⁵ In a change to the earlier years, local communities now began creating forms of local security by banding together and “taking the law into their own hands” (Gertzel, 1980: 488). Instead of turning to the new central government for public safety, local communities began to organise to defend themselves from assault and plunder by agents of the new central government.

In the second challenge – rebuilding the public administration and public services – western donors rushed into the country to assist. The Cold War was still a driving motivation for western donors to take up the space vacated by Libyan and Russian advisers. All western diplomats had left Kampala in 1977 and one of the first to return to Kampala in 1979 – in a small private aircraft two days after Tanzanian troops had expelled Amin’s troops – was a former colonial official in Uganda on direct assignment by the British government. His personal networks included the three next presidents of Uganda, leaving someone to wonder: “How is it that the presidency of Uganda seems to be reserved for Posnett’s personal friends?” (quoted in: *The Telegraph*, 2009). Within weeks, dozens of foreign experts preceded a promised flow of aid and occupied executive functions in the public administration. A Commonwealth report notes with satisfaction: “Rarely has a group of foreign advisers been able to get off to a faster start” and “papers circulated before the meetings, ministers were briefed. The machine had begun to work” (quoted in: Gertzel, 1980: 468, 470).³⁰⁶

However, central government efforts were mostly geared towards developing international contacts and networks. And this was rewarding in the immediate term. Western donors quadrupled aid to central government to over 1.1 billion USD in the next four years (Kasekende and Atingi-Ego, 1999: 625). When central government promised to “honour

³⁰⁵ Though ignored at the time, the interim Minister for Defence, Yoweri Museveni, pleaded publicly for the creation of armed “people’s militia” in local polities, “to make it impossible for any clique in the army to usurp powers by monopolising the instruments of coercion at the centre” (Brett, 1995: 151).

³⁰⁶ The large and dominant presence of foreigners in key positions is clearly an indication of donors’ mistrust of Uganda’s new government, rather than an indication of a shortage of qualified Ugandans. The returning 28 factions of exiles were comprised “almost exclusively” of professionals, very few with a background in the army or politics (Nyeko, 1997: 102). Nevertheless, whilst donors were keen to control key functions in the public service, the returning well-educated exiles rather sought a career in politics (Gertzel, 1980: 476).

obligations” in considering compensation to British investors who had lost in the expropriations by the Amin government, several foreign companies were also willing to negotiate with central government about their return into tea and sugar processing plants (Posnett, 1980: 151). Some economic reconstruction took place, inflation was brought under control and exports started to rise modestly (Tindigarukayo, 1988: 612). Nonetheless, if rebuilding of the public administration took place, it was limited to Kampala. Central government concentrated on expanding its networks to the international level. In the daily realities in the local polities public safety remained elusive and civil servants did not leave district headquarters (Bunker, 1991: 237). The connections between sectoral ministries and district departments – and hopes at local level that services would be resumed – never materialised; all aid money remained tied to Kampala (Brett, 1995: 143). And as far as public services were concerned, most health services were maintained by churches and parents kept schools afloat without support from central government (Saito, 2003: 51). Much of Uganda continued to resemble Lonsdale’s ‘institutionless arena’.

In the third field – “The most serious constraint on reconstruction was the breakdown of links between centre and locality” (Gertzel, 1980: 469) – central government faced the double task of rebuilding the political network with local polities, as well as rebuilding the related network through which material resources could be exchanged with local polities. At one level, the task of rebuilding the political network was based on national elections. In the preparations for these elections, the first provisional president was replaced by another in arguments over election processes, and the first elections were finally organised under a third president. However, none of the parties had party structures in local polities, and the constituencies for the elections were deliberately not aligned with any of the boundaries of the ‘Agreement Countries’ or the district boundaries that local polities that negotiated with earlier central governments, to avoid “promoting sectionalism and tribalism” (quoted in: Gertzel, 1980: 475).³⁰⁷ The election re-produced a parliamentary balance of power similar to the one of the 1960s. Two years after Amin’s government was

³⁰⁷ Interestingly, Gertzel stresses on the one hand the need to re-establish central-local links and criticises the successive governments for being “a small educated elite who had neither national nor local support” (1980: 482) yet on the other hand he deplores that early efforts to revive local structures “threw the Front back onto the old pattern of central-local linkages ... restored the old-style factional politics based on district alliances, and patronage, and national leadership linked to a local, regional power base” (1980: 477).

driven from power, and three provisional central governments later, Obote was inaugurated as president of the next central government (Tindigarukayo, 1988: 614).³⁰⁸ However, the ‘united front’ of opposition parties fell apart over suspicions of vote rigging, which evolved into concern over safety when Obote began re-organising the army. Several factions – notably a faction led by Yoweri Museveni, until then the central government’s Minister of Defence – left government and started a guerrilla war against central government. Unlike past armed resistance against central government, this guerrilla army started from inside Uganda and began seeking alliances with a wide range of local actors (Brett, 1995: 142).

At another level, central government refused to rebuild a political network with local polities by declining requests to organise local elections. Central government ‘demilitarised’ the management of District Councils and Provincial Governments, but then continued to appoint its own candidates as new Provincial Governors and District Commissioners. From a local polity perspective, not much had changed. And while some chiefly institutions were allowed to operate again in the four ‘Agreement Countries’, all personnel working in these structures remained on central government’s payroll (Tideman, 1994: 20). There are no records of central government making any other gestures or overtures towards the local polities. The very limited powers of district councils, for example, were not reviewed. In fact, the sharply centralist 1967 legislation for local bodies remained fully intact (Nsibambi, 1998: 1). And until 1986, all decision-making in public functions and over budgets were “almost exclusively concentrated in central government” (IMF, quoted in: Livingstone and Charlton, 2001: 78).

When it came to the task of rebuilding a network through which material resources could be exchanged with local polities, central government looked to its relationship with cooperatives. Central government continued to control the various Marketing Boards and instructed them to raise minimum producer prices for cocoa, tea, coffee, tobacco and cotton – according to advice from the foreign experts (Tindigarukayo, 1988: 616). However, government refused to reinstate elections for management committees and the

³⁰⁸ The multiparty election of 1980 gave Obote’s party a slim majority, and a minority to a Buganda-oriented party, with only one seat for another party. Although international observers deemed the elections “reasonably fair given the poor conditions”, the results were discredited by many Ugandans, suspecting fraud on Obote’s side (Tindigarukayo, 1988: 614).

employees of the cooperatives remained on central government's payroll. One concession was made by central government to local polities: some of its appointees to local Marketing Boards and Cooperatives once again came from the local elites. Bunker records how central government was surprised not to achieve the expected "degree of quiescence". To the contrary, some of the government appointed Marketing Board appointees began negotiating for higher prices and faster payments. More importantly, their contacts with and knowledge of central government departments, "helped them to defend local interests" and they "adopted many of the political behaviours of the earlier elected committees" (Bunker, 1991: 233). Nonetheless, concludes Bunker, their leverage was greatly reduced, because the "regime was far less susceptible to local political demands than the first Obote regime or any of the previous national or colonial government had ever been" (1991: 228). Local polities' resources of coffee and cotton were no longer the critical resources for central government. Whereas the Amin central government had been supported by 332 million USD, the Obote II central government was supported by aid to a total of 1.1 billion USD. Foreign aid was beginning to replace local coffee and cotton as central government's most critical resource.

Overall, central government in the 1979-1986 period was not willing to create an institutional framework with local polities, perhaps afraid it might effectively be creating again "the organisational base for opposition to its own central power" – as the colonial central government had done in the 1930s and 1940s when it supported the establishment of cooperatives (Bunker, 1983a: 755). The elites in the local polities, on the other side, failed to develop the personal or institutional networks that could have created an arena or a forum with central government. Where local polities in the colonial past sometimes effectively used their personal networks with mission churches to exchange information and connect with colonial central government or the Colonial Office in London, the presence of the expatriate experts in Uganda apparently could not offer the same opportunity. These foreign experts "interact primarily with their high level national bureaucratic counterparts" and had no contact with actors at a local level (Bunker, 1985: 380). (Arguably, the Obote central government also endeavoured to shield the foreign experts from personal contacts in local polities, perhaps in much the same way as the Baganda and Banyoro kings in the 1870s and 1880s had restricted the movement of foreign visitors.)

Amidst the violence of the civil war, however, the guerrilla army of Museveni made the first successful efforts in Uganda since the 1950s to establish an institutional framework between a central command and local polities. Though drawing much of its initial support from the Ankole polity, Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) also succeeded in setting up an institutional framework of a pyramid of so-called Resistance Councils throughout many of the other local polities where it began to hold military sway – particularly in Buganda. Resistance Councils started at village level, named RC-1, and linked into four more levels until reaching the district level as RC-5. Rather than forcing itself militarily on a local polity, the NRM endeavoured to introduce itself in direct talks with medium-sized landowners and well-off peasants – who proved to be more inclined to deal with the NRM than the large landlords and businessmen. Later, these contacts evolved in a network of elected Resistance Councils through which the NRM leadership talked and negotiated with local polities. A critical element was the fact that the NRM succeeded in maintaining discipline among its troops. Not only did NRM's troops not loot, they actually acted to maintain law and order and complaints by Resistance Councils to the NRM central command about soldiers' behaviour were followed up and soldiers disciplined. (Tideman, 1994: 22). By 1985, the NRM controlled large parts of Uganda and had created “a viable social base” (Brett, 1995: 141).

By late 1984, many western donors had grown wary of the Obote central government's repeated violations of agreements, and several contracts for financial aid were cancelled (Baffoe, 2000: paragraph 1.2). Without control over the production structures for local resources – whether coffee, cotton or voters' constituencies – and now suddenly cut off from most external resources, Obote's central government's was left empty-handed. Within weeks, Obote was forced into exile again by a military coup. The new military central government, however, failed to re-attract foreign aid or re-establish relations with local actors. It faced several guerrilla armies, of which Museveni's NRM had by now developed ‘a viable social base’ among key players in many of the local polities. In late 1985, the military central government and the NRM engaged in half-hearted peace negotiations in Kenya (Kiplagat, 2002). However, these agreements collapsed and by early 1986, the NRM army moved into Kampala, routed the military central government, and Museveni was sworn in as the next President of the central government (Tindigarukayo, 1988: 621).

Conclusions

Uganda's socio-political and economic structures were virtually destroyed in on-going civil war and unrest between 1971 and 1986. Looking at the institutional framework, there were two periods. In the first period, one central government dismantled the institutional framework as a negotiating arena with local polities and in a second phase, another central government largely ignored local polities. From a local perspective, four conclusions stand out.

First, when central government suspended elections, it no longer needed to negotiate with local polities over votes. And when government centralised the public administration and its military took direct control of local productive structures such as cooperatives, there was little local elites or peasants could do in the face of actual or the threat of state violence to make central government negotiate – except withdraw their political and economic participation and 'lie low'. It is most likely that peasants withdrew from cash crop production or smuggled cash crops out of the country, with or without collusion of government officials. Generally, local polities had no means – or desire – to confront central government's military force.

Second, when another central government took power and chose to ignore local polities – rather than forcefully control them and destroy any framework for negotiations – there was again little that local polities could do to be heard, especially as their 'vote' was still not required by central government. Again, when central government simply refused to engage with local polities, these local polities had no means to make government negotiate.

These two conclusions lead to the next: as central governments cut off or ignored formal negotiations with local polities, most personal networks that tied the two parties together dissolved. The dissolution of these personal networks, however, probably left central government the lesser informed party. By cutting off negotiations in the formal institutional framework with local polities, the central governments lost access to information about what was going on in local polities and had few alternative sources of information. Local polities, however, could still inform themselves about what was going on in and around central government via the (international) media, contacts with the NRM, international NGOs operating in Uganda, or networks of churches. Moreover, many actors

in local polities retained some of their personal networks with central government. For example, the fact that schools managed to keep a minimum of operations going is probably more evidence of local polities' personal networks with individuals in the Ministry of Education than a functioning institutional network.

Finally, the ability of successive central governments to cut off or ignore negotiations with local polities over an institutional framework for the exchange of resources and continue to remain in power points to the fourth conclusion. Uganda's governments during the civil war could 'afford' to turn their back on local polities because they managed to negotiate an increasing amount of financial aid from a range of different international donors. Central governments dependency on resources from local polities – be that ivory, soldiers, administrators, cash crops or votes – was effectively being replaced by a dependency on international aid.

5.7 Contemporary central-local relations (1986-2005)³⁰⁹

When the National Resistance Movement (NRM) of Museveni took over central government in 1986, it ushered in the longest period of peace, stability and regular elections since independence. In terms of the development of the institutional framework between central government and local polities, this period has two phases. In a first phase – 1986 to 1995 – the new central government addressed the public safety problems that had contributed to the severance of most links between central government and the local polities. Subsequently, central government and the largest local polities, the former 'Agreement Countries', negotiated in three successive steps a new institutional framework, culminating in a new Constitution that acknowledged that "the institution of traditional leader or cultural leader may exist in any area of Uganda" (GoU, 1995: Art 246). In the smaller local polities, the negotiations about a new institutional framework with central government revolved around the development and expansion of the Resistance Councils and a reduction in government control over the cash crop cooperatives. Towards the end,

³⁰⁹ I end my analysis of the wider context of central-local relations in the year 2005 because this is also the year in which I stopped collecting my fieldwork data. Coincidentally, 2005 probably also marks another important turning point in the politics of Uganda. In 2005, central government amended the 1995 Constitution to allow for multi-party elections and to allow an incumbent president to hold office for more than two five-year terms. Partly as a consequence of the latter, the critical relationship between central government and international donors deteriorated markedly and began to have a negative effect on the flow of foreign aid as critical resource.

central government's negotiations with the largest and the smaller local polities merged in the agreement about a Constitution that states decentralisation was to be Uganda's leading governance principle.

