

**London School of Economics and Political Science**

*Actor-network theory as an approach to social enterprise  
and social value: a case study of Ghanaian social  
enterprises*

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## **Abstract**

This thesis assesses the potential of actor-network theory (ANT) for conceptualising social enterprise by applying the concepts of assemblage and translation to the production of social values through three fieldsites studied in Ghana. Social enterprises are companies that use market-based revenues to generate social value while maintaining financial viability. Social entrepreneurship involves using and combining resources, expertise and networks in an innovative way to achieve social value. Finally, social value makes it possible to explore well-being and common good in ways that cannot be reduced merely to individual needs and wants or to monetary quantities.

The present study examines social enterprises and social entrepreneurship through three case-studies and draws lessons from nine months of fieldwork in Ghana in 2004-2005. Using actor-network theory allows us to trace and follow the three social enterprises and social entrepreneurs beyond the conventional understanding of an enterprise or an economy. Measuring and evaluating the qualities of interactions aimed at enhancing social value, social enterprises create new identified objects and realities by involving the stakeholders, users and customers in the process, not just experts, economists and accountants. These pluralistic socio-technical objects are considered in this study as assemblages. The production of social values is studied through the notion of ‘translation’ where values are gradually articulated through different stages.

These propositions are studied by way of a ‘test’ in all three cases, in which various assemblages are identified according to three themes. The first theme discusses information assemblages, which is seen as a source of problematisations; the second relates to spatial assemblages and how they facilitate new associations to emerge; the third theme is credit and money; and how actors use them to enrol new resources. Finally, these resources are evaluated using either internal or external measuring tools developed for the social enterprise sector. Social values emerge through the cyclical process.

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## **Glossary:**

AITI	– Advanced Information Technology Institute
ANT	– Actor-network theory
CBO	– Community-based Organisation
CHPS	– Community-based Health Planning and Services
CMC	– Ghana Cocoa Marketing Company of the Ghana Cocoa Board
COCOBOD	– Ghana Cocoa Board
CUA	– Ghana Credit Union Association
DCC	– Divine Chocolate Company Limited
FOSS	– Free and Open Source Software
FOSSREC	– Free and Open Source Software Resource Centre
GBC	– Ghana Broadcasting Company
GINKS	– Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing
IMF	– International Monetary Fund
ITU	– International Telecommunications Union
KKCU	– Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union
KKFT	– Kuapa Kokoo Farmers’ Trust
KKFU	– Kuapa Kokoo Farmers’ Union
KKL	– Kuapa Kokoo Limited
LAUG	– Linux Accra User Group
LBC	– Licenced Buying Company
LTSP	– Linux Terminal Server Project
MDG	– Millennium Development Goal
M&E	– Measuring and Evaluation
NCA	– National Communications Authority
NGO	– Non-governmental organisation
PBC	– Produce Buying Company
PC	– Purchasing clerk (at Kuapa Kokoo)
RDO	– Research and development officer (at Kuapa Kokoo)
SAP	– Structural Adjustment Programme
SFD	– Software Freedom Day
SROI	– Social Return on Investment
WVI	– Women Vision International



## 1.0 Introduction

This thesis is an exploration into the activities of actors who are engaged in organising diverse markets that challenge some of the most straightforward notions about markets – namely profit and self-interest. The very notion of social enterprise is indeterminate, having emerged in Ghana in the mid-1980s among practitioners in movements such as fairtrade and various types of community-based organisations. Actors in these movements are interesting in that they do not strive for profit, what most people think markets are about; rather, they seek social value or social impact. They are distinctively different from various communitarian movements (Etzioni 1988) which have very little participation in markets, relying rather on voluntary and non-monetary resources.

Social enterprises are interesting as actors since they combine economic and social values (Defourny 2001). Most social movements that struggle for social or economic justice have started by setting up demonstration camps, sit-ins and civic educational workshops outside the gates of well-guarded market institutions (Pleyers 2010; Reitan 2007). In the case of social enterprises, the hopes of activists in various guises – NGO staff, development consultants, ICT-entrepreneurs, community health workers, leadership mentors, ethical investors and social reformers alike – have joined markets and created enterprises for their pursuits. Social enterprises, therefore, constitute a sphere where social values are enacted through markets which have the capacity for plural notions of calculation and measuring (Barry and Slater 2002). Social enterprises demonstrate that economies do not necessarily converge towards utilitarian self-interest. The pursuit of social value indicates that a ‘purification’ (Latour 1993b) and ‘disentanglement’ (Callon 1998a) of markets to constitute spheres of economic agency alone are not the only possible courses of action. Indeed, many for-profit enterprises are also quite open about the existence of political and social motivations in market settings (Fligstein 2001), as exemplified for instance by social innovations towards greater car safety (Palmaas 2005).

The present thesis considers three organisations that can either be understood as being social enterprises (Defourny 2001), or having a high degree of social entrepreneurship (Dees 1998). Social entrepreneurship can take place in any sector of the economy including private, public and third sectors (Bornstein 2004). The first field site in this study was Busy Internet, which at the time was the largest privately owned Internet centre in Ghana with over 100 Internet terminals, and over 1500 daily visitors. It also hosted conferences and events, and in particular public lecture series called CyberSeries. Busy Internet also rented out offices upstairs to ten different IT-companies on a commercial basis, and further four companies took part in an aid-funded IT start-up programme called Busy Incubator. The centre also had a lively bar and restaurant, and screened popular films among many other things, some of them also organised by either NGOs or were for fundraising purposes for different causes and associations. It was founded in 2001 by a combination of foreign entrepreneurs and domestic investment funds, combining a sustainable business model of providing IT-services with specific socio-economic development projects. I also observed here an informal professional network known as the Busy Family; a non-governmental organisation (NGO) called Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS); and participants in public events such as the CyberSeries.

The second fieldsite was Kuapa Kokoo, a cocoa producer co-operative. It was among the largest five cocoa producers in the country, and Ghana being the world's second cocoa producer after neighbouring Ivory Coast, the share of Kuapa's production in the world market was significant. As a co-operative, Kuapa Kokoo was entirely owned and governed by the approximately 40,000 members at the time. They formed 1500 village societies, which were each governed by a village society with posts for treasurer, secretary and society president. Each village also had a Kuapa Kokoo employee, known as the purchasing clerk (PC) who handled cocoa sales and payments. The co-operative had several separate operational units, one of them being the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU), which had 20,000 members at the time of research. Kuapa Kokoo was registered as a Licenced Buying Company (LBC) which had the right to buy cocoa from farmers at a price that was fixed by the government, the so-called 'farmgate' price. Kuapa Kokoo then sold the cocoa onwards to the government, which retained an export monopoly. As Kuapa Kokoo is a certified producer of fairtrade cocoa, it meant receiving a premium on cocoa sold to

this market, and having a guaranteed minimum price. These profits were distributed to cocoa farming communities through the Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Trust (Berlan 2008). At Kuapa Kokoo, I observed mainly the work of the Research and Development Office (RDO) who maintained links between the village societies, and engaged in education and farm improvement work; and secondly the way in which small credit was organised both in the Women's Revolving Loan Scheme and the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union.

The third fieldsite was a voluntary association called Linux Accra User Group (LAUG), which had a high degree of social entrepreneurship. In particular, the group leader at the time of research showed significant entrepreneurial skills in promoting the work of the group at a large international conference called World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Africa Summit, organised the group's members to work on four specific projects, negotiated access to a meeting space from a computer training school and events held in other locations. Seeing this activity in an entrepreneurial light allows us to look at the risk-taking in the activities, as well as the creative use of resources of time, volunteers and sponsorship and benefiting from aid money flows. The production of social values emerges through these stages. At LAUG I observed the weekly meetings on Saturday afternoons, events organised by the group in diverse locations, and discussions on the Yahoo! Group list where participants worked on practical solutions to reduce the cost of ICTs for ordinary users and promote the use of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) applications. Resources at LAUG were limited, so I mainly studied the ways in which they gained resources from outside entities or through mobilising volunteers for diverse events, and as beneficiaries of aid programmes delivered by other institutions or enterprises.

This thesis takes a sociological outlook on studying values as necessarily being socially framed and entangled with the objects of study. While valuation performed by economists has been a focus of recent economic sociology (Callon 1998c; Çalışkan and Callon 2009), discussion has not extended significantly to the ways in which social values are being formed. The formation of social values has been understood through a process of 'sacralisation' (Zelizer 1997), and within the project of 'economies of worth' (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006) where values are considered through their justification based on different grounds. In anthropology a similar

concept of 'spatio-temporal transformation' (Munn 1986) has been put forward to understand value transformations, while others have considered social value as something immeasurable and subject to faith and magic (Graeber 2001). Comparisons between these different approaches are made arising from the substantive examples, or theoretical discussions. The theory of 'economies of worth' assumes that certain types of justifications are somewhat universal in a given society, at a given time. Therefore, according to Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) one can distinguish six of such worths. The 'economies of worth' proposal is problematic in assuming that the six 'worths' of values are broadly established in Western Europe and the United States. Consequently, these 'worths' cannot be directly applied in West Africa and in south and central Ghana in particular. Mapping out regimes of worth in West Africa could have been done, but it would have required extensive archival and historical research, which was not the intent of this thesis. Furthermore, very little is said about the emergence of such 'regimes', constituting a major weakness of the theory. While Boltanski and Thévenot (2006) consider that other regimes may exist, such as the environment (Eymard-Duvernay, Favereau, et. al. 2005), the emergence of such a regime of environmental 'worth' is not discussed in detail. Therefore, the contribution of social value theory lies in discussing the processes of valuation rather than fixed 'regimes of worth'. All activities are seen as being potentially included in valuing processes. However, the exclusion of many types of concerns, activities and types of agency as not relevant in the 'economies of worth' makes the choice of 'justifiable' activities based on past forms of justification.

This thesis will, therefore, explore the formation of social value based on lessons from both actor-network theory (Callon and Latour 1981; Callon and Law 1982; Callon 1986, Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe 2009) and from Simmel's sociological theory of values (Cantó Milà 2005; Frisby 2002; Simmel 2004). Simmel's contribution to the discussion of values is that he moves beyond absolute values and considers that all types of values, aesthetic, social and economic, emerge from relational ties in exchange and interaction. Simmel's relational sociology, together with the actor-network theory, provides here a basis for analysing ethnographic research findings on the emergence and objectification of values. In exploring the social values in the fieldsites I use the notion of *translation* (Callon and Latour 1981) from actor-network theory (ANT). Translation describes the process whereby knowledge and values are

seen as emerging from concrete situations, from identification and prioritisation of problems to their mobilisation and evaluation as things that are seen to exist in themselves. While we often forget how things and objects come about, translation provides a theoretical frame and a vocabulary for discussing emerging assemblages prior to their institutionalisation. Actor-network theory has been used to discuss diverse processes of translation, such as ‘performativity’ of natural scientists (Latour 1987), professionals (Mackenzie and Millo 2003) and economists (Callon 1998c), who are seen to shape society with their knowledge and values. However, ‘performativity’ is just one potential type of a broader process of *translation*, which has gained a lot of attention in actor-network theory. This study will explore the activities of laypersons and how they translate problems and concerns into new actors that address their concerns. Sometimes, though not always, they may call upon professionals or experts, but these relationships are always negotiated and changing rather than following a fixed model.

In this thesis, I develop a model comprised of four stages of translation based on available literature and key informant interviews. The choice of a specific translation is made following the spirit of ANT whereby every translation is unique (Callon and Latour 1981; Latour 2005). While the stages adopted here follow closely other processes of translations (Callon 1986; Latour 1991) described elsewhere, specific issues and contradictions were considered among them. The process described in this thesis starts from a *problematization* where actors within and around social enterprises identify pertinent problems that they face in their communities, enterprises and wider society. The next step is *association* where actors voluntarily associate with spatial settings rather than necessarily accepting an imposed ‘intersement’ drafted by experts as evident in expert-led processes (Callon 1986; Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe 2009). The capacity to define and propose a solution is crucial to understanding power – and thus power emerges through participation in or exclusion from drafting up such *associations*.