In the second phase between 1996 and 2005, the larger local polities continued to push for increased local autonomy, but the ruling elites in the larger polities may be finding the limits for their drive for autonomy within their own polity. The smaller local polities, on the other hand, negotiated the operational details of the decentralisation principle in ways that seemed to expand their autonomy or room for discretionary decision-making. The increasing *de facto* autonomy of school and dispensary committees discussed in the preceding chapter is integral part of this process. In the course of this phase, financial aid by international donor agencies appeared as an increasingly important resource in the negotiations between central government and local polities.

Central government and local polities reconnect

Upon assuming control of Kampala, Museveni's army only controlled about half the country. Different armed groups still controlled the other half of the country, or roamed around. Before any institutional framework with local polities could be re-established, public security needed to be ensured throughout the territory. Museveni's central government negotiated on an individual basis with those armed groups that had a basis within local polities. Commanders were offered positions in the new army, in other cases government just played for time rather than crushing these armed groups, the introduction of Resistance Councils as a platform for negotiations in these areas assisted this process (Brett, 1995: 147). Armed groups that failed to attract sufficient support in their 'home' polities, were pursued aggressively by central government's army. Yet other armed groups revolved only around small groups of returning exiles and these were effectively repressed in and around Kampala (Mamdani, 1988: 1168).³¹⁰

³¹⁰ Central government's repression was not limited to armed opposition. Towards the later 1980s, several non-armed opposition groups that opposed Museveni's central government were harassed, arrested or incarcerated for speaking out against human rights abuse or policies. Even internationally renowned analysts like Mahmood Mamdani who had initially spoken out in support of Museveni's central government became increasingly critical towards the later 1980s (Omara-Otunnu, 1992: 449, 452).

What continued to be an armed challenge for central government were groups based in the Acholi polities, dominated by peasants and resisting government with spiritual and mythical overtones. Joined by former Acholi soldiers fearing revenge from central government, these groups represented a military threat and were ruthlessly repressed by central government in the late 1980s, after which they remained a security problem in and around Acholi polities until the mid 2000s.³¹¹ Yet, by 1990 public security had improved to levels unknown for nearly two decades. While central government's military violence was frequently used against armed groups in areas in northern Uganda, the random and widespread violence and plunder by government troops against individual civilians had ceased. People became mobile again and trade resumed. The first negotiations over their institutional framework between central government and local polities – both the four traditional 'Agreement Countries' as well as the local polities in the form of districts – could begin.

In 1986, Museveni's National Resistance Movement issued a "Ten-point Programme" that promised fundamental change to Uganda's political structures (Kasfir, 1998: 51).³¹² Two key elements were the concept of a "no-party democracy" – prohibiting the participation of political parties in the political process as it was deemed one of the root causes of the fact that "dictatorship has bedevilled our country for too long" – and the expanding practice of a five-tiered local government system based on Resistance Councils. Rather than organising elections around the traditional political parties, Museveni's central government presented, in 1988, a Ugandan Constitutional Commission with a four year plan to travel around the country "to educate the people" and "to ascertain their views" regarding a new Constitution (quoted in: Furley and Katalikawe, 1997: 245, 248). What followed was a remarkable process that attracted widespread praise. Commission members travelled to

³¹¹ These 'spiritual' armies like the Holy Spirits Movement (see: Allen, 1991) and its successor the Lord's Resistance Army not only challenged central government's authority, but were also a struggle for dominance within the local Acholi polities between former soldiers, youths, competing groups of traditional leaders, NGOs, local churches, and trader-smugglers. Added to that, of course, is the cross-border conflict between Uganda and Sudan; both countries supported proxies in each other's territory (see: Acker, 2004; Doom and Vlassenroot, 1999; Titeca, 2005). In itself, armed opposition with a spiritual dimension to central government as well as a local ruling elite have a long history, going back to for example, the Maji-Maji uprising in Tanzania in 1905-1907.

³¹² Museveni has commented and published extensively about principles and systems of government, ranging from state formation in European history to the structural pressures on Uganda's peasantry, the extent of agency of local elites, and the use of local imagery for modern governance (See: Kassimir, 1999; Oloka-Onyango, 2004).

870 Sub-counties to explain the purpose and process and many of these meetings were attended by hundreds of people.³¹³ The Commission later visited each Sub-county again to collect oral testimonies and receive more than 25,000 written submissions as a basis for a draft Constitution (Moehler, 2006: 281).

The consultations for the new Constitution took nearly eight years – longer than anticipated – and was criticised for being too long or manipulated by central government.³¹⁴ However, from a local perspective, this process must have marked an important shift in the relationship between their local polity and central government. Many peasants positively contrasted their experiences during the central governments of Obote I, Amin and Obote II with these experiences (Karlstrom, 1996: 487). Arguably, it created for the first time a two-way relationship between citizens and representatives from central government. However, the consultation process did more than provide a public legitimacy to the building of a new institutional framework between central government and local polities. The drawn out process also built two important foundations on which local elites started to negotiate on behalf of local polities with central government.

First, in organising the meetings between government’s Constitutional Commission and local polities, the Commission depended on local elites. Local elites – via Resistance Councils, local sections of political parties, traditional chiefly structures, or simply local ‘economic’ clout – were critically important in calling for attendance to the meeting. Moreover, in-depth studies of the process at local level conclude, “local political leaders, not participation, caused citizens to view the constitution as legitimate or illegitimate”. The introduction of the consultative process and comments made by local elites – in the public

³¹³ In fact, by scale and duration, the constitutional consultation process was “unprecedented ... in Africa and, indeed, further afield”. Similarly, the end result was a detailed Constitution with 287 articles, several times the size of most Constitutions in most other countries (Furley and Katalikawe, 1997: 252, 257).

³¹⁴ Complaints of a “tainted, illegitimate and unfair” process were raised – especially by leading politicians, legal professionals and academics. For example, it was alleged that the Commission was stacked with government appointees (perhaps true, but leading figures from the opposition, including the Democratic Party and Buganda royalist were also members of the Commission), took place in an environment where leading opposition figures were harassed (true, but mostly confined to the national circles in Kampala), or a delaying tactic to keep the ‘unelected’ Museveni central government in power (perhaps, but the extension in time and the election of a Constituent Assembly were also concessions negotiated from central government by the opposition) (Furley and Katalikawe, 1997: 259; Moehler, 2006: 282). Large numbers of people in local polities – on the other hand – expressed their satisfaction with the process. For most, the freedom of speech – “not speech directed toward a general audience of equals, but rather the speech of subjects toward their ruler” – created and reconfirmed for many villagers a first-time-in-their-life connection with central government (Karlstrom, 1996: 487).

meetings of hundreds of people with central government representatives and in more private settings outside the ear and view of government representatives – determined most people’s assessment of the process and government’s intentions. Local elites were regaining their roles as mediators between central government and local polities (Moehler, 2006: 275).

Second, the consultative process in itself offered an opportunity, a platform, for aspiring local leaders to ‘represent’ their local polity before central government. As government wished to move towards formal approval of the draft Constitution, it came under pressure from national and international sides that it did not have the mandate to do that. “Reluctantly”, central government adapted the process and included an election for a Constitutional Assembly, “to debate, enact and promulgate the Commission’s draft Constitution”. More than 1,100 – four per constituency – stood for election of the 284 seats in the Assembly, many of who had never stood for any sort of election before. Anecdotal evidence suggests these candidates did indeed represent their local polities before central government, as one teacher commented: “The constitution is based on most of the views we gave ... We sent our Constituent Assembly delegate to work on it.” The Constitutional Assembly fine-tuned the draft and approved of the Constitution in 1995.³¹⁵ In the process, of course, the elected Assembly members were becoming also the best-placed candidates for the general parliamentary elections in 1996 (Cullimore, 1994: 710; Furley and Katalikawe, 1997: 251). After decades of successive central governments breaking down an institutional framework with local polities, the protracted consultative process on the Constitution had reconnected the two – restored or built mutual trust – and laid foundations for further negotiations.

In parallel to – and sometimes as part of – laying the foundations for the formal institutional framework with local polities via the consultations on the Constitution, central government also negotiated the new terms of the framework with the ‘Agreement Countries’ – which in itself represented recognition because these four major polities had

³¹⁵ Interestingly, one of the proposals in the draft Constitutions that was eventually dropped was one that had enthused many representatives of international agencies who had observed that “more unusually the draft Constitution provides for a National Council of State with the task of promoting good relations ... between central and local government” (Cullimore, 1994: 709; Furley and Katalikawe, 1997: 260). It is unclear why this proposal was eliminated by the Constitutional Assembly that contained representatives of local polities, but it certainly proves that central-local relations were negotiated until the last moment.

been declared non-existent in the 1967 Constitution. The negotiations between the Museveni central government and the four ‘Agreement Countries’ probably took three successive steps in this first phase between 1986 and 1995. In a first step, both sides established personal contacts during the guerrilla war of the 1980s. Much of the fighting between Museveni’s army and Obote’s central government took place in Buganda. Museveni’s troops and local Baganda elites had agreed cooperation via the Resistance Councils, but this was probably an uneasy alliance as Museveni originated from Ankole. Early 1985, the Baganda crown prince secretly came from his exile in London to visit ‘liberated’ counties in Buganda. This visit boosted support for Museveni’s army throughout Buganda and reconfirmed the importance of the Baganda crown-prince who had left Buganda as a small boy in 1966 (Oloka-Onyango, 1997: 177).

After Museveni’s central government had taken control in 1986, cooperation remained uneasy. With republican or Marxist views, many of the new government’s leaders rejected calls for a restoration of the kingdoms. Some members in central government were arrested – and released – after speaking out too openly for the restoration of the kingdoms. However, personal networks between the Museveni central government and Buganda had now been developing since the prince’s clandestine visit in 1985 and formed the bases for a second step in the cooperation between central government and Buganda (Oloka-Onyango, 1997: 173, 178).³¹⁶ In 1990 the crown prince officially returned to Buganda, but any official coronation was, of course, off until an official restoration of the kingdom. Central government, at that time faced strong opposition to its push to have multi-partyism excluded in the new Constitution. A deal was struck (Johannessen, 2008: 7).³¹⁷ The Baganda king mobilised the Baganda votes in the Constitutional Assembly against multi-partyism and central government endorsed a constitutional proposal stating, “the institution

³¹⁶ For example, the first chairperson of the National Resistance Movement had been Yusuf Kironde Lule, a prominent Muganda with known royalist sympathies. A Cabinet minister in the first central government was Prof Apolo Nsibambi another prominent Muganda (and former Don of Makerere University) who called for “respect for culture”. Apolo Nsibambi would continue to move between central government and Buganda. After being a Minister in the first NRM Government in 1986, he became the chief negotiator for the Baganda king in the mid 1990s. After apparently falling out with the Baganda kin in the later 1990s, he became central government’s Prime Minister in 1999.

³¹⁷ At the time there were very diverging views on both sides about the extent to which the other side could be trusted. Senior Baganda chiefs issued this illustrative statement: “the Baganda looked at the new constitution-making with great scepticism ... many felt that it was a farce and that there was a hidden agenda ... But at last the sign was given. The existing Constitution was amended. The *Kabakaship* was assured. ... [this] restoration went a long way to draw the people of Buganda to the area where the remaining issues could be discussed.” (quoted in: Furley and Katalikawe, 1997: 248).

of traditional leader or cultural leader may exist in any area of Uganda” and “all regalia where they exist shall vest in the Traditional Ruler ... without the need for negotiation” (Oloka-Onyango, 1995: 164). The Baganda king was crowned and opened his *lukiiko*, his Supreme Council, in 1993 in the presence of President Museveni (Johannessen, 2008: 8).

In a third step of negotiations in this phase, central government and the Baganda polity – as well as the other kingdoms – negotiated the administrative institutions and the flow of resources. Within weeks of his coronation, the Baganda king appointed a cabinet with a Chief Minister, 14 Ministers, and a few dozen civil servants. Many of the persons involved were high-profile professionals, securing wide personal networks throughout Uganda. From the flow of ‘gifts’ presented during the coronation, the four-storey parliament and palace were restored (Englebert, 2002: 349). Moreover, much of the real estate and 350 square miles of land confiscated by central government in 1966, were returned to Buganda, securing a minimal flow of resources in the form of rent (Johannessen, 2008: 8). In the same vein, if less imposing, the other kingdoms re-established themselves shortly afterwards. Obviously, the establishment of administrative structures by the Baganda kingdom in 1993 were generally interpreted as a move toward autonomy, and accompanied by a call in the *lukiiko* for a federal model of state in Uganda. Yet, central government “looked away” from these challenges by the traditional kingdoms (Englebert, 2002: 353). Arguably, this underscores that within a decade, the ‘Agreement Countries’ had not only risen from the grave, but were able to negotiate as equals with central government and ‘interpret’ formal regulations to suit their local polities’ purposes.

As central government negotiated with the four ‘Agreement Countries’, so it was also negotiating the foundations of the institutional framework with the smaller local polities and the districts. And as had happened in the negotiations with the larger four polities, the consultation process on the Constitution between 1988 and 1995 was part of these negotiations. The central institution in the negotiations with the smaller local polities was the system of Resistance Councils, initially set up during the guerrilla war as a two-way communication system between the military central command of Museveni’s army and villages. It also assisted in integrating local armed youth or bands of deserted soldiers in the NRM army (Brett, 1995: 142). However, the system of Resistance Councils had also proved useful for central government and local polities in negotiating disarmament of the

remaining armed bands in the 1986-1989 period. And as the massive consultation process on the Constitution got underway – and required a systematic and operational – communication structure, the system of Resistance Councils expanded over Uganda’s entire territory and morphed from a security focused structure into a platform on which the consultation on the new Constitution took place (Cullimore, 1994: 708).³¹⁸

The Resistance Council system was a pyramidal structure starting with a Resistance Council at village level, RC-1. Each RC-1 comprised nine elected candidates from the village, elections were public events as people queued up behind the candidate of their choice. The elected RC-1 would then elect the Resistance Council one level up, the RC-2 at Parish level. From there, elections continue via Sub-county and County level, up to the RC-5 operating at district level. As Resistance Councils operated under the ‘no-party’ motto, candidates could not present themselves as representatives of political parties and had to compete on personal reputation. Nevertheless, it is probably safe to assume that because personal reputation was the basis, most voters would know candidates political affiliations or inclinations, but whether that actually mattered remains to be established. Resistance Councils held elections at a regular intervals in 1986, 1989, 1991 and 1994 (Saito, 2003: 54).

After having been the platform for consultation on the new Constitution, Resistance Councils gradually acquired new roles beyond the exchange of information and consultation between central government and local polities. By the early 1990s, many Resistance Councils had assumed or been given legal executive and adjudicating authority. At the lower levels, Resistance Councils obtained authority in civil and criminal matters. At district level, the Resistance Council-5 had responsibilities for maintaining public services, working with budgets and had started to contract their own staff. In a move to control developments, the former ‘political heads’ of the NRM at district level were appointed by central government as District Administrators to supervise the Executive

³¹⁸ As the system of Resistance Councils expanded, these councils probably lost some of their uniquely local features. I have not been able to find comparative analyses of the actual – daily – work of Resistance Councils in different regions or over time. Karlstrom (1996) makes a fascinating, partly linguistic, analysis of villagers’ perception of Resistance Councils in Buganda, but his work seems to be the only one. Saito’s research in 1999 finds regional differences when interviewing villagers about the usefulness of the (by then) Local Council-1. In Mukone district almost 90% of the people find LC-1s “very useful”, whereas in Tororo the appreciation drops to just 50% (2003: 86).

Secretaries (Tideman, 1994: 23). In effect, the Resistance Councils appeared to become the building blocks to reconstitute the public administration after twenty years of war. The new responsibilities and bureaucratisation of the Resistance Councils obviously created debate about the character of Resistance Councils.

A first point of debate were suspicions that Resistance Councils were becoming nothing more than another version of a one-party state apparatus of the NRM to penetrate into village levels (Young, 2001: 208). However, research carried out at the local level in the 1990s would suggest this did not happen. Since 1986 many opponents to NRM's central government were elected during the regular local elections. Rather than being an exclusive vehicle for central government penetration into local polities, the Resistance Councils offered a platform for local opponents to central government to negotiate their cause. Saito also points at the practical limitations; even if the NRM as the 'ruling party' would have wanted to, it lacked the ways and means: "The NRM did not politicise the Resistance Councils significantly, mainly because the NRM could not penetrate local levels" (Saito, 2003: 54). Golooba-Mutebi's local research concludes that "people generally came to identify the councils as the link between them and the government" (2004: 292).

Research at village level in Buganda in the early 1990s records villagers speaking of Resistance Councils as 'democratic' – though not because the members were elected. In fact, many hardly differentiated between Resistance Councils and old chiefly systems, since their functions and hierarchy were so similar. As one man said: "In the old form of rule we had village chiefs and parish chiefs and higher up were the sub-county and the county chiefs. When you compare with the RCs ... you can see that their tasks and workings are very similar". However, there is widespread appreciation of 'being heard and answered': "Democracy is ... each person speaking for himself ... and having it answered properly", and "Presently we can say there is democracy, because we can stand up and say something and the authority listens to it". Karlstrom concludes that "there has evidently been a fusion in popular consciousness between these two system of local government, both viewed as highly legitimate by contrast with the centralised and oppressive administrative system during the two decades from 1967 to 1986" (Karlstrom, 1999: 489, 496).

A second angle in the debate about the character of Resistance Councils argued that even if Resistance Councils were not politicised by the NRM, the bureaucratisation of the Resistance Councils meant they were becoming “no more than appendages of the civil service”, especially as central government has appointed a “Permanent Secretary in charge of RCs in the Ministry of Local Government” (Mamdani, 1988: 1176).³¹⁹ However, others disagree convincingly. Not only because local polities ultimately control Resistance Councils via regular elections in which large majorities of communities voted (Tideman, 1994: 25), but also because studies find that for most villagers, the councils “are quite explicitly conceived as a form of local self-rule”, not as branches of government (Karlstrom, 1999: 112). To these arguments, the practical argument needs to be added that the Permanent Secretary in Kampala simply lacked the staff and resources to control the 40,000 Resistance Councils or 900 Sub-county Resistance Councils (Saito, 2003: 53). In this light, this thesis’ findings about Uganda’s school committees probably also apply to the Resistance Councils; the Minister or Permanent Secretary may formally control local committees, but in practice local polities control them. The local committees thus become, rather, a meeting point or an arena for central government and local polities to meet and negotiate.

The negotiations between central government and local polities over the Resistance Councils between 1986 and the mid 1990s were talks about the formal structures of the institutional framework; they did not involve any substantial flow of material resources. There was no decentralisation policy and central government did not transfer significant budgets to the districts. Negotiations over material resources concentrated on the role of Marketing Boards and local cooperatives for cash crop production. Since the late 1960s, the local production of cash crops had been under control of central government, and most peasant producers of cash crops effectively evaded the cooperatives and Marketing Boards. And when the Museveni government took power, its economic programme held a central role for government in controlling the market (Hauser, 1999: 625). For example, government maintained price controls for cash crops – in spite of strong pressure by international donors to the contrary. Central government did, however, increase prices for

³¹⁹ Arguably, the expansion of Resistance Councils throughout every single polity in Uganda and their ‘bureaucratisation’ in the 1990s as local bodies with a varying degree of local legitimacy and authority, could be presented as having some historical continuity in comparison with the bureaucratisation of the ‘Native Authorities’ by the colonial government in the 1930s.

cash crops. Coffee prices, for example, increased sevenfold between 1986 and 1989. But central government's continued control of the Marketing Boards and cooperatives did little to increase cash crop production and government revenue from cash crops (Baffoe, 2000: paragraph 2.1). Presumably, local peasant producers continued to smuggle their coffee and tobacco across the border.

By the late 1980s, key economic indicators – which had been gradually improving since 1986 – stagnated. International donor agencies put more pressure on central government to 'liberalise' the economy, privatise state companies and rescind market controls. But government resisted, arguing it would hurt the poor. Nonetheless, while resisting donor pressure, government did engage in a series of public debates with key businesses and members of parliament about economic policies. It is not clear if or how peasants or local politics were involved in this debate – an influence via members of parliament is quite possible – but the end result was a number of major changes in government's macro-economic policies in 1991 and 1992. From a local perspective, government's decision to abandon price controls on cash crops meant a major break (Adam and Gunning, 2002: 2047; Dijkstra and Donge, 2001: 843; Kasekende and Atingi-Ego, 1999: 645).³²⁰

In 1992, central government introduced a new Cooperatives Act, which reduced central government grip on the management of cooperatives and by 1995 coffee, cotton, tea and cocoa markets were fully liberalised. Price-setting by government became indicative, rather than compulsory. Within a few years, government's Coffee Marketing Board saw its share of the market drop from more than 80% to 30%. Unions of cooperatives now exported 15% of the coffee production and private traders more than 50%. Most importantly, farmers seemed to respond positively because coffee production – or coffee marketing via legal channels – between 1990 and 1997 almost doubled.³²¹ And whereas

³²⁰ Adam and Gunning stress that it "was not donor pressure which first led to a change of policy" (2002: 2046). while others note that central government ignored World Bank recommendations between 1987 and 1991 when they were "met with domestic resistance" (Dijkstra and Donge, 2001: 843).

³²¹ The reliability of the statistics of cash crop production is subject of "considerable debate" (Dijkstra and Donge, 2001: 851). Shouldn't production have gone up more? Hasn't farming culture shifted altogether to vegetable production for the urbanised population? How much of the increase in cash crop production is smuggled from neighbouring countries (Baffoe, 2000)? In my field research in 2004 in districts bordering the DRC, various school committees complained of up to 30% truancy during tobacco season because pupils engaged in smuggling tobacco – this time from the DRC into Uganda. Quite a marked contrast with the 1980s and also in stark contrast with the complaints of school committees in the northern districts about overcrowded classrooms due to the influx from refugees from Sudan.

central governments used to simply appoint managers to the unions of cooperatives, the Minister of Agriculture's influence is now reduced. In fact, as a sign of the renewed autonomy of peasant producers and space for negotiations, several cooperative bodies in the late 1990s engaged in legal battles with the Ministry over the extent of central government's influence in the appointments of managers (Brett, 1994: 73; Dijkstra and Donge, 2001: 843, 853). Similarly, the number of (re-) registered primary cooperatives and Cooperative Unions in districts started to increase in the 1990s (Rwabwoogo, 2002). This could be another indicator of local polities increasing confidence that they can negotiate the flow of resources with central government.

Until 1993, central government had been negotiating the institutional framework with the four larger and the other smaller local polities on separate tracks. However, Buganda's increasing moves towards establishing administrative autonomy and calls for 'federalism' probably forced government to reconsider its position and look for a constitutional framework that could limit the autonomy of the larger polities. Hitherto, government had been expanding the system of Resistance Councils, but had dithered in embracing a decentralised public administration as an overall governance principle. Similarly, donors were also half-hearted about a decentralised public administration. A Decentralisation Secretariat had been established in 1991, but suffered from a lack of political support and donors' unwillingness to provide financial resources (Geist and Ng'ethe, 1998: iv). However, when Buganda pushed for federalism, "the NRM changed their position in the debate over the future form of governance ... they argued in favour of a unitary system with decentralisation" (Johannessen, 2008: 10) and "in order to pre-empt Buganda's assertion of federalism, rapid decentralisation was considered necessary" (Saito, 2003: 54).

A decentralised form of governance in a unitary state would, on the one hand, increase the autonomy of the smaller local polities at the expense of central government. However, the same decentralised form of governance could be the constitutional framework that would also limit the autonomy of the larger polities. While Buganda felt "betrayed" and opposed the ensuing changes to the draft Constitution, it failed to find enough allies among the other polities to stop the changes (Johannessen, 2008: 10). In the end, the final version of the Constitution in 1995 declared first "Decentralisation shall be a principle applying to all levels of local government," before stating: "A traditional leader or cultural leader shall not

have or exercise any administrative, legislative or executive powers of Government or local government” (GoU, 1995: Art 176, Art 246). Overall, the ‘institutionless arena’ from the 1970s and 1980s has been filled again with the foundations of a variety of institutions that were developed in interaction or conflict between central government, elected local bodies, local economic actors and traditional rulers. The next phase would be about actually using these institutions to negotiate with a longer-term perspective.

Central government and local polities negotiate

Placed – or constrained – within the framework of a decentralised model of governance with the 1995 Constitution, the four ‘Agreement Countries’ continued to interpret the limits on their autonomy quite liberally, or simply ignore them. Baganda’s *lukiiko* was expanded with clan leaders and representatives from all districts in Buganda and became a leading voice of opposition to the Museveni central government. Buganda went one step further in asserting its autonomy vis-à-vis central government when it began developing an international network and representation. In 2000, Baganda appointed “envoys” to Kenya, Sweden and Britain. Ostensibly – in an elegant diplomatic disguise – these envoys were sent to take care of the large number of Baganda living in these countries. However, the envoys did carry a Baganda flag and an anthem.³²² In the same vein, Buganda engaged in development contracts with international donors, but in the same elegant diplomatic disguise, signed the contracts in the name of the king’s own NGO for development projects (Englebert, 2002: 356).

Probably the most significant impediment to the autonomy of the larger local polities is their limited access to resources. The kingdoms are not only legally prohibited from collecting taxes – that in itself would probably not constitute a major impediment – but there is obviously a limit to Baganda capacity and tolerance to be taxed twice. The Baganda treasury collects rent and receives regular ‘voluntary gifts’. Cultural events, such as the king’s wedding in 1999 also generated large ‘contributions’ (Englebert, 2002: 356). The Tooro Kingdom managed to establish a special partnership with Libya, which proved

³²² These envoys received no formal recognition by any of the receiving countries, and continued to travel around the globe. In 1999, for example, a Buganda delegation went to the US and visited a Trade Forum and spoke with senior US East Coast politicians (Englebert, 2002: 350). I do not presume the welfare of Baganda’s diaspora in Massachusetts, New Hampshire or Rhode Island featured in the discussions.

kind enough to donate to the building of a new royal palace. This allowed the Tooro King to increase the polity's income by renting out his old palace to the Kabarole District Council (UGPulse Staff, 2005). The photographs show how the spatial juxtaposition and levels of maintenance contradict the formal balance of power between the two institutions – a message that is undoubtedly not lost on the local polity's inhabitants (Picture 8). Nevertheless, the limitations of the four larger polities to raise resources is cause for a growing resentment in the local polities. Some *lukiiko* members said in 2002: “We cannot celebrate the restoration of the monarchy when our king does not have political authority, when he does not have the power to collect taxes and he depends on handouts from good Samaritans for a living” (quoted in: Johannessen, 2008: 6).

Picture 8. Tooro palace and headquarters of Kabarole District Council



Left top: The old – dilapidated – palace of the Tooro King in Fort Portal that has been rented out to the Kabarole District Council as the district's headquarters (author's picture, 2004).