Associations often emerge at the crossroads of users, members, workers, farmers, activists, experts and other interested individuals. Once a solution is found, both monetary and non-monetary resources are *enrolled* including in particular aid grants and credit for businesses and farmers. In some cases actors talked of

‘conditionalities’ whereby aid grants and credit came with strict conditions attached to them by donors, sponsors and creditors. In these cases, a conflict emerged between actors and donors. Once the process is finished, we finally have a stage of *evaluation*, referring to a common practice among social enterprises to evaluate their outcomes and impacts of the resources that were enrolled. Evaluation can take place for both internal and external purposes, being expressed by the actors and participants themselves belonging to in governing bodies and company boards; or being imposed by external donor agencies or credit institutions. A further distinction is that evaluation can be either informal or formal, depending on the manner in which evaluations are conducted and the publics intended to communicate with. Finally social values emerged from this process through the on-going processes of assemblage and reassemblage, rather than being fixed.

The thesis is structured in five parts: introduction, theory and method, an overview of social enterprise forms in Ghana, discussing the substantive ethnographic research findings, conclusions and suggestions for further research.

After this first introductory chapter on the key concepts, Chapter two discusses the separation of economy and society as a modernist ‘purification’ proposed by Latour (1993b), whereby the creation of ‘facts’ arising from nature and ‘discovered’ by scientists and economists alike produces a world of purified individual actors. Other non-scientific objects are considered as ‘values’ arising from culture. In contrast, concepts such as social enterprise and social value, through combining both economic and social objectives, can be seen to overcome such purified notions of fact and value. The concept of translation is then discussed within actor-network theory, followed by a specific four-stage model which emerges from the processes observed and examined during fieldwork.

Chapter three outlines methodological issues connected with the use of actor-network theory, building on some of the tools derived from the existing wider ANT literature in studying indeterminate agency. It first introduces a distinction between a fieldsite of study and an assemblage where agency is located. A discussion of the three fieldsites follows this, including two social enterprises and an example of social entrepreneurship in a voluntary association. Rationales for choosing and

encountering the fieldsites are examined next by discussing different approaches to studying them. Finally, the use of the methodology of a ‘market test’ (Callon 1999) is suggested for making ‘propositions’ rather than scientific ‘hypothesis’ of markets in an ethnographic manner, in order to see if propositions and concepts developed elsewhere can be observed within the chosen fieldsites. These methodological concepts are then used in the subsequent substantive chapters that discuss the fieldsites.

Chapter four takes a historical view of the process of ‘purification’ of values within both the cocoa and the ICT sectors in Ghana, discussing the diverse ways in which actors have attempted to reconstitute these social values despite having little control over the framing of markets. It then moves on to look at the five distinct movements within the Ghanaian economy that have in particular contributed towards the emergence of social enterprise. These are then compared to the key objectives of the organisations studied in the three fieldsites, to see how they correspond to past practices in these movements. Key informant interviews are examined to understand better how social enterprises link with social values. Comparisons are briefly made to examples of social enterprise in Europe, Latin America and elsewhere in Africa. This overview provides backwards linkages and historical precedents to the fieldsites that are studied in the following chapters.

Chapter five, as the first ethnographic chapter, discusses information in terms of constituting *problematizations* as the first stage of translation of social value. In doing so, I ask questions such as who is able to problematise, what devices and events they use, and how concerns are expressed. Problematization is similar to the way in which Latour (2005) talks of ‘matters of concern’ being at the beginning of creating facts. I argue that this stage is also applicable to the creation of values. Problematizations will be discussed in terms of information assemblages, and actor-network theory will be used to understand better how actors create information and how it is shared. Confronted with ‘connection men’ and other power brokers, actors find it difficult to access government services and private sector services, which are hard to configure as they are not adapted for Ghanaian users. Drawing on evidence from all the three fieldsites, it is argued that social enterprises act as information

intermediaries and mentors, while also challenging the very ownership of information assemblages.

In Chapter six, spatial assemblages are considered, both physical locations and on-line environments, are discussed in terms of the locations where new types of actors emerge. These new actors construct *associations* as the next stage of the process of translation of social value. This is similar to the way in which scientists construct ‘intersements’ in building facts (Callon 1986), with the key difference that in this case it is laypersons who are crucial at this stage. Association is used here to denote the connection between laypersons. Associations are discussed as spatial assemblages, where I analyse issues such as urban spaces, public spaces, women’s spaces, developmental spaces and professional spaces. I draw on terms such as a ‘topology’ in ANT, as well as the concepts of spatial forms as discussed by Simmel. Spatial assemblages studied here allow social enterprises to create communities and new group dynamics around the problems that they wish to address.

In Chapter seven, I start to identify the resources, agencies and institutions that social enterprises draw upon when they *enrol* further participants as the process of translation of social value moves onwards. It is through this stage that economic values and social values are combined in very diverse ways. This stage is different to the translation of facts by natural scientists (Callon 1986), as it is the laypersons who enrol experts, money, and credit in their own associations around solutions they express. Monetary networks (Dodd 1994) serve as a basis for understanding how monies and credit assemblages are actually wider social mobilisations that are based on trust and creditworthiness. Here I ask which associations are successful in enrolling further resources, and how such resources are acquired. These can be donor agencies that disburse aid grants, volunteers who organise and finance special events at Linux Accra User Group, and credit assemblages at Kuapa Kokoo.

Chapter eight discusses *evaluation* as the next iterative stage of translation, which was often not visible during the fieldwork period due to evaluations taking place at periodic intervals of several months or even years. In scientific translations, this last stage is called either a ‘mobilisation’ of facts to the wider public (Callon 1986), or their ‘institution’ (Latour 2004) as stabilised social assemblages. Evaluation emerges



as the stage which best describes the ways in which social enterprises need to give an account of their social values to their diverse stakeholders, owners and consumers. Social enterprises have developed various measuring and evaluation techniques, which are briefly discussed (Nicholls 2009) and presented in relation to the stages of translation presented in the previous chapters five to seven. I then look at the various evaluation techniques that have been used in the three fieldsites involving formal and informal means, and internal and external ends.

Chapter nine concludes with three different aspects. First, I discuss the contribution of social enterprise and social value to the earlier proposition of a modern ‘purification’ of economies and societies. Secondly, the emergence of social enterprises and social values presents an alternative narrative of social change, which is introducing greater pluralism and wider values to market-based organisations. Finally, the discussion also makes it possible to assess the usability of the concept of translation within actor-network theory for making visible the claims discussed, and examining the key limitations of the theory of translation in ANT that was used in the thesis. These limitations also provide pathways for further areas of research.

## 2.0. Translating Agency – On Theory

In ANT the T is too much ('de trop'). It is a gift from our colleagues. We have to be wary of this type of consecration especially when it is the work of our best friends. *Timeo danaos et dona ferentes*; I fear our colleagues and their fascination for theory (Callon 1999: 194, emphasis in original)

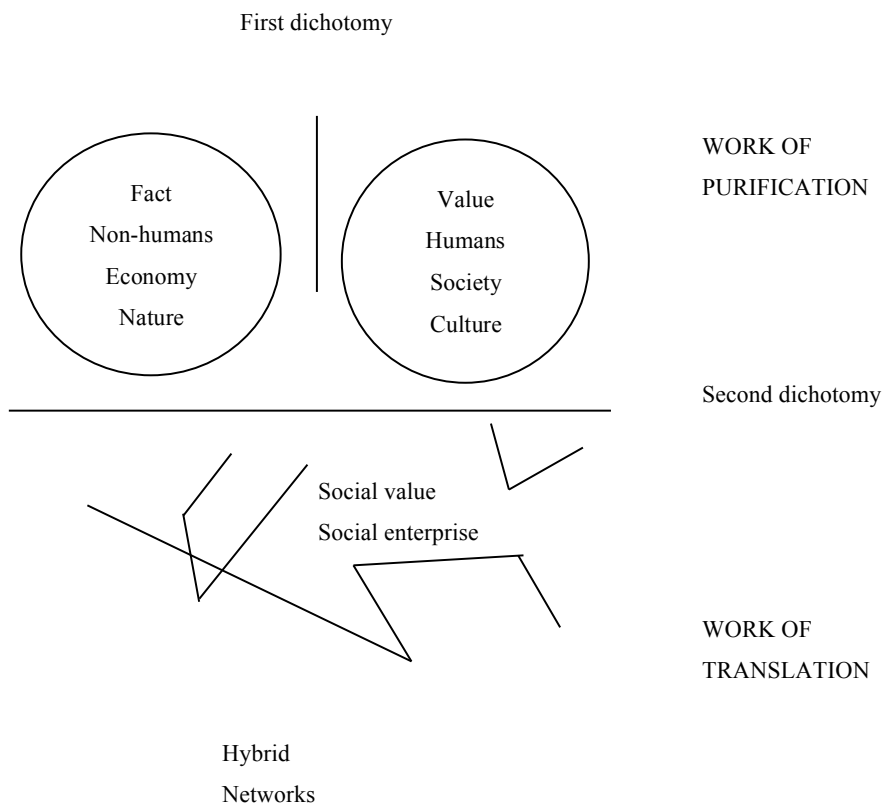
This theoretical chapter, despite Callon's scepticism of the very term 'theory', focuses on three main points. The chapter opens with a discussion of the applications of Bruno Latour's critique of modernity (Latour 1993b), which makes the case for seeing economics as a modern 'purification' of the wider social world that includes much broader notions of social values alongside with economic values. The term translation provides the conceptual point at which both economic and social forces converge, in diverse stages of processes of translation, following rules and conventions as much as interests and motives.

The chapter starts (section 2.1) with a discussion of Latour's argument of modernity as a double dichotomy which operates through the processes of 'purification' and 'translation' rather than studying society in any objective manner. Modernity has created a separate sphere of economic values, which are reframed and disentangled from wider social values in a process of 'purification' – where social values were gradually seen as irrational or 'cultural' rather than being considered important to economic life. Social values in contrast combined both economic and cultural aspects, in addition to aesthetic and symbolic values. The next section (2.2), discusses the process of 'translation', which is adopted here from processes observed in natural sciences, to become a process of translating social values that involves processes previously considered to belong either to economic or cultural values. Key stages of translation are discussed in relation to the fieldsites, thus localising the process of translation within the specific issues and approaches that I observed in the fieldsites. The following section (2.3) then applies the theory of translation to discussing how social enterprises integrate both social and economic values, while giving primacy to social values. Actor-network theory is used here to discuss the ways in which new objects are built through measuring, and how evaluation constructs new social values.

## 2.1. The Modern Purification

Activities of economists in society could be described as a ‘modern purification’ of economies and markets. In discussing the origins of the thinking of both natural scientists and economists alike, Bruno Latour (1993b) in *We Have Never Been Modern* considers that modernity is best considered as ontology – the study of being and existence. Modernity, rather than being an epoch of moving away from tradition to rational thinking - as assumed by Durkheim (1984), Weber (1978) and Tönnies (1955), or interplay of material forces of history according to Marx (1990) - is about how the world is categorised (as depicted in Figure 1 below).

**Figure 1: Purification and Translation**



Source: adapted from Figure 1.1. Latour (1993b: 11)

In Figure 1, modernity is a process with a double dichotomy: *first*, a purification between natural and cultural events; and *secondly*, a translation between the world of

objects, and that of hybrid networks. While the world of hybrid networks is the real world of connections, once it is translated into scientific and natural ‘facts’ we find that such hybridity is lost, and we find only the objects populating scientific literature, not the process of their being and processes of renewal and change. On the side of culture, we could include anything from politics, civil society organisations, activist groups, identity-based activities, language, art and most social sciences – with the exception of economists, who use the language of the natural sciences of biology and physics and present their micro-economic models in much the same way as the laws of Newtonian physics. In so doing they believe that they have moved from studying human culture to studying ‘nature’ (in this case, human nature).