Right top: The new palace of the Tooro king in Fort Portal, overlooking the former palace (UGPulse Staff, 2005).



Left bottom: The new Tooro palace – on top of the hill – seen from the entrance of the Kabarole District Council headquarters (author's picture, 2004).

However, in the course of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the domestic limits of the kingdoms' capacity to push for more autonomy also became visible. In the 1996 presidential elections, the Baganda king openly campaigned in favour of Museveni's

opponent. Nonetheless, Museveni won the election with 76% of the votes. Perhaps more important was the fact Museveni got 80% of the votes in Buganda (Karlstrom, 1996: 500). In 2003, all four kings walked in a public procession to hand in a joint submission to a Constitutional Review Commission, requesting federalism as basis for the institutional framework between central government and local polities. More than 200,000 people watched the procession. However, in the subsequent negotiations central government rejected the demand for federalism and the two sides negotiated an agreement to create a new administrative layer of ‘regions’ between the districts and central government. There could be a ‘Buganda region’ and a ‘Bunyoro region’, but whether these regions would have significant resources remained unclear. Moreover, there was also increasing opposition to the idea from the smaller local polities, who became concerned about the increasing dominance of Buganda and its claim on central government resources (Johannessen, 2008: 11).³²³

Prior to the 2001 presidential elections, the Baganda *lukiiiko* and central government had a public argument over Baganda demands that more land be returned to the king. In response, Museveni’s central government played on Baganda peasants’ fears of increased land rents and flatly refused. Inevitably, the Baganda King and chiefs endorsed Museveni’s opponent in the elections, but again the Baganda electorate ignored the royal calls for ‘unity’.³²⁴ Without making a reference to the historical conflicts between Buganda’s ruling clans and the large number of peasants – who undoubtedly do have a memory of the *bataka* revolts against the chiefly elites in the 1920s and in the 1940s – Englebert concludes the king’s lever against central government may be limited by the consistent lukewarm domestic support: “Ordinary rural Baganda display substantial affection for the king and the idea of the kingdom, they nevertheless remain aloof from its political projects and display a relatively strong allegiance to the national state” (Englebert, 2002: 358). Basically, the king cannot muster the votes to negotiate for further autonomy of his local polity from central government.

³²³ Some people in the *lukiiiko* rejected the acceptance of the idea of a ‘Buganda region’. They claimed it was, ‘yet another empty promise from the central government’. Buganda’s Chief Minister on his side has argued it was ‘a stepping-stone towards real federalism’ (Johannessen, 2008: 12). Personally, I would see the value of the Chief Minister’s argument, but the principal question would be to what extent ordinary Baganda would wish, or vote, for further strong negotiations with central government or even statehood.

³²⁴ These decisions definitely have a historical continuity with the Baganda decision in 1961 to support Obote as a presidential candidate.

Most of the smaller local polities started differently from the four ‘Agreement Countries’ once they were placed in the framework of the 1995 Constitution that had ‘decentralisation as a principle’. Most smaller polities – or elites in these local polities – did not start the post-1995 phase on a contentious footing with central government or wished to revert to a defined past tradition of self-rule or domestic governance. The reconnection with government via an institutional framework largely based on Resistance Councils was, probably, appreciated by most local polities. Considering the massive support for Museveni’s central government in the elections of 1996 and 2001, it is likely there was a wide appreciation of the ‘peace and democracy’ that was secured via the Resistance Councils. Moreover – as discussed before – many aspiring local elites showed by their overall involvement that they considered the Resistance Councils an appreciated opportunity to create or increase influence within their local polity, as much as an arena to interact and negotiate directly with central government.

After announcing decentralisation in the 1995 Constitution, central government introduced a comprehensive Local Governments Act in 1997. The five-tiered system of Resistance Councils – running from RC-1 to RC-5 – was re-branded as Local Government. The Resistance Councils became Local Councils (LC), starting with an LC-1 at Village level and running up via the Parish (LC-2), Sub-county (LC-3), and County (LC-4) to a District (LC-5). However, in practice, most of the public administration and direct election of the councillors takes place at just three levels: at Village level, at Sub-county level and at District level (GoU, 1997). International observers who were critical of Museveni’s overall governance record, acclaimed the local elections (e.g. Human Rights Watch, 1999: vi). These three Councils hold executive and legislative powers, with local civil servants becoming accountable to the latter two councils. Districts and Sub-counties were granted a large autonomy in the planning and delivery of public services and Sub-counties were to play a leading role in the collection of local taxes (Golooba-Mutebi, 2004: 294).³²⁵ And whereas the earlier Resistance Councils had been volunteer positions at all levels, the new Sub-county and District Councillors receive sitting allowances, capped at 15% of last year’s revenues (Saito, 2003: 57).

³²⁵ Sub-counties remit 35% of the collected local taxes to the District and retain 65%. Of the latter amount, 25% needs to be distributed among the Village Councils (Golooba-Mutebi, 2004: 294).

Picture 9: Making decentralisation visible at local level



Left top: The office block of a Sub-county (LC-3) Council in Arua District. The LC-3 Chairman holds 'open office' for the public twice a week (insert). Two elected Village Councillors have come for a meeting and parked their bicycles in front (author's picture, 2004).

Right top: The symbol of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) is the 'Yellow Bus', calling people to 'get on the bus'. In the 2001 election campaign, central government campaigned on its successes with 'decentralisation' by driving around real and mock yellow buses. Pictured is a mock bus 'parked' in the Moyo District Council's yard (author's picture, 2004).

Left bottom: The Local Government Development Programme (LGDP) offered significant grants to Local Councils for discretionary use. "In terms of approach, it [LGDP] has been highly significant and has provided the basis for Uganda's recently adopted fiscal decentralisation strategy" (Land and Hauck, 2003: 15). Pictured is a primary school in Arua District that successfully competed with other schools before the District Council for a grant to re-roof the school (author's picture, 2004).

Golooba-Muteti's assessment of the impact of decentralisation on villagers' engagement in the institutional framework is sceptical: "Within just a decade of their establishment as a mechanism for facilitating participation, village councils had succumbed to atrophy". However, that does not imply Local Councils have lost legitimacy: "Villagers seemed content to sit back and let their leaders get on with the job of leading. From an observer's point of view, their behaviour suggests representative democracy" (2004: 301). Oloka-Onyango's assessment of Uganda's decentralisation policies underscores that – in spite of continued 'bigmanism' – "the most critical element" for the success of Museveni's government was the experience with the "the diffusion of administrative power among

elected officials known as Resistance Councils and Local Councils” (2004: 35). Rather than seeking to centralise administrative power, the new central government seemed to seek legitimacy by negotiating an institutional framework with local polities in which power is negotiated. Local Councils ... now constitute the most important associational arena outside the religious sphere in much of rural Uganda and, potentially, the strongest institutional impetus towards ... the reconstruction of State-society relations” (Karlstrom, 1999: 111). Assuming, then, that Local Councils have legitimacy in the eyes of the local polity, the extent to which local polities have actually acquired a negotiating power vis-à-vis central government in this new institutional framework – or conversely, the extent to which Local Councils are ‘appendages of the civil service’ – should become visible by looking in three areas: representation and accountability, access to and control over resources, and autonomy to negotiate.

In the first area, an analysis of the 1998 elections showed that the electorate had a choice of candidates: an average of four candidates competed for each position of chairperson and nearly three for each position of councillor. At Sub-county level, the average number of competitors per position was 2.5 (Saito, 2003: 59). The turnout for the 1998 local elections was about 55% (compared with a 73% turnout for the national elections of 1996) and in 2002 around 47% (compared with a 70% turnout for the national elections of 2001). Considering that globally the turnout for local election is on average half the turnout for national elections, Uganda’s local elections have a “relatively high” turnout (Kabuye, 2004: 5; Steiner, 2006: 7).³²⁶ These numbers by themselves clearly suggest that it is unlikely central government controls the candidates for the positions and that there is strong local interest in making a choice and that the elected council can lay claim to be representing the people in their electorate. Regarding the accountability of these local councils, Saito observes that less than about 90% of the incumbent chairpersons lost their bid for re-election, and concludes on that basis that “this is an area where accountability is put to work” (2003: 59).³²⁷ In the light of this thesis, it should be noted that the election patterns of local councils are quite similar to the election patterns of school committees and

³²⁶ Other research finds that in the 2002 local elections at least one person had voted in 80% of the households, which would suggest further legitimacy of the electoral process (Steiner, 2006: 7).

³²⁷ One local councillor succinctly expressed the dilemmas of upward and downward accountability when he said: “You are caught in between, so who do you serve first?” (quoted in: Saito, 2003: 60). In yet another historical continuity, Fallers referred to the same dilemma when he analysed the Native Authorities in the 1940s as “the predicament of the modern African chiefs” (1955: 290).

dispensary committees in that they show no evidence that a local elite has ‘captured’ these local institutions as permanent and personal fiefdoms.

In the second area – access to and control over resources – data suggests an increasing flow of resources from central government to Local Councils. Transfers from central government to local bodies increased sevenfold between 1993 and 1999 when Local Councils spent 22% of the total government budget, against an African average of 8%. When compared to OECD averages, Uganda’s local government’s spending of 4.0% of GDP is in the league with Australia (4.1%) and Greece (3.8%) (Steffensen and Trollegaard, 2000: 239-240).³²⁸ By 2003, the transfers to Local Councils had increased to 34% of central government’s budget (Mwenda and Tangri, 2005: 458).³²⁹ Staffing also shifted to Councils. The number of central government employees decreased over 20% (Flanary and Watt, 1999: 518) while the number of civil servants in Local Councils rose from 6,000 to 13,000 between in 2006 and the number teachers employed by Councils rose from 80,000 to 147,000 in 2004 (Okidi and Guloba, 2006: 8).³³⁰ However, while the budgets and staffing numbers increased, discretionary budgets of Councils dropped from 26% to 20% between 1999 and 2003 (Saito, 2003: 127), or, in another source, from 24% to 17% (Francis and James, 2003: 330).³³¹ In sum, Local Councils have managed to negotiate an increasing and a larger slice of central government’s revenue and staff. This is also a pattern that emerged from the field research into school and dispensary committees. Moreover, some Local Councils seem able to compensate for the reduction in discretionary spending by their increased autonomy to negotiate specific local conditions – the third area: autonomy to negotiate.

³²⁸ Although different sources present rather different absolute figures, proportions are quite similar (Francis and James, 2003: 330; Saito, 2003: 127).

³²⁹ Several analysts deplore the lack of control and accountability and the opening up of “greater opportunities for corruption” and “patronage” in local polities (Flanary and Watt, 1999; Mwenda and Tangri, 2005: 458), while others are more optimistic about local accountability mechanisms in Uganda (Dauda, 2006; Kjaer, 2004). Econometric calculations do not suggest local governments are more prone to elite capture and corruption than central governments: “the extent of elite capture at the local level may well turn out to be context- and system-specific” (Bardhan and Mookherjee, 2000: 139).

³³⁰ The decrease in central government employees and the increase in local government employees must have further reduced central government’s operational capability to monitor or control local polities.

³³¹ Considering the reduced staff numbers in central government and the limited options for local auditing (the figures for discretionary spending diverge from the start), the Local Councils will probably ‘get away’ with infringing on these limitations on discretionary spending – as do school and dispensary committees.

In this third area, there is evidence that the Local Councils' autonomy to negotiate specific local conditions has increased via two channels: local taxation and direct relationships with donor agencies. Local taxation includes personal income tax, market taxes, and local licenses as principal sources. Yet, an analysis of local revenues suggests that Local Councils vary markedly in total and in proportional tax revenues. Obviously, the total of revenues is determined by the wealth of a district's inhabitants. Poorer districts will simply collect less tax. However, there is also variety in the proportional revenues; comparable districts collect diverging percentages of their total tax revenues from similar sources (Livingstone and Charlton, 2001: 83). Moreover, market taxes across districts on an identical product may vary from 15% to 37% of the gross profit margin. All this suggests divergence in districts' capacities or choices to collect taxes (Bahiigwa et al., 2004: 9). A few districts have even decided to introduce unique local taxes, like a special education levy, or a head tax for squatters (Livingstone and Charlton, 1998: 503). Other districts are experimenting with contracting out tax collection to private firms (Iversen et al., 2006).

On top of maximising their autonomy in taxation by showing unique local agency in adapting and responding to local opportunities and constraints, Local Councils also expand their budgets by negotiating direct contracts with international donor agencies, bypassing central government. Comparative studies suggest that 'middle-income' districts managed to have bigger local discretionary budgets than 'high-income' districts because they managed to acquire special 'partnerships' with international donors (Saito, 2003: 137). Livingstone and Charlton's sample of 19 districts finds donor contributions to districts' budget for education, health or infrastructure range from 0% to 24% (2001: 83).³³² This suggests that Local Councils are not only developing personal networks outside and beyond central government – which may offer them information or a political lever over central government – but they are also able to use these networks to attract additional

³³² The study of Livingstone and Charlton is telling in its choice of perspective. As it points at the danger of exacerbating the inequalities among districts, it accuses international development agencies of a "cherry-picking approach" towards the local polities (2001: 98). In this perspective local polities are mere objects to be picked, rather than active agents who manoeuvre and use their personal networks to ensure that they are 'being picked' for a 'partnership'. In fact, if the actions of donors exacerbate the inequalities among local polities, isn't that a proof that local polities' capacities to jostle for preference on the basis of personal networks outwit donors' capacity to coordinate with each other and central government to ensure equitable development? Kasekende and Atingi-Ego lean to this perspective when they note: "There are districts that have managed to attract donor interest" (1999: 647).

resources and diversify their resource base.³³³ And some Local Councils are clearly better at this than others. Interestingly, the field research into school committees and dispensary committees found similar tendencies; these local management committees also showed patterns of diversity in the ways they raise resources and develop personal networks beyond their strictly sectoral contacts.