The ‘purification’ of economies and societies has meant that to an ever increasing extent social and economic life is considered to be a sphere of purified economic rationality – based on individual calculations and utilitarian thinking. This ignores the complexity of actors, and their own ways of constituting agency and value. Unlike the modern economists consider, economic agency is far from being individualist and detached from non-economic beliefs or wider actor-networks that cannot be explained by individual preferences alone. This ‘purification’ has led to economic agency being considered in far too narrow terms, and as separate from wider society. By introducing terms such as social enterprise and social value, a process of re-entanglement and re-assemblage is undertaken, where the linkages between ‘fact’ and ‘value’ as well as economic and social values are considered anew.

Social values, however, did not disappear. They were reconstituted as ‘culture’, which gained an ever greater independent sphere with regard to economy. Culture is not something ‘irrational’ belonging to non-calculative practices of social life as economists would think, but follows calculative practices as in the case of consumption (Slater 1997). Nor was culture simply a ‘superstructure’ of capitalist relationships of productions as assumed by Marxists; rather, it constituted a sphere through which order and hierarchy are mediated in society.

In brief, the idea of ‘culture’ arose largely to deal with the fear that the development of market society would debase or erode ‘true’ or ‘authentic’ values, ‘traditional’ or ‘organic’ forms of expression, ‘high’ or ‘universal’ and ‘autonomous’ forms of art and thought. At the same time, ‘culture’ is not only a response to market relations; or rather, commercialization is

only one of the series of modern assaults on traditional social order and status hierarchies of value and distinction. (Slater and Tonkiss 2001: 151)  
While 'culture' was a critique of many of the claims made by economists about human activity and its rationality, it did not necessarily link the field of study to new forms of economic organisation that would be necessary to reconstitute social values within a market-based society. Cultural theorists located the potential for greater autonomy within the contemporary society and new forms of emerging cultural experiments that also did include cultural enterprises and economies that were not all orientated solely for profit (Amin and Thrift 2004; Amin 2002).

In this study, instead of 'cultural', I take up an older term of 'social value' to define the objectives of the actors involved in social enterprises. I do so, since it is the term most commonly used in the social enterprise literature along with other terms such as social mission (Social Enterprise London 2001), or social objectives (Department of Trade and Industry 2000). While social values were largely erased from both economic and political theories, they did survive in some schools of economic thinking, and keep re-emerging in specific fields of study such as social enterprises. The American Institutional School of economic thought (Tool 1977; Tool 1986) use the term based on Veblen's (1899) earlier consideration of 'conspicuous' consumption being inherently relational emerging in status competition. Social value, however, emerged as a concept in the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when Schumpeter (1909) discussed the term in the following manner.

[...] [I]ts use does not involve any opposition to the individualistic methods and concepts of theory. It is a summary expression for certain phenomena, and its meaning is pretty clear. It expresses the fact of mutual interaction and interdependence between individuals and the results thereof. (Schumpeter 1909: 218)

What Schumpeter says is that the term is not of his own invention, but has existed either in practice or in theory (he does not state the usage) prior to his discussion. For him social value is not a general term, but rather refers to specific events where interdependence is more marked than in other events. For Schumpeter social value therefore co-exists with utilitarian concepts of individual values. As a result he discussed price theory where the "determination of values and determination of prices, therefore, are vastly different things" (Schumpeter 1909: 227), being in direct contradiction with the marginalist theories of his time. Other contemporary theorists including Clark (1915) proposed that 'social marginal utilities' existed alongside with

micro-economic marginal utilities, while Anderson (1911) looked at a social psychological approach of social values<sup>1</sup>. Over time as the marginalist revolution progressed and utilitarianism remained unchecked, the meaning of social value was quickly purified by ‘social choice’ theory of Arrow (1951) which considers that all social level events can be derived from micro-economic foundations of individual choice. This led to ‘public choice’ theory where political behaviour is also subjected to the individualist ‘rational choice’ paradigm in politics – both being utilitarian versions of social interaction. We arrive at a full circle of social values being erased from economic and political thinking as incompatible with the ‘natural’ concept of a rational individual.

The concept of social value then started to re-emerge as new issues and events such as social enterprises began to gain some visibility. In the beginning it was used to replace the common term of ‘externality’ in economics, which denotes residual or unintended consequences of economic activity impacting either positively or negatively on other actors external to the firm or individual. As the ‘positive externality’ linked to social objectives gradually becomes the main objective of the social enterprise, it made no sense to call such an objective an ‘externality’ as Dees (1998: 2-3) notes.

It is inherently difficult to measure social value creation. How much social value is created by reducing pollution in a given stream, by saving the spotted owl, or by providing companionship to the elderly? The calculations are not only hard but also contentious. Even when improvements can be measured, it is often difficult to attribute them to a specific intervention.

For Dees the dilemma has two dimensions. The first dimension, already identified by Schumpeter, involves the immeasurability of social value of events that do not have a monetary equivalent. The second problem concerns attribution, namely being able to attribute improvements in the lives of the elderly to a single action or actor. Related to the second point of attribution of social value, Mair and Martí (2006) make another important observation concerning non-linear accumulation of social values.

Although social value is very often created by bringing resources into the organization’s boundaries and by creating outputs directly, in other cases, the organization may actually have greater social impact by working in

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<sup>1</sup> Anderson (1911) was inspired by Gabriel Tarde’s economic psychology (1902), which interestingly is also an inspiration for Latour’s view on actor-network theory (2005).

collaboration with complementary organizations, or even former or potential competitors. (Mair and Martí 2006: 18)

Here Mair and Martí consider that social values are non-exclusive and non-rival, which is the definition of a public good in economics. However, the definition of 'public goods' is still considered to be based on individual enjoyment, rather than collective appreciation. Public goods are problematic in economics, as rivalry and competition are seen as being the norms of economic behaviour. Social values provide an alternative, as having a good well-being, and caring for the environment, is not a public good in the economic sense of being derived from individual enjoyment - it is rather a matter of social valuation processes which does not require direct derivation of utility of a 'good' or a 'service'.

Social values are becoming ever more recognised and appreciated in the domain of well-being studies, a development also noted by Jordan (2008). In discussing the difference between *well-being* and *welfare* the first notion cannot simply be reduced to material welfare, or minimum requirements or basic needs being met.

[T]he creation and distribution of *social value* is not well captured by the economic model, and indeed that the policies that derived from the model often reduce social value in the process of increasing individual utility. I reserve the term 'well-being' for the level of social value enjoyed by populations, and distinguish it from the 'welfare' that is maximised in the economic model. (Jordan 2008: 8, emphasis as in original)

The pure focus on economic welfare has led to 'purifying' social values from public policies across the world guided by welfare theorists, while well-being is something which arises from the preservation, creation and distribution of social values. He notes, furthermore, that social values can be both positive and negative, as social exclusion, stigma, and shame play an important part in marginalisation, which is not necessarily related to low incomes alone. Furthermore, social value,

does not fit comfortably either into a notion of 'quality of life' based on universal principles of justice [...] or into public policy environment constructed around individual autonomy and choice (Jordan 2008: 50)

Jordan considers that existing models that are based around individual choice, either of healthcare providers or primary schools, do not capture social values as they cannot be reduced to individual choice. He settles for social values being based on moral standards, based on the notion of the taboo (Douglas 1991). Jordan also criticises the universalism of other concepts, such as that of quality of life or the different human development indicators, which take a statistical or aggregate vision of social value –

rather than considering substantive notions and particular conditions. Meanwhile, theorists concerned with universal concepts of justice and morals in economies (Sen 1987) often derive them from individual choices rather than collective interrelational social values.

The contemporary debates on social values (Dees 1998; Jordan 2008) often lack a firm theoretical grounding. In this study, I seek to ground social values within economic sociology, which offers an interesting literature for discussing this problematic. Economic sociology is one of the strands of sociology that in least in principle is concerned with overcoming the nature and culture division. The utility-maximising and ‘rational’ economic actor is seen as an unrealistic representation of agency. Granovetter explains (cited in Swedberg 1997: 163-164):

My position is that there is something very basically wrong with microeconomics, and that the new economic sociology should make this argument loud and clear especially in the absolutely core economic areas of market structure, production, pricing, distribution and consumption.

Granovetter’s critique of economics is targeted at these core assumptions that economists make about the ability to reduce all economic action to so-called micro-foundations that reduce all ‘macro’ events to individual utility-maximising choices. Adding on to the critique, for Swedberg, the exclusion of economic issues from sociological inquiry was previously defined by institutional boundaries: “to get a place in the university, sociologists had to convince existing disciplines that they would not poach their territory” (Swedberg cited in Granovetter 1990: 89). This led to a division of labour between economists to study an economy and sociologists to study a society, tacitly agreed by Talcott Parsons with the economists at Harvard (Çalışkan and Callon 2009).

However, despite these earlier more critical texts, economic sociology soon positioned itself as complementary to economists’ visions of markets – rather than diametrically opposing the dominant theory of the rational utility-maximising individual. The critique was soon diluted, and economic sociology considered that it needed to accept the key tenets of economics to carve out their ‘niche’ in the academic division of labour. This positioning exercise between economic and sociology that followed was called the proposition of ‘embeddedness’ (Granovetter 1985), which claimed that social and cultural norms provide a foundation for



economic exchange to take place. This still leaves the field wide open for understanding economic decision making as being mostly based on micro-economic foundations. Callon, being slightly more critical, also considers Granovetter's use of 'embeddedness' as not undoing the societies versus markets dichotomy.

Instead of adding connections (contingent contracts, trust, rules, culture) to explain the possibility of the co-ordination and the realism of the calculation, as in the various solutions proposed by economists, we need to start out from the proliferation of relations and ask how far the bracketing of these connections – which below I call 'framing' – must go to allow calculation and co-ordination through calculation. (Callon 1999: 186)

For Callon, the main intent of actor-network theory was the search for concepts that could transcend the nature-culture, and micro-macro distinction. Here he uses terms such as framing (Goffman 1975) and a broad notion of calculation precisely to overcome such divisions. Çalışkan and Callon (2009) identify a process of 'economisation' where actors that exist in the hybrid networks become 'economic'. In such a translation, actors are influenced by institutions, practices and standardised behaviours that inform their way of making choices.

We use the term 'economization' to denote the processes through which behaviours, organizations, institutions and, more generally objects are constituted as being 'economic' [...] We identified three key agents in economization processes: (1) the theories of the economy; (2) the institutional and technical arrangements that enhance the capacities of human agents for action and cognition, (3) the things which are being valued whose materiality influences the modes of valuation that are possible and their outcomes. (Çalışkan and Callon 2010: 2)

The process of 'economisation' as described above involves the utilisation of economic theories in shaping the economy itself. This involves the instrumentalisation and institution of devices and socio-material arrangements that are used to enhance the calculative capacities of agents. Value is an outcome, rather than a starting point of a process of 'economisation'. What is interesting about this is that it reverses the order of how we often consider objects – as modern knowledge often takes firm moral beliefs or strong assumptions such as utility-maximising or 'rational expectations' as starting points. The process, according to the authors, itself constitutes an economy in the sense that neo-classical economists understand it - as a constellation of utility-maximising actors. Once the frame is defined, the institutional arrangements fall in place and actors become part of a process of translation, and

finally, a reflexive process of valuation takes place where certain values are considered as constituting 'economic' objects.

However, not all processes in contemporary society follow an 'economising' logic, and economic sociologists have also been quite keen to discuss areas of society which are either resisting or not penetrated by rationalism, utilitarianism or calculatedness. In the modern dichotomy they are considered as cultural, religious and moral objects, which are then placed firmly in the box of culture within Latour's (1993b) model. Zelizer, for instance, argues that while she sees a simultaneous process of commodification taking place, actors are increasingly constructing spaces and objects through a counter process of sacralisation where economic calculation is not considered acceptable.

The 'commercialization effect' has its precise counterpart – a reciprocal 'sacralisation' process by which value shapes price, investing it with social, religious, or sentimental meaning. (Zelizer 1997: 21)

Zelizer draws from earlier works by Polanyi (1957) and Parry and Bloch (1989) in how economic markets are not the only means of exchange of resources. What sacralisation shows is that other than economic actors have also been able to translate their social values, but in this case they have been articulated in terms of moral boundaries where market-based calculation should not apply. This process of sacralisation is seen as a way to redraw moral boundaries around certain objects or events in terms of non-economic objects defined by religious or sentimental concepts. She takes the example of children's rights and the increasingly sacred position of children in society as non-economic entities. While she sees a dual opposition between commercialisation and sacralisation, we could also analyse a similar process of 'sacralisation' taking place in some social enterprises. What Zelizer does not discuss are the processes that enable actors to move from one sphere to another, or the actors and institutions who made the effort of arguing that children should be considered sacred. This makes it difficult for an ethnographic enquiry to operationalise around the concept of sacralisation. Zelizer herself uses historical material research instead of the topic of child rights. Looking at Zelizer's work and comparing it with earlier examples of 'economisation' shows us that the boundaries that exist at the current moment are not permanent – and have necessarily been

constructed by actors themselves through processes understood here as constituting translations.

Anthropologists have also dealt with the ‘nature’ and ‘culture’ dichotomy (Graeber 2001; Gudeman 1986) in very diverse ways. This has often been looked through the prism of the ‘substantivist’ versus ‘formalist’ dichotomy that basically reproduces the same issue noted by Latour, which itself stems from an artificial modernist dichotomy of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’. Many anthropological theories of value stem from the cultural anthropological project within American cultural anthropology of Kluckhohn, who tried to ground the discipline in terms of comparative value-system. In this project “values are ideas about what they *ought* to want” Graeber (2001: 3). It is the social element of valuation that became a central notion, but how it actually takes place was not linked to action that would explain their emergence. Polanyi (1957) drew largely also on historical material in *The Great Transformation*, to consider the argument of a ‘double movement’ between society and markets as being the defining dynamic of modernity. This substantivist argument led to a whole notion of different spheres of exchange (Polanyi 1992) being popularised, and still used in current social enterprise research as a way to understand the types of agency taking place within a social enterprise (Nyssens and Defourny 2006).

One example stands out in the anthropological literature on value, namely the work by Munn (1986), which looked into the production of values within a Melanesian society. She made the link to actual production of values in *The Fame of the Gawa* (Munn 1986) by considering the types of value transformations that objects and people undergo. Munn talks of *socio-temporal transformations* where value is created through both temporal and spatial shifts. The shifts in space are conceptualised as intersubjective spacetime such as how giving away food will over time transform into the ‘fame’ of the person or the entire community.

I argue that in the Gawan case, value may be characterized in terms of differential levels of *spatiotemporal transformation* – more specifically, in terms of an act’s relative capacity to extend or expand what I call intersubjective *spacetime* – a spacetime of self-other relationships formed in and through acts and practices. (Munn 1986: 9, emphasis in original)

Munn emphasises that values are created through self-other interaction and extensions of this type of spaces over time. The spatiotemporal qualities include acts of

remembering as well as ways in which actions in the current time may yield socially valuable results in the future as, for instance, some forms of transformation of wood into canoes, and trips to exchange valuable or powerful goods with other islands, requiring seafaring. Economic and social values are mixed, and no dichotomy of the type that Latour discussed exists. One example that she takes is how giving food is converted into ‘fame’ which has value in Gawan society.

[G]iving food away to overseas visitors for their own consumption is perceived as initiating a spatiotemporally extending process – an expansion beyond the donors’ persons and the immediate moment, and beyond Gawa Islands – as visitors take away the favourable news of Gawan hospitality. (Munn 1986: 50)

Here the key term of fame is gained not through the momentary offering of food to an overseas visitor, but through the way in which this act is remembered by the visitor and contributes to fame overseas, which will bring benefits to the island later on. Munn’s discussion of the spatio-temporal transformations shows that values can be discussed in terms of processes, and these processes include different types of values (aesthetic, economic, social, witchcraft and ancestral values). It is this lesson that I mainly take from Munn in studying processes of valuation while using concepts and notions from actor-network theory.

The difference between economic anthropology and economic sociology is ultimately that within Munn’s study of the island of Gawa: there does not seem to be a money economy that would create the possibility of establishing quantitative equivalences between objects or processes understood as services. Both Munn and Graeber still leave many questions open with regard to what distinguishes economic and social values from each other, and how they may emerge in economies that have the presence of money and credit. This is where I consider particularly relevant the work of Simmel<sup>2</sup> and recent scholarship regarding Simmel’s works (Cantó Milà 2005; Pyyhtinen 2010). In overcoming the distinction between fact/value and nature/culture, we need to start looking for unifying principles. One, according to Simmel is his broader concept of exchange in relation to a narrower concept. He

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<sup>2</sup> Simmel’s sociology was for a very long time considered to be marginal within the wider sociological establishment – it was considered as unorthodox in not considering there being a separation between economic and social values, a key to both Weber’s distinction between end-rational and value-rational agency, and Durkheim’s concepts of collective consciousness.

says that different values originate from interaction – and that economic interactions are not that different from other social interactions.

[E]very interaction has to be regarded as an exchange: every conversation, every affection (even if rejected), every game, every glance at another person (Simmel 2004: 82).

For Simmel, an economy is not a separate sphere or pole from the rest of society, but rather both types of exchange have very similar origins. Here he finds similarities between economic exchange and wider social interaction, in noting that relational dynamics lie at the core of all valuing processes. Simmel was looking for unifying concepts such as ‘distance’ and ‘sacrifice’. For him, sacrifice emerges when we have the development of an object of desire, which cannot be attained by the subject through means of simple interaction, but requires giving up something to gain something else.

Value is only reinstated as contrast, as an object separated from the subject [...]. [V]alue does not originate from an unbroken unity of the moment of enjoyment, but from the separation between the subject and the content of enjoyment as an object that stands opposed to the subject as something desired and only to be attained by the conquest of distance, obstacles and difficulties. (Simmel 2004: 66)

In this passage Simmel makes two distinctions. Firstly value is not something uniquely attained in a transaction at the moment of enjoyment as the marginalist economists consider. Instead, value is something that is a tension or a relation between an object and a subject. Secondly, bringing this distance requires giving up something else, which can be money but also time and effort, to overcome obstacles and difficulties. Cantó Milà (2005: 159) sums up this distinction between economic and other values in terms of sacrifice and equivalence.

The specific trait of economic exchange lies more in the necessary objective equivalence between the values of what is being exchanged than in the dimension of sacrifice. (Cantó Milà 2005: 159)

While sacrifice of time and effort can be considered as being present in both economic and social values, the second trait characteristic of economic values – namely equivalence – is more unique and establishes the difference between the economic values and other values. The search of equivalence finds its greatest embodiment in the modern money economy, where Simmel saw that money has the potential (though not always actualised) of constituting ‘pure’ exchange, whereby equivalences can be established between any types of objects. Cantó Milà (2005: 151) considers that it is a unitary theory of value rather than a theory that rests on separate spheres of value.

Simmel's intention was nonetheless not only to sketch an economic theory of value, but to develop an all-embracing theory of value, which would seek to explain the emergence and consolidation of all types of values including economic, aesthetic, ethical, and cultural values in the same general category of values, and viewing each of them (with special attention directed towards economic values) as special forms of value.

This reading of Simmel places him as primarily a theorist of value, rather than a theorist of monetary culture and economic value. What was lacking in Simmel's theory of value was a link to practices of valuation, and how actors go about such processes of plural valuation. Here I consider actor-network theory providing some tools for moving forwards in combining different types of value in a single process.

## **2.2. Translation of Social Value**

I propose that the concept of *translation* could be seen as a unifying concept where both social and economic values can meet, much like Munn (1986) used 'socio-temporal transformation' in a more phenomenological and symbolic sense. Through translation the focus is on "processes by which an actor creates lasting symmetries" (Callon and Latour 1981: 286). Translation as a notion was a response to simplistic and atomistic understandings of the interests of scientists in explaining how scientific findings were published (Callon and Law 1982). Translation is important for understanding the combinations of social and economic value, and it helps to understand social enterprises as they combine both types of values in a single organisation.

Actors were thus seen as making choices that were not simply explainable based on individual 'desires' and 'interests', but rather that activities of scientists entailed that the "*relative value* of these choices [...] is determined in part by the exploration of the imputed interests of other actors" (Callon and Law 1982: 617, emphasis in original). The term of translation appeared in ANT in the context of discussing alternative ways of conceptualising the world beyond a micro/macro separation.

By translation we understand all the negotiations, intrigues, calculations, acts of persuasion and violence, thanks to which an actor or force takes, or causes to be conferred on itself, authority to speak or act on behalf of another actor or force. (Callon and Latour 1981: 279)

As a term, translation becomes a way to account for the growing or decreasing scale and shape of the actor, and how such a scale is achieved through distinct stages. The

term ‘translation’ means literally to translate the complex social world (before the first dichotomy of purification) gradually into a more ‘objective’ reality may it be nature or culture – or indeed a reality that does not rest on either one. In the case described below, an actor gains the position to speak on behalf of others, just as scientists take the role of ‘spokespersons’ (Callon 1986; Latour 1999a). These symmetries were subsequently discussed in more detail by Callon (1986: 196–233) based on the work of scientists who found a solution to the depleting population of scallops in St. Brieuc Bay:

- 1) ‘problematization’, where researchers join forces with scallops and fishermen and make allies to reach the goal of halting the decline of the scallop population;
- 2) ‘interessement’, where the actors – including the scallops, but also the fishermen and the public – are locked into an explanation of the decline in the population with an alternative solution in mind;
- 3) ‘enrolment’, where scallops, fishermen, and the public are brought together as a new actor by using devices to lock the actors into ways of measuring and understanding their role as a collective;
- 4) ‘mobilisation’, whereby researchers represent this collective as spokespersons, and the scallop-fishermen-researcher actor-network is mobilised into research papers, conference presentations, and new forums where their new identities are stabilised.

This translation thus involved the issue of declining sea life stocks in a French seaside town and it was gradually solved first through the scientific discovery of an alternative way for the scallops to live in an artificial environment. It was a process where experts have a much greater say over the steps that lead to the eventual end result of the scientists becoming the spokespersons of the entire actor-network. The model only fits the types of translations where experts actually have the power both to define the problem, and to solve and finally even represent the collective in public forums. Latour (1999a: 80-112) adds a fifth step, namely that of ‘links and knots’, where all of the four previous processes (using slightly different names for each stage) need to be brought together by a scientist to master the entire process. Latour (1993b) proposes a ‘parliament of things’ as an alternative to this process of creating scientific facts, whereby the process includes not only the scientists but also the laypersons who have a stake in the outcomes of any process of creating new knowledge and facts.

Here I propose another route: rather than mobilising around the redefinition of facts, why not look at how values are also translated along very similar processes? While Latour proposes a combination of values in the translation of facts (Latour 2004) to form a ‘new constitution’, he never studied value translations more closely. Value translations also could be seen as speaking on behalf of others to bring up the values of a person, community or a wider actor-network. Values, much like facts in the earlier example, become recognised objects only when they are constructed and gradually become publicly known. In economic sociology, existing models of translation had the central problem of being overtly focused on the role of experts and technologies (Slater 2002), and less so on ordinary citizens, users and other stakeholders. While scallops may need spokespersons, actors within the fieldsites that I studied in Ghana were rather keen to represent themselves, and if necessary, to appoint and elect leaders or experts who could pursue their interests.