On balance, and from a local perspective, since local polities began using the new institutional framework with central government after 1995, they appear to have been able to negotiate an increase in local autonomy, and particularly the smaller local polities have successfully negotiated a large and increasing share of central government's resources.³³⁴ However, this success of local polities in influencing the flow of resources in the institutional framework with central government raises the question: "What is the resource that local polities have offered to central government in exchange?"

Earlier it has been noted that the institutional framework between central government and local polities developed because local polities possessed resources that were of interest to government. First, in the late 19th century, local polities offered soldiers and administrators, later cash crops, and in the decade before and after independence, 'the vote' became another critical local resource that was used by local polities as a lever in their negotiations with central government. Between the late 1960s and the mid 1980s, central governments could 'afford' to stop negotiating with local polities by resorting to violence and – increasingly – by relying on international aid as a resource. The Obote II central government of the 1980-1985 period could 'ignore' local polities' resources because it succeeded in obtaining 1.1 billion USD in aid. And while the Museveni central government came to power in 1986 based on political support or alliances with local polities, it also succeeded in obtaining more aid than ever before. Between 1986 and 1997

³³³ Moreover, whereas the larger local polities like Buganda have to manoeuvre carefully and create 'diplomatic disguises' when establishing international networks and attract international donor funding, the smaller local polities appear to be able to do the same without provoking a counter-reaction of central government. There are a number of obvious reasons for this – e.g. the larger local polities represent an imminent challenge to central government's authority – but it remains to be investigated whether the obvious reasons are all the reasons.

³³⁴ In a broader perspective, the new institutional framework is of course also used by local polities to negotiate with their inhabitants and international donor agencies. And, from yet another perspective, the new structures also offer the ruling local elites and any aspiring local elites an arena to negotiate dominance, co-optation or displacement. Uganda's decentralised public administration has become a veritable arena for negotiations.

it obtained nearly 7.2 billion USD in aid (Kasekende and Atingi-Ego, 1999: 625) and after 1997, aid climbed to an average of 800 million USD a year. Over the full period, international aid covered between 50-65% of central government's budget (Kasekende and Atingi-Ego, 1999: 619; Tangri and Mwenda, 2006: 122).

In addition, while aid became an essential part of central government's budget, the role of local polities' cash crops as a resource for government stagnated or decreased. After government ceased controlling the Marketing Boards in 1995, cash crop production did go up quickly, but it stagnated after a few years. Cotton production rose from 10,000 tonnes in 1995 to around 20,000 tonnes per year in 1996. Nevertheless, production remained more or less constant in the ensuing years. "The sector lags behind its full potential" (Baffes, 2009: 68). When government let go of its control over Coffee Marketing Boards, the number of peasants in coffee regions growing coffee rose from 22% to 38% within a year. However, that number has not changed since (Bussolo et al., 2007: 295). Legal coffee exports rose from a low 120,000 tonnes in 1986 to 220,000 tonnes in 1996. However, that number too stagnated. According to Belshaw and Lawrence, "In the present aid-dependent economy... no agency has an immediate interest in changing the status quo" (1999: 688). Clearly, local polities do not have cash crops as a lever in their negotiations over the flow of resources with central government.

Perhaps the answer to the question 'What is local polities' resource?' is still: the 'local vote'. The local vote may still be the resource that central government needs and that local polities use as a lever when negotiating with central government. However, in the context of a central government that is highly dependent on international aid, 'the local vote' of the 1990s and 2000s is a different vote – more complex – than the vote from the 1950s and 1960s. An analysis of the dynamics in the institutional framework between central government and local polities in the 1990s and early 2000s would suggest there are at least three forms in which 'the vote' is a resource that local polities use as a lever in their negotiations with central government, enabling government to obtain international aid.

First, 'the local vote' from ordinary people may offer the Museveni central government the political legitimacy it needs to obtain international aid. Uganda has been one of the "donor darlings" in the 1990s and early 2000s (e.g. Green, 2008: 1; Leliveld, 2006: 3). There are

probably a number of reasons for this, Museveni's personal network being one.^{335 336} But one of the most important reasons has been that the overall governance process of the Museveni government dovetailed with what was considered 'best practice' in international development discourse. "In many ways it amounted – well *avant la lettre* – to what the PRSP process is supposed to be" (Adam and Gunning, 2002: 2047). And evaluations of Uganda's policies until the mid 2000s continuously present Uganda as a leading example of "the new architecture of aid" (Stephen Lister et al., 2006: 1). However, because the Museveni central government vehemently opposed open multi-party elections, the government had a 'democratic deficit'. And it is in this context that 'the vote' in local politics probably has become a critical local resource that provides central government with the political legitimacy it needs, in spite of the fact Uganda has no multi-party elections. With a voter turnout in national elections in 1994 and 1996 (and 2001) over 70% and because Museveni was re-elected (and re-elected again) with 70% of those votes, many donors' reservations over the democratic deficit were dispelled (Kasfir, 2000: 60).

But 'the local vote' by ordinary people does more than offer political legitimacy by turning out at the polls in large numbers. The first principle of the dominant aid agenda in the 2000s is so-called "ownership"; donors seek proof that policy reforms are "country-driven with the broad participation of civil society and elected institutions" (IMF and World Bank, 1999: I.1; OECD-DAC, 2005: 3). This implies that local politics' visible participation in central government's policy-making processes becomes a requirement for donors' disbursement. And while donors may be willing to compromise on high standards of governance and due process, a central government that is merely "ticking boxes on consultation is deeply unhelpful" (Canagarajah and Van Diesen, 2006: 665). So as long as policy research and consultants can conclude that Uganda's "national budget is being

³³⁵ President Museveni has shown a remarkable talent "to hobnob with all sides on the political divide." His personal network includes as friends Libya's Muammar Qaddafi, as well as all British Prime Ministers from Margaret Thatcher to Tony Blair, but also Malaysia's Mahathir Mohammed as well as Fidel Castro, while the US calls Museveni its "closest ally in East Africa" (Oloka-Onyango, 2004: 36).

³³⁶ Arguably, international aid will continue to flow for some time to come, but some African central governments are clearly managing to obtain a bigger share than others. Aid continues to flow for systemic reasons as well as geo-political reasons. Systemic reasons include the 'Principal-Agent dilemma' (cf. Killock, 1996) and the 'Samaritan's dilemma' (cf. Schmidtchen, 1999), which lead some to conclude that "development assistance will continue, despite its problems" (Gibson et al., 2005: 224). Geo-political reasons include – next to naked 'influence buying' – a commitment by richer countries to spend a percentage of their wealth on aid, as well as a commitment to 'budget support' (Koeberle et al., 2006: 20) and a commitment to long term aid relations (World Bank, 1998: 6), which lead to what is called the "disbursement imperative" (Thomas, 2004: 494).

greatly influenced by the views of the local people” (Onyach-Olaa, 2003: 112), the ‘local vote’ is the resource that central government needs for its political legitimacy.

Second, ‘the local vote’ in local polities can also provide central government with policy credibility in the eyes of donors, if that local vote comes from local civil servants and elected councillors responsible for the now decentralised delivery of public services. Donors will only continue to provide central government with budget support if local actors meet precisely defined performance indicators for the delivery of health and education services. The joint donor evaluation of budget support to Uganda in over the 1994-2004 period had among its principal conclusions that “General Budget Support funding has accelerated increases in the quantity of basic services delivered by local governments, from which the poor have undoubtedly benefited” (Stephen Lister et al., 2006: s7). As a corollary, it was recommended that budget support be continued. Local polities’ efforts in public service delivery have ensured a continued flow of budget support for central government, in spite of donors’ increasing alarm over various actions by central government.³³⁷

The third ‘local vote’ in local polities that may enable – or disable – central government from obtaining international aid comes from local NGOs. A 2005 survey suggests that on average there are 15 local NGOs operating in each district.³³⁸ Most are connected with international networks and ‘advocacy’ is often one of their core objectives (Barr et al., 2005: 662). These NGOs are integrated in international networks and will be well informed about the most recent expectations or concerns of donors regarding central government. Moreover, the information or image they transmit about central government’s policies or practices carries weight in London, Washington and Brussels. Government may not necessarily need this local vote to be on its side, but it definitely does not need these votes to advocate against it (Sarah Lister and Nyamugasira, 2003: 103). “Although the activities of a single NGO may not significantly undermine the government, every NGO is part of a system which may do so” (Cannon, 1996: 265). If these NGO networks ‘vote’ against or in

³³⁷ In 2005, the US called “Uganda, an African success story turning sour” (USAID, 2005: v) and most donors have had periods in which they temporarily suspended or reduced budget support referring to central government corruption, military involvement in the DRC or human rights abuse (DFID, 2005; DGIS, 2005; Tangri and Mwenda, 2006: 121).

³³⁸ I.e. these NGOs are established by individuals from the local polity – as opposed to local branches of national or international NGOs.

favour of the Museveni central government in London or Washington, their impact on the government's international position will be similar to that of the missionary networks speaking out in London against the colonial central government in 1910, or the joint delegation of Acholi, Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole chiefs who travelled to London complaining about the colonial governor exiling the Baganda King in 1953.

Arguably – and as a final thought in this chapter – ‘the vote’ as the local resource has quite some similarities with the other local resources that have underpinned the development of earlier institutional frameworks between central government and local polities. Like ivory and like coffee, the vote is a commodity that has no value *per se* within the local polity. And like ivory and coffee, the vote is a commodity that has a high value on the international market. From a local perspective, the current central government can be compared with the early Arab traders, the colonial central government and the early independent central government: the middleman between local polities and the international community. Local polities' current success in negotiating the flow of resources with central government may well hinge on their ability to maintain personal and formal contacts with both central government *and* the international community.

Conclusions

Uganda's current central government came to power in 1986 after waging a guerrilla war against a central government. Unlike that preceding central government – which had come to power on the back of an invasion by a neighbouring country – the current central government not only acquired power from within the country, but it also did so by relying on agreements and a network of consultative structures with a range of different local polities – including Buganda as the largest one. Against this backdrop, five conclusions can be drawn about the development of the institutional framework between the current central government and local polities in the 1986-2005 period.

First, central government began its rule with a long, systematic and sustained discussion with hundreds of local polities about a Constitution over nearly eight years, using and expanding a network of ‘Resistance Councils’ as a key structure. Existing political structures and political parties – or the remnants of it – were deliberately not used. This consultative process not only provided the central government with broad political

legitimacy, but also built and tested the structures of the emerging new institutional framework between central government and local polities, and it offered local elites a platform to start talking and negotiating with central government – for the first time in a generation.

Second, central government developed two different strategies to negotiate with local polities; one for the four major local polities – the former ‘Agreement Countries’ – and one for the dozens of smaller local polities. Negotiations with the larger polities started with a formal re-instatement of their legal existence. After that, however, central government and local polities had protracted and continuing acrimonious negotiations in which the larger polities pushed for ever-increasing autonomy and a federal model of governance against a reluctant central government. The long-standing personal networks and regular crossovers between elites on all sides of these negotiations probably helped in keeping negotiations peaceful. Negotiations between central government and the smaller polities – on the other hand – led to a rather smooth conversion of the Resistance Councils into a decentralised local government structure of Local Councils. By most accounts, these councils were largely controlled by local polities, rather than being ‘appendages’ of central government into local polity.

Third, in the overall balance within the institutional framework defined as ‘decentralised governance’ between central government and local polities, government endeavoured to play off larger polities’ drive for autonomy against smaller polities’ concern for domination by the larger polities. In the process, the larger polities obtained less control over resources than they demanded and the smaller polities probably got more control over, and access to, resources than they had dared bargain for. By the early 2000s, local polities controlled most of their local resources – cash crops, staff, local taxes – and saw about one-third of central government’s budget flow towards them. This leads to the last two points.

Uganda’s current central government has been one of Africa’s most successful negotiators in the international arena and succeeded in obtaining more than half of its annual budget as international aid from donor agencies. Central government certainly did not get this aid for its warring interventions in neighbouring countries, nor for its record regarding the media,

its 'no-party' elections, or its repression of gays and lesbians. No, one of the main reasons why central government managed to attract billions of dollars in aid was because its policies towards local polities were exactly what donor agencies wanted to support.

However – and this is the second and last point – central government's dependency on international aid rested on the institutional framework with local polities. This handed local polities a new local resource: the local vote. This is not just the one-off local vote in elections that was already a local resource around independence providing political legitimacy to central government. Today's local vote also includes the more continuous vote of local councillors, local civil servants and local NGOs that provides central government with the policy credibility and reputational support in international personal networks that keeps international aid flowing towards government.

5.8 Conclusions

This fifth chapter has analysed from a local perspective the historical context to the findings from the field research presented in the fourth chapter, and it addressed the second research question of this thesis: “How have central government and local polities in Uganda been developing their institutional framework over time and from local polities' perspective?”

Overall, the analyses suggest that throughout time, the development of an institutional framework between various central governments and local polities has primarily been driven by the exchange of resources between the two parties. In most cases, elites in local polities developed or strengthened their domestic dominance by controlling or monopolising the local aspects of the institutional framework in which this exchange of resources with central government took place.

In the course of time, the character of the most important resources flowing from local polities to central government has varied; from ivory in the 19th century, to coffee and cotton in the first half of the 20th century and votes in the later half. The principal material resource flowing from central government to local polities in exchange for these local resources has mostly been finance. In the earlier periods, central government obtained these finances by selling the local resources on the international market. In the most recent

periods – when local votes became a resource – central government obtained much of the finance in the form of international aid. As the character of the local resource changed, so did the character of the institutional framework between local polities and central government.