The way this dilemma was approached in this thesis was to adapt the concept of translation to the fieldsites studied here in terms of the ways in which social value was translated. The charting out of the stages was made based on key informant interviews, most of them being founders or key personnel in the different fieldsites. One of the most defining key informants during my fieldwork was an interview with a staff member of a Ghanaian NGO called Social Enterprise Foundation of West Africa (known as SEND Foundation). This interview enabled me to see social enterprise as something emergent and as a process, beyond a set of criteria (Defourny 2001). According to this interviewee, social enterprises respond to community concerns as a process involving several stages. The key assumption behind this idea is that first of all people have a good understanding of the problems facing their own communities, and do not necessarily need outside measuring and evaluation of the causes and relationships of poverty in their communities.

[T]he way we try to operationalise this concept of social enterprise is that we say that if development [...] has a social dimension, [...] by that we mean that the people have to be at the centre, so they might champion their own development. So what we try to do is to look for a way to do development work that allows the community to enhance their social capital formation by they themselves being involved. So most of our projects in the first two years we try to emphasise very much the social aspect, the social capital development of the organisation as a perquisite.



People call it doing their time, and we work with them and their youth.

(Person A)

The ethos of the SEND Foundation is that the ordinary citizens should be in the driving seat of developmental activities. The prior organisation, networking and ‘social capital’ formation was at the heart of SEND Foundation’s approach as a way of addressing community concerns by the formation of new actors. In such a sense, the ‘problematization’ of a cause or a concern is within the very population who are the beneficiaries of the agency which takes place. The approach of the SEND Foundation is based on the assumption of an organic growth of a community to find its own solutions rather than considering an outside development expert or government official would be better placed to solve their problems.

This view was also reflected in the process of translation that I observed in the different fieldsites. At Busy Internet prior informal mentoring and networking activities had already constructed built the necessary social assemblages that later were further mobilised with aid money to start the Busy Incubator. The plans for business incubation did exist from the very beginning, but these were not materialised before the scale of their own activities allowed for it and they could identify additional funding to realise it. At LAUG, the work was based on prior building of local community relations within the group’s meetings, and exchanging views and tips about using Linux and other Free and Open Source (FOSS) applications on the Yahoo! Group list of the group. These exchanges were at the foundation of events that they eventually organised – such as the Software Freedom Day, and Linux Install Fest that required much more voluntary and donated resources from within and beyond the group. At Kuapa Kokoo, the actors saw their entire activity being based on the existence of strong village societies who organised themselves into a village societies to manage the local branch of the co-operative. The entire network of Kuapa Kokoo was based on viable village societies, as they had local officers (the purchasing clerks), who then related to the closest Area Office staff. Only later did they build the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU) once they had already built the trust within the village societies who would then constitute separately KKCU village credit union branches.

Therefore, there is no phase of ‘interessement’ as described by Callon (1986) or elsewhere (Akrich, Callon and Latour 2002) that discuss laypersons’ critique of existing expert-led interessements; rather a process which I call *association* takes place, where laypersons come up with solutions to the pertinent problems they face. This initial phase, according to the interviewee, may last for up to two years and it simply creates the conditions for future social and economic development.

[In] phase two, then we start doing some skills-training activities in whatever they are involved in. Then we are starting to use micro finance, so we have a credit union. It allows business development. [In] phase two we also try to consolidate those organisations so they develop into stronger and viable organisations who can become our partners. (Person A)

As the actors had come up with their own solutions, they do eventually need resources in the form of skills training or micro-credit, and both were offered by the SEND Foundation. This phase can therefore be called an *enrolment* just like in the case of expert-led scientific translation, as the phase involved getting the work done with the resources raised for such a purpose.

The phase on *enrolment* at Busy Internet was linked to the funding they received from World Bank’s InfoDev programme for the Busy Incubator project. There was subsequent tension of the funding conditionalities in the programme in relation to the expectations of the beneficiaries of the Busy Incubator programme. This tension between the ‘interessement’ proposed by the World Bank, and the *association* of the incubatees and Busy Internet staff will be discussed in Chapter 7. At LAUG, the events that they organised to attract new public *enrolled* important resources of voluntary work, aid flows for the agencies LAUG worked in partnership. At Kuapa Kokoo resources in the form of credit union loans were *enrolled* in the village societies. Enrolment in the sense of mobilising laypersons and actors’ own resources also responds to wider concerns about social value.

So it could be possible to construct a theory of social value that encompasses economic exchange, and in which the utility gained by material consumption is valued according to social criteria. (Jordan 2008: 38)

Indeed, the translation of social value responds to this dilemma identified by Jordan, in proposing a four-stage process that actually combines economic values in the third phase of translation when economic exchange is required for the fulfilment of social values. This combination places social values at a more important position in relation

to economic value, and thus aspects of economic value creation becomes auxiliary to creating social values.

To sum up, I will propose a slightly different process to the earlier models of translation, while continuing in the spirit of ANT of not constructing a general theory, but rather finding out how theory is generated through the particular conditions of the actors in each question. I identify translation here with the following four stages:

- 1) *problematization*, where actors – either experts or laypersons within social enterprises – raise their concern over the current state of things or events, and wish to articulate possible solutions. This initial phase can be a simple expression of discontent by customers, members or other stakeholders, or a fully worked out solution – depending on the type of the actor that we are talking about. Social enterprises studied here used very diverse situations and opportunities to voice their problematisations, including face-to-face interaction with staff, public discussion events and forums, and informal gatherings or formal meetings.
- 2) *association*, which emerges once a common proposal for solution is found among actors who participate in the social enterprise activity. Association denotes that a solution itself is a social agent, as it requires actors to align around a common understanding of how to solve the problem in question. Associations in social enterprises were formed in public spaces, professional networks, educational institutions, places where meetings were held, and also through building alliances by travelling from one place to another.
- 3) *enrolment*, following from actors bringing together the various economic and non-economic resources of time, money, contacts and other human or non-human objects which they assemble together into the common project to implement the solutions. This is a stage where economic and social values converge, as the accomplishment of social values requires economic resources in one form or another. Social enterprises can seek money in the form of aid funding, sponsorship, freebies as well credit via bank loans, traditional Susu-clubs, and also forming their own credit union, in the case of Kuapa Kokoo.
- 4) *evaluation*, which as the final stage establishes the outcomes and the impact of the social value creation within the social enterprises studied. Some processes of translation are formally evaluated within measuring and evaluation

frameworks, while others are appreciated informally. Some evaluations are also made to satisfy external demands, while most are for internal purposes. All types of evaluations are discussed. Evaluation is a crucial stage crucial to social enterprises because it largely legitimises and justifies their actions in terms of a social impact.

Social values among social enterprises studied in this thesis emerge through the process of translation as described above. Social enterprise is a process rather than a static practice. The creation of social value begins from somewhere, for example, from an event of realising the potential of FOSS or Linux, leading to the wish to start a business with social aims, or creating a chocolate manufacturing company owned by cocoa farmers in Ghana. The idea is then developed further and in later stages both financing and expertise is sought once a clear idea is seen apt for development. This idea is then communicated to the outside world and that establishes the ‘pride’ of cocoa farmers, or the ‘social development’ of Busy Internet in the form of the flagship Busy Incubator project, or the Software Freedom Day event for Linux Accra User Group. The creation of social values transcends the earlier nature-culture dichotomy, as it does not fit neatly into either side of the divide. The processes of translation have been previously used to analyse the creation of facts in natural scientific projects (Callon 1986, Latour 1999a; Latour 2004). Here it is adopted to explore ways in which social values are also created by actors who are engaged in the process.

Social values emerge through an interplay of social forms (Simmel 1971), as they negotiate distance and proximity, and importantly make sacrifices to attain something that is desirable and of value. Simmel goes on to consider that these interrelationships do not have an independent existence.

*“They are themselves immediately society. Only the unsearchable richness and abundance of the reciprocal influences operative at every moment have given to the general concept "society" an apparently independent historical reality.”* (Simmel 1909: 302, emphasis in original)

For Simmel, the presumed independence of subjects such as economy, family, religion as social institutions are mere ‘reifications’ or an abstractions which was a consequence of ever more complex social relationships. For instance, monetary relationships and urban landscapes have a seemingly independent domain of action, as they are increasingly detached interpersonal relationships. This, according to Simmel (1909: 301) develops due to a separation between form and content, explaining for

instance that a cube has at the same time a content of its material, and also it represents the geometrical shape which is known as a cube. If one only considers the geometric representation, it may be come detached from the relationships of craftsmanship, materials and tools that created the cube in the first place. In the *Philosophy of Money* (Simmel 2004) he discusses the role of money in creating 'objective culture' where money is seen as an end in itself, contributing to the emergence of specific relationships such as greed and poverty. However, even money as the 'purest' representation of social forms, derives its value and existence from reciprocal ties according to the broad notion of exchange, which encompasses aesthetic, human and economic exchanges.

Meanwhile, Latour (1991, 2004) sees actor-networks always as emergent and transitory. Durability in actor-networks is achieved through the use of technology and artefacts, as well as scientific institutions in the process of the creation of scientific 'facts'. In such a sense, for Latour money would be a technology which, much like mapmaking (Latour 1987). Information is concentrated in 'centres of calculation', which hold significant power over territories and spaces where they are deployed. Similarly, Callon talks of market institutions that stabilise forms of metrology,

To establish relations that "exist" between monetary masses and price levels, to act on the one in order to control the others, there have to be institutions, systems of observation, codification and data collection, tools for analysing large numbers and so on. (Callon 2007b: 333)

The establishment of metrological tools and instruments in this case can be considered as institutions or systems, which disseminate certain practices and types of interaction. However, these metrologies or market institutions do not have an independent existence beyond the actors who constructed, use and maintain such institutions as socio-technical assemblages. Forms of calculation and evaluation are often created by professionals and experts such as scientists and economists. However, as Barry and Slater argue (2002), the creation of metrological instruments is not only the domain of experts, and indeed also non-experts can create new metrologies, which in turn create new types of institutions.

Social values would only emerge after the processes of translation were successfully engaged, as seen in as the appreciation of fairtrade cocoa due to concern over livelihoods of Ghanaian cocoa farmers, or the localisation and greater sense of

ownership of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in adapting computer platforms for greater access to electronic media in libraries or schools. While many translations are partial, and never progress beyond initial stages, following up even the unfinished translations is equally interesting. Some translations therefore never constitute publicly recognised social values at all, but may still produce tangible benefits to the beneficiaries, customers or communities in which they work.

### ***2.3. Translations in Social Enterprises***

Social enterprises no longer reproduce or defend the usual economic boundaries as the only legitimate activity of a company (including profit, individuality and economic rationality), but rather look at ways of integrating different values into the project of the same enterprise (Defourny 2001; Laville 1996; Laville, Levesque and Mendell 2007). To start with, I borrow from the notion of linking social enterprises to the Third Sector, as we may say that its current conceptualisations allow us to identify three levels by which the ‘social’ nature of initiatives may be distinguished.

- 1) the purposes of the activity,
- 2) the non-commercial resources,
- 3) the particular organisational methods. (Defourny 2001: 15)

Further criteria are also often discussed in relation to social enterprises, especially in the European frame (Defourny 2001), where a European-wide research project called EMES established a list of criteria that they saw as describing social enterprises. The list has often been adopted as a set of qualitative criteria for defining social enterprises as a result (Social Enterprise London 2001; Department for Trade and Industry 2002; European Commission 2009), while the authors maintain that it is work in progress and should be adapted to each country and region where the issue of social enterprises is being looked into. The definition is still a useful starting point into looking at national, regional and local characteristics of social enterprise – and it makes a distinction between economic and social criteria. The economic qualities include:

- 1) A continuous activity producing goods and/or selling services;
- 2) High degree of autonomy;
- 3) A significant level of economic risk;
- 4) A minimum amount of paid work;

While the social qualities include:

- 5) An explicit aim to benefit the community;
- 6) An initiative launched by a group of citizens;
- 7) A decision-making power not based on capital ownership;
- 8) A participatory nature, which involves the persons affected by the activity;
- 9) Limited profit distribution. (Defourny 2001: 16-18)

If we compare these criteria to the Ghanaian examples of types of social enterprises above, we would need to alter these criteria somewhat. In Ghana, a social enterprise might be a seasonal or an occupational side project, and it might not be a continuous activity as such; but as Hart (1976) mentioned, informal enterprise strategies are often a complement to formal paid employment. Meanwhile autonomy and economic risk are commonplace characteristics of social enterprises, as just about all enterprise activities still carry an element of risk, whether performed by women's groups or Busy Internet as a large private sector company. With risk comes autonomy, as one assumes that the results are the fruit of one's own activities. Finally, an amount of paid work – used to distinguish social enterprises from purely voluntary activities – is hard to maintain as some payments in Ghana could be performed in kind as contributions, or through rendering favours via extended families or kinship networks.

Social enterprises are also openly 'hybrids' as they are capable of discussing their activities and attachments without the need to legitimise according to the conventional profit-maximisation paradigm of enterprises. The concept of social enterprise is a platform for discussing the unification of different types of exchange, institutional arrangements and resources.

The combinations of market, redistribution and reciprocity that characterise societies have varied historically. [...] The solidarity economy approach emphasises the hybridisation between the three patterns of integration that characterise contemporary economies but are generally not linked. (Laville, Levesque and Mendell 2007: 176)

For this type of hybridisation to take place, the precondition is the existence of strong institutionalised spheres where families are separated from market-based enterprise, where the public and the private sectors have different spheres of activity and distinct values, and where the reciprocal sphere of kinship and family relationships is considered completely outside of either of them. This separation, if we read Polanyi's

(1957) *Great Transformation* is constructed over time, and it is by no means stable.

According to Westall (2001: 9) we rather find that,

[t]he overlaps with other sectors – voluntary, government or mainstream business – illustrate the range of models incorporating different stakeholder involvement or ownership and also the lack of clear distinctions between sectors.

To this mix, Kerlin adds international aid as the fourth source of hybridity (Kerlin 2009), while economic anthropologists note the importance of informal economic organisations as possibly a separate sector (Hart 1976); solidarity economy (Singer 2000; Eme 1994); or a popular economy (Aman and Parker 1991; Nyssens 1997; Razeto 2010) as possibly a separate sector. Institutional hybridisation assumes the existence of strong institutions which defend their boundaries actively. This tends to be more the case in Europe and North America, where these theories of institutional hybridisation emerged, while in Ghana formal institutions are not considered to cover the totality of social relationships and interactions (Hart 1976). What is being hybridised would thus be somewhat different in Ghana than elsewhere, and we would need to add the informal sector to the hybrid mix as well. Hybridity can also be seen as a strategy for social enterprises to seek actively opportunities available to only certain legal forms, institutions or certification criteria.

[S]ocial entrepreneurs exploit (and hybridize) multiple organizational forms and types of disclosure: legal form and reporting practices are pliable and serve the larger mission rather than the other way around. (Nicholls 2009: 766)

The explanation of using multiple organisational forms, certificates and legal entities allows the use of different types of resources and attracts more consumers. For instance, a charitable legal structure would allow recruiting volunteers and receiving tax exempt donations, while being a shareholder in a company would allow for establishing market-based relationships with larger investors who would like to receive some dividends, while also wishing to see a demonstrated effort to abide to social norms and ethical guidelines. This hybridisation according to Nicholls is done without losing sight of the ‘mission’ or the social values of the social enterprise in question.

Busy Internet is a good example of such creativity, as they were able to find international aid flows from the InfoDev programme (see section 7.2.2) to start the Busy Incubator programme. In doing so, Busy Internet was following its social value



objectives, and the institutional frameworks were able to adapt to them – rather than the other way around. At Kuapa Kokoo (see section 7.2.1), a combination of aid and loan funding was received in the form of Women Vision International (WVI) loans, where the loans allowed the creation of new women’s groups which often did not formally exist prior to the formation of lending and savings groups. At Linux Accra User Group (see section 7.2.3) they received money and ‘freebies’ from sponsors, who supported the organisation and planning of special events such as the Linux Install Festival. These activities did not require the mobilisation of money or credit in a direct manner, but rather making donations to third parties who were able to book spaces and share resources with LAUG members. In all of these examples, mixing resources was an important matter, and it provided a way for social enterprises to function in a more flexible manner.

An interesting similarity exists between the sociology of Simmel and actor-network theory (ANT) in the definition of the concept of the ‘social’ discussed already by Pyyhtinen (2010). The ‘social’ in Actor-Network Theory (ANT) arises from these entanglements and framings and hybridities, among human and nonhuman actors. According to Latour the ‘social’ is located in constant shift and movement.

This is the reason why I am going to define the social not as a special domain, a specific realm, or a particular sort of thing, but only as a very peculiar movement of re-association and reassembling. (Latour 2005: 7)

The assemblage is therefore not a ‘thing’ in itself, but rather a process which can be followed through different stages which here are understood in terms of the processes of assemblage, calculation, framing and translation. In addition to the flux, Latour sees action as being not embodied to an agent, but rather as being ‘dislocated’ and taking place around the actor.

If we accept to unfold the metaphor, the very word actor directs our attention to a complete dislocation of the action, warning us that it is not a coherent, controlled, well-rounded, and clean-edged affair. By definition, action is dislocated. Action is borrowed, distributed, suggested, influenced, dominated, betrayed, translated. (Latour: 2005: 46)

The notion of ‘dislocation’ allows us to move beyond simple subject-object relations in Latour’s account of the ‘social’ and consider the social as itself being distributed, dissolved and dislocated. The actor for Latour is not a situated one, and the philosophical underpinnings of the actor are described as Latour as a theory of

relativity (Latour 2005: 12). Latour adds that those who we are with are also material and other nonhuman others.

One of the differences between Latour's and Simmel's understanding of the 'social', however, relates to whether the social is made of separate entities that are connected, assembled, and translated together as Latour argues, or whether the 'social' *is* in fact the interrelationships as Simmel would argue through his notions of 'being-with' as discussed by Pyyhtinen (2009: 110).

The being of an individual is thus always supported, even constituted by something *other* than him- or herself. This makes the 'other' a crucial component in the structure of being for Simmel; being-with others is essential to the constitution of being. Accepting this idea has significant consequences for our understanding of 'the social'. From the perspective of being-with, to study the social is to explore the conditions of forms of being along with others.

The centrality of the self-other relation for Simmel is carried forwards in his very concept of the 'social' which is neither the totality, nor the sum of its parts, but rather the connectedness between the parts. In this respect, Simmel (1971) analyses what he calls 'social forms' such as the dyad between two entities (dyad), and three entities (triad) as an emergent social category of the 'we'.

In principle, for Simmel the shift from the bilateral relationship to a trilateral formation marks the emergence of groups, a supra-individual entity that is constituted not only by I-you relations but also by part-to-whole relations. (Pyyhtinen 2009: 109)

These social forms for Simmel are, therefore, not unrelated to the associations and interrelations. The study of sociology, is essentially about understanding 'reciprocal effects' or 'interactions' (Wechselwirkungen) which may create social forms such as money, family and religion, but can always be brought back to the I-you relations. Meanwhile, for Latour technology plays an important part in connecting and associating between individuals – introducing a relative sense of continuity, and thus forms of power (Latour 1991). Technology for Simmel sits in a different category of a relationship, discussed as a 'tool' which does not have agency in its own right, due to the reason that nonhumans for Simmel do not have *life*, which as argued by Lash (2005) constitutes the basis of Simmel's sociology of associations.

The 'social' in this thesis is adopted from Simmel's works, and is therefore situated in the spaces 'in-between' individuals and objects. This is what we will see in the case

of Linux Accra User Group, as the 'social' it is mediated by emergent social forms and tools of information technology that are used to constitute the 'social'. In the case of Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union the 'social' is studied in relation to credit relationships between members of a Village Society as well as through the use of 'artefacts' such as a loan form which establishes a material continuity of agency in time and space. Finally, at Busy Internet, the 'social' is constituted through the relationships between the projects and participants at events who also interact with the built environment and public spaces. This does not make these 'social forms' independent or detached from the associations or assemblages, though in some instances the actors in such places and spaces may wish to emphasise the social values by giving them an independent and 'reified' form.

Actor-network theory has discussed the dynamics of hybridisation in terms of 'framing' and 'calculation'. These are unifying terms that can combine economic and social values, and assume no specific scale or shape of an actor. In real-world markets, while Callon does not talk of social values explicitly, he proposed that decisions are not straightforward, and cannot be assumed to take place without a prior construction of the conditions in which calculation takes place. Calculation becomes an act of negotiating assemblages that contain both fact and value:

More specifically, for calculative agents to be able to take decisions they need to at least be able to:

- i) establish a list of the possible states of the world
- ii) rank these states of the world which gives content and an object to the agent's preferences
- iii) identify and describe the actions which allow for the production of each of the possible states of the world. (Callon 1999: 184)

These conditions emerge differently in each market, depending on the capabilities of actors to engage in markets with tools and devices that they have to measure, rank, calculate and ultimately take decisions. The considerations include value-based judgements, as the actors are balancing social and economic value as well as considering combinations thereof when making decisions over distinct possible future statuses. These value judgements are called 'entanglements' (Callon 1998a), or 'qualifications' (Callon, Méadel and Rabeharisoa 2002), involving agency which is not limited to economic rationality alone.

Instead of using the concept of calculation, here I found more fruitful the use of the concept of translation (Callon and Latour 1981; Callon and Law 1982; Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe 2009). Both concepts have been widely used in ANT, and can be used to describe how hybridity is achieved in markets. The key difference is that, while calculation is about momentary frames of calculation that appear at the moment of taking a decision, translation involves long-term processes of establishing new types of actors through a series of stages that transform the entity and develops a different type of agency invested in it. Both calculation and translation as concepts can accommodate for hybridity. Calculative agency has been expanded to include both the calculative practices by non-economists in diverse types of measuring and accounting practices (Barry and Slater 2002; Mitchell 2002; Mitchell 2010). Translation can also involve a significant amount of hybridity between experts and laypersons, for instance, in the case of a particular association of disabled persons suffering from a condition of Myopathies (Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe 2009).

What is common between both of them is that they talk about the role of experts and expertise within socio-technical assemblages. This is exemplified in the work of Timothy Mitchell (2002: 111), who takes the example of Egypt, shows how international financial institutions such as the IMF have had a monopoly of expertise in restructuring markets in the absence of other agencies that could provide counter expertise.

[I]f economics treats economic relations as essentially relational and consensual, and reduces coercion and violence to residual questions of enforcement and sanction, this corresponds to the discipline's role in the larger project of embedding the exercise of coercion into the force of nature and the laws of the markets - in subsuming the under logics of history, capital or exchange. (Mitchell 2002: 300)

Calculative practices are based on coercive institutions, which then are negotiated with national institutions to regain some form of sovereignty. In this instance, the development of such calculative practices provides the long-term view, of the different shifts in policy and practice at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the key donor agencies such as USAID, whose interactions with key ministers, armed forces, and influential families are at the heart of such coercive power over Egypt. In the concept of translation expertise is located in the stage of 'interessement' as used by Callon (1986) and Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe (2009) in understanding the transformation of matters of concern into actor-networks that have specific aims. By

focusing on stages of translation, we can study the emergence of counter expertise or laypersons' views to be integrated in hybrid models of agency.

While in ANT, the stability of such relationships is the metrological or technological process or artefact, taking a Simmelian perspective allowed me to study 'social forms' that were assembled in a process of translation. While the process of translation could be described as the creation of new metrologies and means of calculation, this was only apparent in one of the fieldsites that was studied, namely that of fairtrade cocoa. Curiously, the metrological apparatus was most relevant for the consumers of fairtrade, rather than for the producers who were most concerned by the creation of new types of social forms of a co-operative, and in maintaining their own lobby.