Looking at the second research question, it is important to note that the historical analyses of the institutional framework suggest that at different points in time, local polities have dominated formulating or operating the institutional framework. At other points in time, however, central government has been the dominant actor in shaping the institutional framework with local polities. Generally, a shift in position in this seesaw correlates with a change in the character of the local resource coveted by central government. The latter half of the 20th century has also seen periods in which central government secured finances from international sources without actually needing the local votes. In these circumstances central government hardly had a motive to maintain the institutional framework with local polities and local polities tended to withdraw from interaction with government or had no means to force government to negotiate with them, leaving the nation-state as an ‘institutionless arena’ (Lonsdale, 1981: 205).

Finally, the findings from this fifth chapter also suggest that the institutional framework and the personal networks between central government and local polities tend to grow denser and probably therefore more complex as time goes on. In recent years, for example, the negotiations over the institutional framework between central government and the larger local polities have diverged from the negotiations over the institutional framework with the smaller local polities. Arguably, smaller local polities, larger local polities and central government appear to be currently engaged in complex negotiations and continuously shifting alliances, using different forms of ‘the local vote’ as a key resource. The next, and last, chapter brings together the conclusions from the field research and the historical analyses, before considering the potential implications and opportunities for contemporary development programmes, which was the ultimate purpose of this thesis.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions from this thesis start with a brief review of the two opening chapters of the literature review and the key concepts and methods that guided the research. This contextualises the conclusions from the two core chapters of this thesis. First, eight specific conclusions will be presented from the core chapter on the field research with local school and dispensary committees in Uganda and Tanzania in 2004. These specific conclusions address not only the question of how central government and local management committees develop their institutional framework, but also take a closer look at two important dynamics underpinning that institutional framework: the flow of resources and personal networks. The specific conclusions from the other core chapter result from a reading of historical records to investigate how the institutional framework between central government and local polities – in which the contemporary school and dispensary committees operate – has developed over time and from a local perspective. Again, eight specific conclusions emerge from this historical and localised analysis and each of these conclusions is connected to the preceding conclusions from the research in the contemporary institutional framework. The end of this chapter discusses the opportunities that emerge from this thesis for development programmes in decentralisation and capacity building of local organisations.

6.1 Literature review, concepts and methods

The literature review in chapter 2 revolved around the three schools of thought about governance in Africa in general and in particular decentralisation as a strategy to improve governance. Two of these schools of thought are predominantly embraced by international donor agencies. A first school of thought emphasises that decentralisation of the control over resources will improve the delivery of public services like education and health because it brings actors in the supply side and actors in the demand side closer to each other. This market-oriented thinking essentially argues decentralised public service delivery is a more efficient and responsive form of service delivery.

A second school of thought takes a different point of departure to advocate decentralised public services. In this line of thinking a decentralised public administration will deliver education and health services as part of a more democratic and accountable political

process about the use of resources. Decentralised public services, including school committees and dispensary committees, will contribute to the empowerment of the people using these services. Though coming from two different angles, the review concludes these two schools of thought seem to have found each other in a marriage of convenience in contemporary aid policies because they both advocate that central governments in Africa move towards decentralisation and decentralised public services.

The third school of thought about governance in Africa, including the debate about decentralisation, remains more confined to academia. It revolves around concepts like neopatrimonialism and elite capture. It argues that actual governance processes and decisions about resource allocation in Africa are – for a number of reasons – more determined by informal personal networks of patrons and clients than by the formal structures of the public administration. From this perspective, it is not certain that decentralisation and decentralised control over the resources for education and health services will lead to better or more services because local elites will try to capture this control over resources primarily to sustain and expand their political basis – rather than sustaining or expanding public services.

Chapter 3 consisted of two sections: methods and concepts. The section about methods reflected on some of the methodological issues related to the research in this thesis. At one level this related to epistemological issues. It is particularly important to acknowledge that ‘reality’ and ‘history’ are socially constructed and contested concepts when a part of the research for this thesis included studying historical records and ‘reading between the lines’ or ‘reading against the grain’ to get an understanding of the informal personal networks and the perspective that actors in local polities – who did not leave much of a written record – may have had. At another, more practical, level the second section explained how mainstream tools were used in the field research such as closed questionnaires, as well tools taken from participatory research such as Venn diagrams and pairwise ranking. These qualitative research instruments were used to minimise researcher-bias and yet data was collected in a way that enabled partial quantitative processing afterwards. The second section also presented the details of three key concepts that underpin much of the work and thinking in this thesis: institutional framework, local polity, resources, and personal networks.

Chapter 3 included an overview of all data sources. The field research revolved mostly around 64 rather structured group interviews with school and dispensary management committees in Uganda and Tanzania and the individual questionnaires filled out by the 420 participating committee members. In addition, the field research perused local archives in, particularly, Uganda. The focus of the field research was to seek breadth and generalisable information and insights, acknowledging this may come at the expense of depth and detail. Part of that qualitative loss in the field research was compensated by the rather open interviews with 43 local government and local aid officials and the analyses of minutes and correspondence around the local management committees. However, the most important compensation came with the decision after the field research that the findings from the field needed to be contextualised by ‘re-reading’ with a local perspective the history of the relations between central government and the local polities in which these management committees operated.

6.2 Contemporary central government and local management committees

Chapter 4 is the first of the two core chapters of the thesis and presented the findings from the field research, addressing the following specific question:

How are central government and local management committees in Uganda and Tanzania developing the institutional framework for the decentralised management of schools and dispensaries?

Mindful of the literature review that hinted at the importance of the flow of resources and personal networks, the field research reaches eight conclusions in three areas: the general institutional framework between central government and local management committees, the flow of resources and related processes of accountability, and thirdly conclusions regarding personal networks and elite capture surrounding school and dispensaries committees.

Institutional framework of central government and local management committees

Three conclusions about the institutional framework between central government and local polity emerge from the field research. A first conclusion is that central government may

appear to have principal agency, but it may often actually be responding to developments in local polities, rather than shaping the institutional framework.

An initial look at contemporary decentralised management of schools and dispensaries in Uganda and Tanzania would suggest that it is central government – and not local polities – that initiates and formulates the formal institutional framework between central government and the local management committees. Uganda’s central government decentralised its public administration with a Local Government Act in 1997 and local elections in 1998 and the radical changes to the responsibilities and resources of school and dispensary committees coincided with these decentralisation policies. Tanzania introduced similar changes in 2000 with a Local Government Reform Programme and changes to the roles and resources of dispensary and school committees followed in 2001 and 2002. However, a closer look at the trajectory of the formal institutional framework of each committee reveals noticeable differences between the two countries and between the sectors of education and health.

Most of these differences can be traced back to the particular history of these committees or the relations between central government and local polities. For example, in Uganda a central government was re-emerging after a civil war and found schools had been kept running largely by local actors. Arguably, the decentralisation policies of the late 1990s in both countries and the new regulations for local management committees were less driven by motives of a more efficient delivery of public services or empowering local actors, and more, or also, by central government’s determination to respond to particular developments in local polities. The importance of the dynamics between local polities and central government – and conversely the apparent unimportance of global donor discourse and policy recommendations – is also visible in the fact that while Uganda’s central government obtained international donor funds to pay for the abolishment of user fees in 2001, international donor agencies promoted the introduction of user fees to be collected by newly established dispensary committees in Tanzania from 2001.

A second conclusion from the field research is that central government’s regulations seem to create the formal space for school and dispensary committees to emerge or operate in local polities, but how these committees actually emerge and operate varies so much from

one local polity to another, that uniquely local dynamics are more likely to be determinants than central government's regulations.

Central governments undertake significant efforts to make sure key actors in the local polities are well informed about the new formal space and regulations. Special training programmes for members of school and dispensary committees were rolled out across both nations between 1999 and 2003, at considerable costs. However, in spite of this centrally directed and uniform manner in which these local management committees were instructed, the field research found the selection or election processes that saw these committees actually emerge varied widely – often not quite abiding by the letter or spirit of the regulations which underscore central government authority rather than local autonomy. Moreover, in their actual operations the committees developed their own, local, patterns that varied from one locality to another and they could openly or covertly deviate from central government's regulations. One indicator of local committees operating by local dynamics rather than government instruction could be that women make up one third of all committees, even though only dispensary committees have regulations demanding that quota for women.

Analyses of the operations of management committees in terms of meeting frequency, agenda items, successes and problems also show significant local diversity – suggesting they are driven by choice and local dynamics rather than compliance – although school committees in both countries cluster around a comparable patterns, as do dispensary committees. For example, school and dispensary committees both find most of their efforts revolving around operational issues, but they differ markedly when it comes to the next biggest issue on their agenda. School committees spend far more time communicating with the community and non-state actors than dispensary committees, who focus on communicating with government bodies. This pattern correlates with a pattern that sees members of school committees in both countries overwhelmingly state that they feel nominated by parents or the community, whereas majorities of members in dispensary committees feel nominated by local government. It seems that management committees orient themselves towards the agents that have appointed them – not so much in formal regulation, but rather in actual local fact.

The third conclusion about the institutional framework is that while dispensary committees were the product of decentralisation policies in the 1990s, school committees have a long and ever-changing, seesaw, relationship with central government that goes back to the 1950s in which both parties had periods of dominating the institutional framework.

Uganda's school committees emerged with late colonial decentralisation policies when District Councils established Education Committees to co-fund and co-manage mission schools. By the late 1960s, the independent central government moved to take full ownership of school and marginalised local actors in school committees. Yet, these local actors resumed financial and managerial control in schools when central government disappeared from the education sector during the civil war of the 1970s and 1980s. With peace and decentralisation in the 1990s, central government resumed funding to school committees, while regulating the committees' formal accountability to government. By and large, Tanzania's school committees had a similar seesaw trajectory. Between the mid 1940s and late 1960s, actors in local polities – either as Native Authorities, District Councils, or parental organisations – had a leading role in the establishment and management of schools. However, by the early 1970s, strong centralisation policies effectively turned school committees into arms of government. School committees gradually ceased to operate or be effective. However, the seesaw tilted again in 2002 when school committees were given significant funding and autonomy.

Control and accountability over the flow of resources

Two conclusions stand out about the flow of resources around school and dispensary committees and the accompanying processes of control and accountability. First, central government formally controls the appointment of each individual member in three of the four types of committees as well as the number of members who can represent certain stakeholders, such as parents.³³⁹ It could be presumed that central government thus seeks to exert control over committees via its 'appointees'. In practice, however, groups in the local polity (parents, churches, village councils) control who gets appointed as well as the numbers of representatives of local stakeholders. In addition, the field research also finds

³³⁹ Central government does not appoint individual members of Tanzania's school committees, although it does regulate how many representatives of various local stakeholders can be on the school committee.

that the control central government exerts via its other ‘appointee’ to the committee – the head teacher or the nurse in-charge – is minimal.

School and dispensary committees operate differently in determining who gets appointed to a committee. The incumbent school committees and parents determine a list of candidates in a number of locally varying ways – usually involving an electoral process. In electing candidates, the school committees openly or covertly ignore regulations with regard to numbers and representation of local stakeholders and central government only marginally ‘vets’ this list before formally appointing the candidates. Candidates for dispensary committees go through a ‘vetting’ process via one or more local government bodies. Rather than an election process, the candidates for a dispensary committee go through a selection or application process. School committee members clearly feel ‘nominated’ by parents, while the members of dispensary committees mostly feel ‘nominated’ by the local government body.

The second conclusion relates to the processes of accountability over the resources; the management committees do not necessarily or exclusively orient themselves towards the provider of the resources, but can also decide to show accountability towards the actors they feel that have ‘nominated’ them in the committee.

Analyses of the ‘acts of accountability’ by management committees reveal two patterns. First, virtually all dispensary committees direct more than three quarters of their acts of accountability to government agents, but only a minority of the school committees do. This correlates with the earlier finding that most dispensary committee members feel they were nominated by local government, while most school committee members feel nominated by parents or the community; accountability appears to flow towards the nominating party, not the provider of resources. The second pattern is that school committees in both countries make uniquely local decisions in directing their act of accountability; some direct most to the local community, some direct most to government, other divide their attention equally. As there is no district specific pattern, the role of the district education authorities can be ruled out and strong local agency is the most likely determinant.

Personal networks and elite capture

With regard to personal networks and elite capture, the findings from the field research allow three conclusions. First, analyses of the personal profiles of local management committee members show distinct patterns suggesting committee membership is mostly determined by country specific conditions – or conditions specific to the local polities – not by government regulations or sector-specific conditions.

For example, a clear majority of members of school and dispensary committees in Tanzania have completed primary education, whereas the members of school and dispensary committees in Uganda have more widely spread educational profiles. Similarly, a majority of members of school and dispensary committees in Tanzania are farmers, while the professional profiles of Uganda's committee members are more diverse. This suggests that the same stratum of actors in a local polity ends up as members of management committees – irrespective of central government regulations or different selection procedures for schools and dispensary committees.

The second conclusion from the field research is that local management committees are clearly embedded into wider formal and personal networks.