Later, Callon and Muniesa (2005) use the term of 'qualculation' to denote the calculation of quantitative qualities first introduced by Cochoy (2002). Despite these additions, calculation for Callon establishes an order that necessarily requires the production of equivalences. Thus calculation introduces an element of economic value into what could be considered in much broader terms, which he has discussed in terms of the process of 'economisation' (Çalışkan and Callon 2009; Çalışkan and Callon 2010). In contrast, Miller (2002) considers that calculation introduces a utilitarian logic, and thus is an apology to the neo-classical economists. He proposes that calculation as such is better understood as an example of 'virtualism' where extremely heterogeneous aspects of identity, status and power are negotiated.

Instead of calculation, I rather talk here of metrologies (Callon 1998a; Barry and Slater 2002) and evaluation (Vatin 2009; Eymard-Duvernay, Favereau, et. al. 2005), which provide a way of overcoming the nature and culture divide as this divide does not assume equivalence between values being assessed. This plural agency is a source for creating new types of actors, which emerge as practices of valuation and measuring, bringing actors together as they make use of the diversified resources.

[M]etrology itself creates new objects. This is made clear in Callon's analysis of 'framing' in *The Laws of the Markets*. Metrological practices (such as those associated with, for example, quality control, audit or environmental monitoring, etc.) do not just reflect reality as it is. They create new realities (calculable objects) that can, in turn, be the object of economic calculation." (Barry and Slater 2002: 181)

Barry and Slater also extend the view of framing to practices of association and non-professional or scientific forms of knowledge. Such practices make calculation – which Callon (1998b) introduced in terms of professional economists – more applicable to social enterprises, which do not attempt to reproduce the ‘purified’ notions of economic value through their operations. An increasing array of social accounting, blended value and social audits (Nicholls 2009) are emerging (see in particular section 8.1). The process of measuring creates new ties, as regular participation in social accounting, stakeholder forums and establishment of public spaces changes the socio-technical networks on which the company depends. This process necessarily both includes and contains some of the pressures that social enterprises are facing.

Indeed, far from limiting the possibility for political conflict and negotiation, framing forms something like a surface on which forms of political reflection, negotiation and conflict can condense. (Barry and Slater 2002: 185)

The authors above considered that ‘anti-political’ use of technological devices and tools was more commonplace in containing dissent. Framing can have ‘anti-political’ uses (Barry 2002) in the sense that those who define frames – where certain types of actors and alliances are allowed to define a topic of discussion or decision-making process – gain control over the very process they define. In the case of social enterprises similar tools of measuring and evaluation, if defined by the actors themselves, can be a source for greater autonomy and self-legitimation, creating a greater reputation and negotiating difficult conflicts. The fairtrade labelling system used by Kuapa Kokoo, as well as the loans assessment procedures discussed in this study, provide an example of such metrological practices that are primarily defined by actors themselves.

Framing, therefore, also renders some conflicts and negotiations more visible, and allows studying participation – not only exclusion – but also greater participation.

Barry takes the example of urban pollution from cars:

Calculation increases reflexivity about the organization of the market, but it also effects a reduction in the potential space of political conflict. When they meet in the showroom, the car buyer and the car seller do not enter into a heated controversy about the politics of global warming or the effects of cars on the health of schoolchildren or on asthma sufferers. (Barry 2002: 273)

While Barry considers that there are often powerful interests that determine such frames, be they car manufacturers, oil companies or political parties associated with funding from both these sources, he does not take into account that the very concept of framing also allows the opportunity to study conflict and disagreement, as much as its reduction. Jordan, who used social value in relation to well-being studies, argues that utility is an ‘anti-political’ technological device, invented in the Enlightenment period precisely to contain social values. Utility, far from being a sign of personal freedom as often proposed by liberal economists, was rather a restraint of the negative social values of glory, passion and duty, which were considered as being destructive.

The model in which utility is installed as the metric of all value was designed by its originators as a *replacement* for social value (perceived as the product of passions, rites and rivalries, deriving from sex, kinship, blood, rank, faith and territory). (Jordan 2008: 146, emphasis in original)

The reductionism was inherent in the concept of utility, and it is best understood as a moral device of containing social values by placing the burden of choice and rational reasoning on the individual agent rather than allowing social institutions and norms to govern choices. Jordan (2008: 130) links these restrictions to the Enlightenment project, which thought that rationalism through purification would solve many of society’s ills.

[T]he Enlightenment project for modernity sought to exclude the symbolic value of interactions from the public sphere of economy, polity and international relations, as subversive of order and harmony.

The fear of the Enlightenment thinkers was that negative social values, such as honour, pride and hatred would gradually become so overwhelming that they could destroy society as such. The rise of different national rivalries and hatred of other social groups, exemplified most prominently in fascism, does exemplify that such fears are not without foundation (Bauman 1989). However, the unique focus on negative social values means that many of the positive social values have since been ignored through the extensive focus on rationalism. It’s worth noting that the reductionist views of values have also made it nearly impossible to discuss social values in a general sense without recourse to some type of utilitarian maximisation or legitimisation. This loss of social values is what social enterprises also aim to address by placing it in as their main objective.

## **2.4. Conclusions**

Modernity was here reviewed as a process of a double dichotomy, whereby researchers have attempted to produce theories that separate the 'cultural' from the 'natural' events. The different market actors have been successively 'purified' into idealised ways of interaction and causality, which have little to do with actual ways that real world markets work. The way in which this dichotomy worked is by the separation of economic values from social values, which has gradually worked itself through the process of 'purification'. Here, by bringing forward the theory of social values, I make an attempt to break such a dichotomy and once again propose that economies are plural and multi-faceted and can carry multiple types of values in the same organisations.

The second part of the dichotomy considered 'translation' which is the process by which events and issues become facts or values. Here I follow the stages of translation, adapted from natural sciences, which started from a problematisation of issues and events within the three different fieldsites studied here. Subsequently, some of these problematisations are taken up and become new associations, where actors team up together around an agreed solution. For these associations actually to be implemented as enrolments, they require resources such as expertise, money and voluntary contributions of time and energy. Finally, as some issues get through all of these stages, evaluation takes place, which then solidifies and formalises the process and often objectifies the social values as norms and beliefs at the end of the process.

Looking at social enterprises through this dual prism of purification and translation, we find that they are pluralistic sites of economic life. Social enterprises have been analysed previously as hybrids, while here by using actor-network theory, I consider social enterprises as constituting assemblages that measure social values along-side with economic values – and thus constitute new types of objects of calculation. By calculating these new boundaries, they constitute new entities by including stakeholders, users and members in the process, which in turn has a reflexive effect on the size and shape of the enterprise in the first place.



### 3.0. Tracing Assemblages – On Methodology

In this scheme of things entities have no inherent qualities: essentialist divisions are thrown on the bonfire of dualism. Truth and falsehood. Large and small. Agency and structure. Human and non-human. Before and after. Knowledge and power. Context and content. Materiality and sociality. Activity and passivity. In one way or another all of these divides have been rubbished in the work undertaken in the name of actor-network theory. (Law 1999: 3)

In this chapter I explore some of the key questions that emerged during the fieldwork period related to ways of giving accounts of the actors that I encountered in the three fieldsites. When describing their activities, I found the current concepts and vocabulary of ANT insufficient and introduced a distinction between a ‘field’ as an entry point to study actors, and an ‘assemblage’ as the actor itself. In making this distinction clearer, I draw here upon the central notions of ANT which assume no specific shape or size of the actor – neither micro nor macro, human or non-human. The actor thus emerges in the pragmatic sense through what it does. The shape evolves either through observation, the study of artefacts produced by the actor, or by any other discernible traces and documents uncovered in archival research and secondary sources.

By following the actor (Latour 2005), we find that the researcher either willingly or unwillingly becomes part of the assemblage that he or she is studying. Thus a short note is also worth mentioning on the intentions of why I started to research social enterprises in Ghana. While Latour is adamant about noting the role of Pasteur (Latour 1993a) in ‘discovering’ a microbe, he is less keen to describing his own role while, for example, looking at translation within the Paris transport system (Latour 1996). Interestingly, these studies also emerge as the ethical statements of ANT, which again are not made entirely explicit in ANT, while it has been quite keen to point out the ‘performativity’ of economists and other professionals. The dialogue between researchers and actors is a source of further ethical concern – simply, because some actors may prefer to be left alone and not be disrupted. Thus ethical questions to studying agency also become a necessary part of the discussion. The actor in this sense is also what the he or she gives out of oneself. Thus actors should

still be allowed to keep their secrets, and the researcher should not try to force them to reveal these.

We will approach these three problems in the present chapter by first (in section 3.1) discussing the distinction between a field as an entry point and an assemblage as the actor being followed up, to clarify the methodological approach of discussing assemblages as heterogeneous and indeterminate sites of agency. Following this, (section 3.2) I describe the three different fieldsites that were studied in this thesis in a descriptive manner. In each case I outline what constitutes a fieldsite, what types of assemblages were encountered and how they expanded far beyond the fieldsites in question. I then (section 3.3.) reflect on the manner in which claims are made in ANT, and what kind of validity and empirical sense they bring to understanding the research theme. Finally, I relate the empirical claims to ethical questions (section 3.4) associated with this ethnographic research project.

### **3.1. *Fieldsite and Assemblage Distinction***

The difficulty in ANT thus far has been how to define what constitutes the object of the study, and how to limit it within a practical fieldwork plan. Here, I will make an essential distinction between a 'fieldsite' as a space that can be used as a multiple-entry point for studying an 'assemblage', which, as an actor, can be framed and is able to rank and order motives, preferences and values, and ultimately make decisions that may extend beyond the original location. The key idea of ANT is that it proposes to study agency in a 'radically indeterminate' manner. The idea allows the theory to be used to study actors as they present themselves, rather than being restricted to a pre-defined theoretical and conceptual context, bounded territory or some other container.

The most important is that ANT is based on no stable theory of the actor; rather it assumes the *radical indeterminacy* of the actor. For example, the actor's size, its psychological make-up, and the motivations behind its actions – none of these are predetermined. (Callon 1999: 181-182, emphasis added)

This instability and indeterminacy has been interpreted in various ways, as indeterminacy is too often taken for lacking the theory of an actor. Some see in it a complete lack of method, which leads to a methodological confusion, as noted by

Candea (2007) with regard to using ANT in studying political groups in the French island of Corsica. The experience observed in this study concluded that following connections endlessly is not a good methodological guide, but apparently it is the only one offered by Latour (2005)<sup>3</sup>. Rather, any guidance on how to conduct a study by following the actors has to do with what ANT is *not* about:

ANT does not tell anyone the shape that is to be drawn – circles or cubes or lines – but only how to go about systematically recording the world-building abilities of the sites to be documented and registered. (Latour 1999b: 21)

ANT in its present form is mostly a critique of structural explanations of agency, rather than a well-developed methodology which could be adapted to different fieldsites. In a similar way, Latour (2005) describes ANT most commonly in terms of uncertainties that it presents, rather than methods to describe these uncertainties. Very rarely does Latour discuss what ANT could actually be about, and how one should conduct a study following this tradition (Latour 1991; Latour 2004). Despite these difficulties in actually following methods and ideas within actor-network-theory a rich literature has grown around topics such as ‘performativity’ (Callon 1998b) of experts within society and their interaction with laypersons; ‘agencement’ (Callon 2007a; McFall 2010) addressing the agency of socio-technical assemblages such as marketing, packaging, and insurance sales that in themselves create new markets; to market devices such as formulae and evaluation tools being used to create markets (Callon, Millo and Muniesa 2007).