Nevertheless, an analysis of the formal contacts of management committees reveals that the average school committee has more direct formal connections to other bodies than the average dispensary committee. School committees also had more knowledge of wider institutional networks because they were able to list more indirect formal contacts – i.e. they know with who their direct formal contacts are in contact. Moreover, school committees had more contacts at higher levels. Some management committees, but particularly school committees, reveal wide diversity in these contacts; their connections with MPs, NGOs, or government departments outside their own sector underscore their agency as they are not limiting themselves to contacts prescribed by central government's regulations. When it comes to personal networks, members of school and dispensary committees are in more or less equal measure connected to other bodies via personal

networks. About 82% of committee members indicated they are also members of other local boards, committees or councils.³⁴⁰

Moving from the topic of personal networks towards the topic of elite capture, there is relevance in mentioning the phenomenon of a ‘patron’ or *mlezi* for school committees in Tanzania. Formal regulations suggest a school committee include a patron. Of the 27 school committees interviewed, 22 listed a patron and most had gone to great lengths to find one that was willing to be enlisted. All patrons had some ‘personal’ connection – having grown up or worked around the school – and about half now lived in the district capital or Dar es Salaam. Yet, in spite of the high investments in time to enlist a patron, most committees are quite disappointed in the material or advisory contributions of their patrons. In fact, patrons only feature in less than half of the 22 school committees’ Venn diagrams and consistently as a player of minor importance. Apparently, Tanzania’s school committees really try to capture members of the elite at a higher echelon – a case of ‘inverted’ elite capture – but they are generally not satisfied with the results, nor do the elites at the higher echelons seem interested to take up on the easy opportunity to capture a local school committee.

The third conclusion broaches the question of elite capture from three angles. First, can committee members be profiled as the local elite? Tanzania’s committee members describe themselves in large majority as “about average” when comparing themselves economically with other villagers. Uganda’s committee members, again, have a more widely spread self-assessment, but the largest cluster defines itself as “a bit above average”. Another indicator to suggest committee members constitute the local elite lies in the fact that clear majorities (58-74%) of all members report feelings of general prosperity, indicating that over the preceding two years their households’ positions had become “a bit better”. Though the evidence is thin, it could be assumed that committee members represent the local elite. A second angle to the question of elite capture would then be whether committee members actually captured the committees; do they turn a public body into their permanent personal fiefdom? The answer is no. An analysis of members’ terms in office suggests that majorities limit their terms in office to one or two terms.

³⁴⁰ The 82% is the average over all committees in both countries; specific data per committee and per country range from 74-91%.

However, a third angle to the question of elite capture provides perhaps the most revealing finding. As indicated earlier, about 82% of committee members also held seats in other local boards, committees or councils. When these members were asked how many other positions they held, many said they held three or four other positions; leading to the conclusion that of all school and dispensary committee members about 54% (228 of the 420 interviewed committee members) hold three or four positions simultaneously in public bodies in the local polity. An 8% of committee members even held seven or more positions. As there are only a limited number of public bodies in a given local polity – committee members listed 17 different types of organisations – it can be concluded that it is likely that a group of a few dozen individuals in a local polity have indeed captured control over local public bodies. However, their limited office tenure in schools and dispensary committees suggests they do so in a rotational fashion; these few dozen individuals move over the available positions as if they were musical chairs. And as most of these local public bodies have electoral processes, it can also be argued that these few dozen people are subject to varying formal and informal accountability mechanisms because the music is played – and stopped – by the constituencies of these local bodies.

Moving from specific and contemporary to context and history

The above eight specific conclusions describe school and dispensary committees in 2004, with three general tendencies. First, central government may create the formal institutional framework for its relations with local polities, but local actors determine actual operations of local bodies and short of disestablishing committees or cutting funding, central government's ability to manage or influence local operations is minimal. Second, the extent to which either central government or local actors tend to control or dominate the institutional framework and the flow of resources between them, appears to vary in time – in a seesaw fashion. And third, it appears that there is a small group of local actors within a local polity who control – in a rotational fashion – all local public bodies such as school and dispensary committees.

In the light of these specific and contemporary tendencies, a fuller understanding of the dynamics that influence contemporary policies for the decentralised management of education and health services – the overall purpose of this thesis – was acquired by a

further study of the wider and the historical relations between local polities and central governments.

6.3 Historical context of central government and local polities in Uganda

Chapter 5 is the second of the two core chapters of the thesis. It applied the research question for contemporary management committees to a wider and historical perspective. In view of the conclusion from the field research that local actors have significant agency in shaping the contemporary institutional framework for the education and health sectors, the research also endeavoured to include local polities' perspective:

How have central government and local polities in Uganda been developing their institutional framework over time and from local polities' perspective? ³⁴¹

To answer this research question, primary and secondary historical documents were studied – with an awareness of the interpretative caveats outlined in the methodological consideration of chapter 3. The findings suggest eight conclusions in the areas of the institutional framework, the flow of resources and the personal networks.

Institutional framework of central government and local polities

Reading the development of the institutional framework between central government and local polities with a historical perspective leads to three conclusions. The first conclusion is that throughout history, local polities have shown active agency – in degrees that varied per polity and in the course of time – in shaping an institutional framework with exogenous actors, be they Arab ivory traders in the 1870s or a rebel movement aspiring to become central government in the 1980s.

For example, in the latter half of the 19th century a few of the local polities were trading actively via long-distance trade. Some local polities regulated this trade – as an exchange of resources – in an increasingly formalised framework of licenses, taxes, correspondence

³⁴¹ This thesis' chapter 5 presents findings with regard to Uganda. A similar analysis was made of the development of the institutional framework between central government and local polities in Tanzania, which has not be included in this thesis (see footnote 1).

and contracts. In the early 20th century local polities with a 'proto-bureaucracy' negotiated separate and formal treaties with British representatives in order to gain advantage over neighbouring polities, but in the process established the basis for a central government. The scope for agency of local polities to formally negotiate aspects in the institutional framework with central government gradually diminished after the 1920s. However, local agency re-emerged in the 1950s when elected District Councils and the 'old kingdoms' regained formal statuses as they negotiated first with the exiting colonial central government and later with the new central government that needed their support to gain legitimacy. By the late 1960s, the seesaw tilted again, as central government began to refuse to negotiate with local polities and in the ensuing civil conflict of the 1970s and 1980s most of the nation's institutional framework collapsed. When one of the rebel movements gradually emerged as the main contender for central government in the later 1980s, some local polities negotiated new degrees of local autonomy, others gained discretionary powers in District Councils with decentralisation policies in the 1990s.

A second conclusion is that even in periods when central government dominated the formal institutional framework, it still relied on local elites to operate the local institutions and local elites generally succeeded in operating these institutions to their benefit or responding to uniquely local dynamics rather than central government regulations or supervision.

For example, central government control over the formal institutional framework appeared strong in the 1920s and 1930s when it bureaucratized in increasingly detailed rules how the so-called Native Authorities should manage local administration. However, in practice most ruling elites in local polities operated or developed the institutions in their own ways. A 1926 despairing official report is illustrative: "The law at present administered by the native courts is a confused mixture of native laws and tribal customs ... tempered by British ideas" (Morris, 1967: 168). Moreover, local polities' drive to operate local institutions as they thought fit was facilitated by the fact that the District Commissioners as central government's representatives in the local polities generally lacked means, interests and skills to ensure the Native Authorities conformed to the regulations. The bureaucratic regulations had given local elites more executive, judicial and legislative power than ever before without any effective supervision or accountability mechanisms.

A third conclusion regarding the historical development of the institutional framework between central government and local polities emerges from the previous two: the balance of power in the institutional framework seesaws. Throughout time, central governments and local polities take turns in having a dominant position in the institutional framework.

When the first central government presented itself to local polities at the beginning of the 20th century, each of the most powerful polities negotiated a detailed ‘agreement’. These agreements were not only the formal institutional frameworks with central government, but also secured the ruling elites’ domestic dominance and a net flow of resources from central government. Moreover, the strongest local polity – Buganda – used its agreement with central government as an instrument to dominate most other local polities. However, while most local polities managed to dislodge Baganda rulers in the 1920s, the local polities lost much of the control over the institutional framework with central government in the ensuing period until the late 1940s when the colonial central government dominated and bureaucratised the institutional framework. Yet, in the decade preceding and following independence in 1962, local polities regained an upper hand in the negotiations with the departing colonial and the arriving independent central government. Virtually all of this was lost when successive central governments destroyed much of the institutional framework with local polities in the civil war of the 1970s and early 1980s. When yet another aspiring central government emerged in the later 1980s, it could only displace the preceding central government by reaching agreements with local polities. Since the mid 1990s, a decentralised public administration became the principle of Uganda’s public administration, giving local polities decisive control over most local affairs and securing a net flow of resources towards local polities.

*Control over the flow of resources*³⁴²

Reading historical documents with an eye for the flow of resources between central government and local polities, led to two principal conclusions. First, the type of resources flowing from local polities to central government varies in time and, more importantly, these resources have limited or no intrinsic value within the local polity. In the other

³⁴² The readily available historical records are generally not detailed enough to build an understanding of accountability procedures and practices regarding the flow of resources in the course of time.

direction, the principal resource flowing from central government to local polities throughout time has generally been cash.

In the 19th century the principal local resource was ivory; a tooth of no value within the local polities, but as the then equivalent of plastics in Europe it was paid for in cash. Between the 1920s and the 1940s, crops like coffee and cotton that had no local value flowed to central government in exchange for cash.³⁴³ Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, central governments were willing to see money flow to, or remain in, local polities in exchange for votes flowing to the centre. During the civil war of the 1970s and 1980s there was little exchange between central government and local polities. However, throughout the 1990s and 2000s, cash flowed again to local polities in exchange for votes that secured the re-election of central government. Local polities received grants in decentralisation programmes and voters got to keep their money with the abolishment of school fees in 1997, health fees in 2001, and most personal taxes in 2006. From a local polities' perspective, it did not matter that international donors provided nearly half the cash to central government.

The second conclusion is that as the character of the resource flowing from local polity to central government changes, so do the formal structures and principal local actors in the institutional framework between central government and local polities.

This is illustrated, for example, in the early 20th century, when agreements between the Baganda polity and central government placed Baganda representatives in the form of soldiers and administrators at the centre of the institutional framework between most local polities and central government. However, two decades later local elites proved more successful in delivering a flow of coffee and cotton and central government removed the Baganda while changing the institutional framework into Native Administrations that allowed discretionary powers to local elites. When central government coveted the votes in local polities in the 1950s and 1960s, the institutional framework was changed into one where elected District Councils replaced the Native Administrations and local politicians were placed in charge of the local institutions if they could deliver the votes, as central

³⁴³ Obviously, the local resource of labour had to be applied to produce the coffee and cotton, but most families engaged voluntarily in coffee growing as the most rewarding labour investment.

government wanted them. A similar dynamic re-emerged in the 1990s when central government introduced far-reaching decentralisation policies after the civil war. Again ‘the vote’ became the critical local resource that central government needed from local polity. This time, however, ‘the vote’ was a more complex and continuous resource – comprising the votes of villagers, locally employed civil servants, locally elected councillors and local NGOs – that is used as a complex and ‘composite’ resource in negotiations between local polities and central government.³⁴⁴

Personal networks

With regard to the development of personal networks surrounding the institutional framework between central government and local polities, the reading of historical records is obviously fraught with caveats because these personal contacts are generally not documented, sometimes even hidden. Nevertheless, three conclusions emerge. A first conclusion is that a dominant elite in a local polity endeavours to monopolise or control the personal networks around the institutional framework with central government.

Buganda’s ruling elite in the 19th century, for example, demanded foreign representatives take up residence in designated locations near the palace. Later, the alliance between Baganda and central government not only saw Baganda officials controlling the administration in many local polities, but also an institutional framework in which central government was primarily informed via Baganda intermediaries. It left the British central government looking down on other local polities and reporting the Baganda as “the most progressive people” (Fallers, 1961: 678). As local elites displaced the Baganda officials and became the Native Authorities in the 1930s, they controlled all executive, judiciary and administrative institutions and few dared complain about the Native Authorities to central government. In the 1950s and 1960s, the personal network between local politicians and national parties became the principal source of information for central government. Later, in the 1980s when a victorious rebel army assumed the role of central government, it relied heavily on its own personal networks via a pyramid of local ‘resistance councils’ to

³⁴⁴ In recent work, Chabal also underscores the importance that ‘the vote’ has acquired as a resource that can be exchanged. However, he emphasises the exchange of the vote in informal personal networks: “Ordinary people ... have realised that their votes are now more valuable in that they can negotiate their ballot for economic benefits” (Chabal, 2009: 141).

be informed about local polities. Members of these local councils, in turn, often ended in the front seats when these councils eventually were transformed into the similar pyramid of local government structures.

A second conclusion is that, with time, the density of these personal networks between central government and local polities increased and domestic competitors to the ruling local elites began to develop personal networks with central government officials or other exogenous actors to challenge ruling local elites.

As the number of central government representatives in local polities increased in the 1920s, these representatives inevitably developed personal networks with local elites who were ruled by Baganda agents. Gradually central government changed its opinion of Baganda. By now central government began accusing the Baganda – who had hitherto been labelled as ‘the most progressive people’ – of exhibiting “brutal and predatory behaviour” in the local polities they ruled (Gartrell, 1983: 4). Later, Buganda elites sent their children to Protestant mission schools, because this is where they could network with the children of the central government representatives; elites in other local polities sent their children to Catholic schools, precisely because these were part of a personal network of opposition to Buganda-British rule. In the 1950s, ruling elites in local polities maintained direct personal contacts in Britain and sent official delegations to London to complain – successfully – about the colonial central government. In the 1990s, hundreds of small NGOs had emerged in local polities and they were directly integrated in a global network of NGOs.

A third conclusion is that the personal networks between central government representatives and local actors are quite likely conduits for a lopsided exchange of information; local actors – both ruling local elites and local competitors – tend to have broader personal networks branching out and therefore better levels of information about central government than vice versa.

For example, when missionaries appeared in Uganda’s local polities in the 19th century, the ruling local elites staged public ‘debating matches’ between these missionaries, which must have provided entertaining information to the local elites and left the missionaries

none the wiser. In the colonial period, central government officials in the local polities rotated regularly and few of them learned local languages. This offered local elites ample opportunity to obtain diverse views, but central government learned little about local polities. In the 1940s, local leaders of coffee cooperatives merged into a national network and travelled to meet and hold discussions. Others had a mission education and used ‘old boys’ networks for exchanging information. In the 1950s, representatives from local polities seeking to become nationalist leaders travelled to London and New York to talk with officials, politicians, trade unions and they developed close personal networks with other aspiring nationalists in East Africa. This left these representatives from local polities better informed about the colonial central government and the pressures it was under than the government was informed about them. In the 1990s and 2000s, several District Councils developed formal and informal contacts with NGOs and international aid agencies. Again, this left these Councils better informed about the pressures on the central government than the government was about Councils.

Moving from history to the contemporary

The above conclusions about the historical dynamics in the relationship between central government and local polities suggest that various actors in local polities have had important and diverging agency in shaping the institutional framework and that the character of the principal resource that is being exchanged has influenced the form of the institutional framework. As a consequence, the overall balance of power between central government and local polities seesaws throughout history. Contemporary development policies – especially policies around the decentralisation of the public administration – could gain in effectiveness and local relevance if they included attention to agency in local polities, the character of resource exchange, and the momentum of change in today’s institutional framework. In fact, some donor agencies such as DFID, NORAD, SIDA and DGIS have been doing precisely this when they started to develop new analytical models in 2004 that explicitly include historical and local perspectives on governance such as the ‘Drivers-of-Change’ model (Dahl-Ostergaard et al., 2005; DFID, 2004; DGIS, 2006).³⁴⁵

³⁴⁵ Arguably, there may be a historical continuity between this Drivers-of-Change approach and the instruction issued by the Governor to Tanzania’s District Officers in 1926 to “study ... the institutions of the peoples under their charge, in order that the true native authorities might be found” (quoted in: Perham, 1931: 303). This led to the production of many in-depth studies of local polities. It also led quite a few former

6.4 Three opportunities for aid agencies

When I began the research for this thesis, I wanted to understand how factors associated with decentralisation policies influence the expanding responsibilities and operations of school and dispensary committees in Uganda and Tanzania. Professionally, I was probably a child of the marriage of convenience between the two schools of thought that advocated decentralisation and decentralised management of schools and dispensaries because this would empower citizens as well as deliver better services by closer, more efficient, interaction between supply and demand. Looking at the conclusions of this thesis, I now believe these two schools of thought lack an eye for the informal dynamic of personal networks and the tug-of-war over the flow of resources behind the façade of formal regulations, as well as an awareness of the historical context in which that seesawing tug-of-war takes place.

I am now more inclined to turn to the third school of thought. However, a few conclusions from my research do not sit well with some important tenets of neopatrimonialism. For example, I did not find evidence that local elites capture local management committees as their personal fiefdoms. Moreover, the tenet of a pyramidal network of patrons and clients does not seem to reach to the lowest tiers in the institutional framework. Not only do Tanzania's elites at provincial level seem unconnected to local school committees as clients, but the apparent failure of the deliberate efforts of Tanzania's school committees to connect with provincial elites as a patron remains puzzling. (Although it does coincide with Kelsall's field research in Tanzania which also "fails to present such a stable and hierarchical picture," which suggests that it is not the case that "society is so interpenetrated by patronage networks that we cannot distinguish the two" (2004: 52)).

When I connect the conclusions from the research to the overall purpose of this thesis – contributing to development programmes for capacity building of local organisations – I believe three opportunities for these programmes emerge. The first opportunity is that the two schools of thought that dominate thinking and policy-making in most aid agencies could benefit from the insights in political practice in East Africa developed by academia, particularly with regard to informal dynamics and personal networks. The findings from

District Officers to later careers as academics in anthropology (e.g. Beattie, 1960; Brokensha, 1972). Am I another historical continuity?

this thesis suggest that the formal rules and regulations can expand – or reduce – the negotiating arena for local organisations vis-à-vis central government, but these formal frameworks are generally not critical in determining the actual operations of the individual local organisations. In practical terms, many aid agencies study and support the recent changes of the formal framework around school and dispensary committees that have increased the space for people in local polities to negotiate with central government about the resources and delivery of education and health services. However, this research has also found that the formal frameworks for school and dispensary committees are not overly determinant of how these resources and services are actually managed at ‘the point of delivery’. Uniquely local and generally informal political practices are much more important.

And it is precisely in this area of these informal political practices that aid agencies could benefit from academic research into these informal dynamics under the banner of ‘neopatrimonialism’. Arguably, the more successful capacity building programmes would expand local organisations’ capacity to strategise and act in both the formal and the informal spheres. As far as I know, the development of methods and instruments to develop a local organisation’s capacity to manage informal dynamics – and to do so in concert with the formal dynamics – would be a rather new field. It would be a very interesting challenge in itself, if only because it is conceivable that increasing an organisation’s capacity to manage the informal dynamics in a particular area is inversely proportional to its capacity to manage the formal dynamics. In any case, I would argue that there is an opportunity for aid agencies to improve their operational and advisory practices by engaging with research into neopatrimonialism. Similarly, the neopatrimonial school of thought could benefit from an engagement with aid agencies because this thesis found that the changes in the formal institutional framework – such as promoted by decentralisation policies – cannot be dismissed as mere window-dressing. Changes in the formal framework can – and have – affected the space for actors in local polities to negotiate the balance of power with central government. Looking at the two schools of thought in aid agencies and the school of thought around neopatrimonialism, I would think there might be value for aid agencies to transform the marriage of convenience into a *ménage à trois*.

The second opportunity for development agencies that emerges from this thesis is to bring the history of governance into the future of development work. I am not convinced that ‘African governance’ is unique – arguably, negotiations around the flow of resources and the dynamic of neopatrimonialism are integral elements in most institutional frameworks – but I am now convinced that there is a unique history of governance in Africa. I have concluded in this thesis that each local polity has a unique domestic history and a unique historical relationship with central government that moves like a seesaw. My field research into today’s decentralisation policies in the education and health sectors ultimately became just an illustration of how that historical relationship between central government and local polities was calibrating itself by the mid 2000s. With hindsight, I would like to think my research is a response to the concern of the editors of a special issue of the *Journal of African History* in 2000, who concluded that contemporary research into development projects was, “rich literature, to be sure, but it lacks historical perspective” (Brenner et al., 2000: iii).

Adding a historical perspective to the practice of development work in general, and capacity building in local polities in particular, is not a matter of appreciating a ‘picturesque past’. Having an understanding of the historical seesaw movement in the relationship between central government and local polities will allow development workers to appreciate towards which side the balance tends to be tilting at the moment a development programme is being designed, implemented or evaluated. Development work with local organisations in a local polity is, or becomes, part of that seesaw and it seems judicious and astute to include a consideration of the direction of the momentum in the balance of power when strategising for the future. If the balance is tilting towards local polities then capacity building programmes could possibly be accelerated by positioning programmes in areas where the momentum is strongest and by consciously using the local resources that are coveted by central government. If, on the other hand, the balance seems to be tilting towards central government or local polities do not possess the resources that government needs, then capacity building programmes need to anticipate resistance to change from government. Moreover, an analysis of a particular local polity’s unique historical relationship with central government – and neighbouring local polities – is likely to reveal patterns, lessons, and actors that influence the perspective and decisions of people in local organisations. The comments by the Mozambican tax collector about development

programmes for civil society cited in the opening of this thesis – “Ah, that’s good, I thought it was something new...” – are an exemplary illustration.

The third, and probably most challenging, opportunity for development programmes for capacity building for local organisations lies in engaging more directly and formally with local polities. Generally, and by political and diplomatic default, aid agencies operate in ‘partnership’ agreements with central governments and rarely enter into formal agreements with local polities. Aid agencies generally assume – or have to assume for diplomatic reasons – that local polities are an integral and subservient part of the central government. Moreover, aid agencies also often work on the assumption that local polities’ institutional capacities are less developed than central government’s institutional capacities. The research findings in this thesis suggest these two assumptions may not – or not always – be justified. Local polities can operate and negotiate as distinct actors vis-à-vis central government and have the capacity to deliver education and health services without much – or any – support of central government. In fact, many a local polity is not only a capable actor in its own right, but many a central government – and international aid agency – has been deftly outsmarted by local polities in negotiations and accountability regarding the flow of resources.

I witnessed one example of this deft agency of local polities in Mozambique. Many local polities in the northern region of Mozambique had supported the armed opposition to central government during the civil war between the late 1970s and the signing of a peace agreement of 1992. In 1997, the Dutch embassy in Mozambique opened a consulate in the northern city of Nampula to be able to offer closer and more direct support to its capacity building programmes for local governments. I recall a speech of the Dutch ambassador a few years later in 2001. He mused that something odd was happening:

We opened this consulate in Nampula province to get a foothold in Mozambique’s remote north. However, I have this increasing feeling that, actually, this consulate is becoming a step for people in Nampula to get a foothold in the capital Maputo.

In this light, this thesis reveals the importance for aid agencies to choose formal and informal partners with care. If aid agencies could consider direct and formal partnerships with local polities, it is quite possible that the scope for more enduring and locally owned

institutional frameworks would increase. And if the informal personal networks are critical to the operation of the institutional framework – as this thesis concluded – then the point of this thesis for individual aid workers would be that the most effective aid workers choose their personal network carefully. Fortunately, the good news from this thesis is that those aid workers who do not choose will be chosen – by the powers that be in local polities, or the powers that want to be – and put to good use.

“The end to be sought is human happiness combined with full mental and moral growth ... This end can be achieved under decentralisation. Centralisation as a system is inconsistent with a non-violent structure of society.”

Mahatma Gandhi

Appendix 1: Model of the Individual Questionnaire

For individual members of **School Management Committees**

Thank you for answering these questions. Your answers are anonymous and confidential. Please mark with a cross the box with your answer. For example, if you are a man, you mark as follows:

Man <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Woman <input type="checkbox"/>
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Questions

1. What is your age group?

18-29 years <input type="checkbox"/>	30-44 years <input type="checkbox"/>	45-60 years <input type="checkbox"/>	61 years or more <input type="checkbox"/>
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2. What is your sex?

Man <input type="checkbox"/>	Woman <input type="checkbox"/>
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3. How long have you been a member of this Committee?

less than 1 year <input type="checkbox"/>	more than 1 year less than 3 years <input type="checkbox"/>	more than 3 years less than 5 years <input type="checkbox"/>	more than 5 years <input type="checkbox"/>
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4. What is your education?

none <input type="checkbox"/>	Uncompleted primary <input type="checkbox"/>	completed primary <input type="checkbox"/>	uncompleted secondary <input type="checkbox"/>
completed secondary <input type="checkbox"/>	secondary plus other education <input type="checkbox"/>	other: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	

5. What is your occupation?

farmer <input type="checkbox"/>	farmer with employees <input type="checkbox"/>	trader or business(wo)man <input type="checkbox"/>	employee of business(wo)man <input type="checkbox"/>
active civil servant <input type="checkbox"/>	retired civil servant <input type="checkbox"/>	Student/home-maker/unemployed <input type="checkbox"/>	other: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>

6. Are you also a member of a Committee or Board in other organisations?

No <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>
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If "YES", in which organisation are you a member of a Committee or Board?
(You may mark more than once.)

Village council <input type="checkbox"/>	ward development committee <input type="checkbox"/>	district council <input type="checkbox"/>	saving and credit society <input type="checkbox"/>
dispensary/health committee <input type="checkbox"/>	political party <input type="checkbox"/>	youth organisation <input type="checkbox"/>	women organisation <input type="checkbox"/>
church/mosque <input type="checkbox"/>	professional group <input type="checkbox"/>	sport organisation <input type="checkbox"/>	water committee <input type="checkbox"/>
farmers organisation <input type="checkbox"/>	NGO or CBO <input type="checkbox"/>	Other: <input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	

7. Comparing yourself economically with other members of your village, how would you describe yourself?

clearly above the average		a bit above the average		about the average		a bit below the average		clearly below the average	
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8. How often have you travelled to Arusha in the last two years?

never		1 or 2 times		3 or 4 times		more than 4 times	
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9. How would you describe your household's situation, as compared to two years ago?

a lot better		a bit better		The same		a bit worse		a lot worse	
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10. As a member of this Committee, how many meetings have you been able to attend since you joined?

I could attend <u>all</u> meetings		I could attend <u>most</u> meetings		I could attend <u>half</u> of the meetings		I could only attend a <u>few</u> meetings	
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11. Who proposed you as a member of this School Committee? And do you know why?

12. Why have you accepted to become a member of this School Committee?

13. Please indicate your opinion: "Since I am a member of this School Committee . . .

I trust the teachers of the school:

a lot more		a bit more		the same		a bit less		a lot less	
------------	--	------------	--	----------	--	------------	--	------------	--

I understand the teachers of the school:

a lot more		a bit more		the same		a bit less		a lot less	
------------	--	------------	--	----------	--	------------	--	------------	--

I trust the government workers of the District:

a lot more		a bit more		the same		a bit less		a lot less	
------------	--	------------	--	----------	--	------------	--	------------	--

I understand the government workers of the District:

a lot more		a bit more		the same		a bit less		a lot less	
------------	--	------------	--	----------	--	------------	--	------------	--

I trust the government workers of the central government in Kampala:

a lot more		a bit more		the same		a bit less		a lot less	
------------	--	------------	--	----------	--	------------	--	------------	--

I understand the government workers of the central government in Kampala:

a lot more		a bit more		the same		a bit less		a lot less	
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Thank you very much for your cooperation!

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