Since the publication of *The Laws of the Markets* by Callon (1998), economic sociology has moved on from considering a social context of in which an economy is embedded (Granovetter 1985) as being the subject matter of the discipline. The research agenda has evolved tremendously since the earlier works, and challenges established views by economists and other market professionals about both the content and role that they play within an economy (McFall 2009b). My contribution to the debate in this thesis is to add views of laypersons in these actor-networks,

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<sup>3</sup> The guidance is in the form of a conversation between Latour and rather a confused PhD candidate at the London School of Economics, reprinted in Latour (2005) as a chapter. This confusion is something I think every student encountering and subsequently adopting ANT has to face. Latour is not very pedagogical about the way in which he conducts this encounter, as the questions asked to him are real.

already hinted by Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe (2009), but considered as being of marginal importance in the fieldsites that the study discussed.

In looking for the completeness of an actor-network, the debate about the indeterminacy of the actor has led to a discussion about ‘cutting the network’ (Strathern 1996), which is especially related to ANT as it has challenged more place-bound ethnographies. Strathern points out that “a network is an apt image for describing the way one can link or enumerate disparate entities without making assumptions about level or hierarchy” (Strathern 1996: 522). This idea of the lack of a pre-conceived hierarchy and position of actors was also the main attraction in choosing ANT for this thesis. For Strathern the task of tracing networks entails being able to cut them. Much of the discussion on ANT’s challenge with regard to more classical ethnography is focused on the increased connections that can be made outside the fieldsite where actors are observed, or between human and non-human actors. Making such cutting points, however, reintroduces (as cutting always involves pasting the cut pieces to a scientific journal or other publication) an element of structure, a traditional yardstick of exhaustiveness and comprehensiveness of all ethnographers.

They may seem to depend on continuities of identity (that is, on homogeneity). But heterogeneous networks also have their limits. I shall argue that if we take certain kinds of networks as socially expanded hybrids then we can take hybrids as condensed networks. (Strathern 1996: 523)

The idea of cutting networks here does establish new structures. Presenting an actor-network to the public not only ‘cuts’ but also simultaneously ‘pastes’ the network in public, taking the form of an academic article in the post-fieldwork phase of the study. Latour rarely discusses himself as having ‘performative’ power, possibly due to considering not thinking himself as a spokesperson for microbes or plants he presents in a different light from the natural scientist. The real question is how the researcher establishes such cutting points, and whether they follow any prior ‘natural’ or ‘cultural’ boundaries. But what are these homogenous networks, and what is the role of anthropologists themselves in reproducing such homogeneity on concepts such as identity or meaning, which one may assume to exist within certain boundaries?

Possibly the most classic boundary of anthropological inquiry is that of a 'place' of study. Most anthropologists classify the whole field of study in terms of territories where anthropology takes place, and this became the role of anthropology in the academic division of labour in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The validity of anthropological accounts was then a matter of the time spent in studying such places, and the detail shown in the fieldnotes and other materials that described these locations. When the intent of the study is to investigate the kinship relations that are found in the field as a 'comprehensive' ethnography (Spradley 1980: 31), it is essential to capture face-to-face dynamics within specific places.

[L]ocal communities are methodologically manageable units which can easily be studied through participant observation. In a village or a relatively bounded local environment, most inhabitants know each other personally; they participate in, and reproduce, a social system characterised by face-to-face contact. (Eriksen and Nielsen 2001: 58)

Originally for practical reasons, traditional ethnography has focused on a manageable place, choosing topics of study that emerge from the field. It is from this notion of a lived place that one can best expand towards the different topics that emerge through the stratification, hierarchy and power vested within the chosen locality. However, Geertz already recognised that while place is the entry point, it is not the entire story.

The locus of study is not the object of study. Anthropologists don't study villages (tribes, towns, neighbourhoods...); they study *in* villages. You can study different things in different places, and some things – for example, what colonial domination does to established frames of moral expectation – you can best study in confined localities. (Geertz 1973: 22, emphasis in original)

Geertz is making the case that otherness and distance as dilemmas in ethnographic enquiry are best solved by assuming a stable (while not static) viewpoint about communities or places situated elsewhere from the author's initial point of entry. I argue that studying 'assemblages' can benefit from this implicit distinction between a fieldsite and an assemblage. The difference that I propose, referring to Geertz, is that the actor can also move around to follow other actors who bypass and overflow the initial entry points. Actor-network theory in some sense reverses Geertz's idea, as rather than considering that anthropologists should remain in the village, one should follow the actors over and beyond the villages. The limits are not established by geography, but by a completeness of a process of translation which is being followed-up and mapped-out.

Actor-network theory does not go as far as claiming that places have completely disappeared. Rather, as it considers that agency is distributed in *spaces* and we should consider indeterminate spaces rather than places (Benediktsson 2002; Leyshon and Thrift 1997). Fragmentation is a real danger in using ANT, which is why one needs to follow the process of an actor throughout the story. Place is only an entry point for studying such complex and heterogeneous actors. ANT has certainly learned a lot from anthropology in the ways in which it describes complex agency and interaction. Furthermore, Latour has been inspired by the ethnomethodology of Garfinkel (1984), which inspired him to look at social interaction in more detail. Latour (1987) uses terms such as 'centre of calculation' where places are reduced to information that is gathered in maps, charts and other geometrical devices. Meanwhile face-to-face interaction as a feature of 'place' also plays a significant role (Goffman 1975) in understanding 'framing' of more heterogeneous agency, even though it may take place in meetings in different locations, including cyberspace. These different methods serve as possible ways in which to structure the fragmented data collected during the fieldwork period.

Translation as a process that is studied transcends more traditional anthropological concepts such as that of 'place' (Geertz 1973) and even that of a 'space', which has largely replaced the earlier notion of studying via places. Riles (2000) analyses this dilemma of moving from traditional ethnography towards recognising places in a more distributed fashion rather than focusing on multi-sitedness (Marcus 1995).

[T]he focus of the engagement must lie in the problem of how to render that familiar accessible ethnographically, not in the identification of new multisided "places", diasporic "groups", or technological phenomena for anthropological study. This will require finding a point of access from *within* the ethnographic material – it will require turning the Network Inside Out.

What Riles then discussed as the method of turning the network inside out as it were, was to not take representations of networks at face value. It means tracing networks to where they lead, rather than assuming any type of hierarchy or symmetry pre-existing. Rather Riles considered that networks had themselves to be constructed prior to their deployment as 'networks' and the sociologists needed to take a critical step of inquiry away from concepts used in the field (such as a 'network') and that of the methodological unit of study. Riles (2000: 8) takes the example of how

international norms and law gradually builds up from language in documents presented by advocacy groups:

[A]s “language” is quoted and repeated from one conference document to the next and as states begin to conform their practices, or at least their discourse, to the norms expressed therein, some of what is agreed upon at global conferences gradually will become rules of “customary international law”.

This is one way of looking at what is here understood in terms of *translation*, where what is ultimately studied is the process of constitution and construction of legal documents, namely how artefacts (Akrich and Latour 1992) become incorporated in objects that are recognised as having a legal standing. Such processes are possible to follow using actor-network theory, and they provide one way of using ANT to study agency in a transnational sphere of agency. Finding these cut-off points in ANT is not very clear, and while it may work for legal documents, less materially focused translation such as the creation of unwritten and informal social values here required another approach.

At this point it is necessary to introduce a distinction between what is a ‘fieldsite’ as a place of study and an ‘assemblage’ as a heterogeneous actor. ANT has tended to bypass this distinction, proceeding to discuss assemblages and actor-networks directly, without tracing how they were found and encountered, approached and traced as assemblages that are then studied during the fieldwork experience. Entry of the researcher to the fieldsite is part of the assemblage studied. For instance Latour (1993b: 11) notes only in passing that his method is linked to semiotic principles.

The method I use here consists simply in following all these translations, drifts, and diversions as they are made by the writers of the period. Despite my search for complication, I could find no more than this simple method. Semiotics provides me with a discipline, but since it is too meticulous to cover a period of fifty years and thousands of pages, the semiotic method is here limited to the interdefinition of actors and to the chains of translations.

For Latour, concepts such as translation and other semiotic terminology provide one way to group the connections together and study it as if it were a semiotic web with indefinite connections. In such a web, it is the purpose of the ethnographer to see what meaning actors give to such semiotic spaces, and to look at the chains of translation how objects are moved from one shape to another. This idea of the absence of a pre-conceived hierarchy and position of actors was also the main attraction in choosing ANT for this thesis. The task of the researcher is to try to

understand the hierarchies that the research participants recognise, rather than trying to impose a preconceived instance of order.

For Latour, an assemblage is a moving target that cannot be studied in a complete or comprehensive sense (Latour 2005). In contrast, De Landa (2006) considers that an assemblage is a realistic picture of an agent that can be captured in a given space and time, meaning that causalities could be established between such actors.

[A]nalysis in assemblages theory is not conceptual but causal, concerned with the discovery of the *actual mechanisms* operating at a given spatial scale. (De Landa 2006: 31, emphasis in the original)

Studying assemblages ‘out there’ in the real world is about studying the interrelations which can reveal causality in different directions. Here, I rather consider assemblages under the definition given by Latour (2005), as being ways of understanding agency which is extended in space and time, such as the process of translation described in Chapter 2 and discussed in sequence in Chapters 5 to 8. Establishing causalities, as Latour proposes, becomes more complicated if we do not have a fixed ‘thing’ we are studying, but rather we see progression and process, which may or may not mean the presence of causality.

A further concept proposed by Callon to study agency is characterised by the term *agencement* (Callon 2007a), which I find as being a special case of a translation where professionals in particular have a very strong role. For Callon it signifies the unity between human and non-human agency, as most terms in ANT including the assemblage do. The difference between an assemblage and an *agencement* is rather in the type of agency that the actor is vested with. This philosophical notion is also used by McFall (2009a: 51) to study effects between assemblages and their intended or unintended effects:

Through privileging dynamic articulation and its effects, *agencement* targets not the assemblages *per se* but how they produce particular forms of action and agency.

*Agencement* therefore is an assemblage which has an interest, a motive – in the sense that assemblages become reflective, and statements about them also start to reflect actor behaviour. McFall, by describing how ‘*agencements*’ shape society, considers that objects never exist *per se* but are always shaped by instances which control means of measuring and creating new devices. She goes on to argue (McFall 2010)



that insurance companies, politicians, media, customers and sellers perform life insurance markets, and that agencements are a way to understand the powerful actors in question. Agencements are therefore also a manner to introduce discussions concerning power into ANT. Another definition of an ‘agencement’ is given below:

Agencements denote socio-technical arrangements when they are considered from the point view of their capacity to act. (Çalışkan and Callon 2010: 9)

While Çalışkan and Callon consider ‘agencements’ as actors who already have the capacity to act, I am more interested in how such capacity is translated in the first place. I thus assume no agencement to exist without its prior assemblage and translation. I consider that *agencement* is just one special type of translation, of experts having vested socio-technical power. Therefore, I consider it better to revert back to the more general theory and concepts of translation and assemblage, and then study *agencements* as special types of translations of actor-networks with vested interests.

Secondly, looking back at the fieldwork period, I chose to focus on certain activities that emerged as meaningful and significant to the actors I had encountered. This ‘cutting’ of the actors into identifiable assemblages took place intuitively rather than in any type of prioritisation or criteria and how well it contributed to following up the process of translation. At Kuapa Kokoo, which was the only exception, I had asked to study the KKCUC but also through this came across the other activities of the Research and Development Officer (RDO), who was engaged in defending farmers’ rights, providing them with pricing information of commodities and farm supplies, and helping them to gain access to government services. None of this was anticipated or obvious before having mapped chartered the actors and starting to spend some time with them.

It was the follow-up of the processes of translation, and its fragments that gave the structure to the substantive chapters discussing the fieldwork period. In the beginning I did not consider the notions of translation as being so central, but rather I had the notions of calculation and framing in my initial toolbox (Callon 1998a). It was only much later in my writing-up period that I started using the concept of translation (Callon and Latour 1981; Callon 1986; Latour 2004) more commonly, and indeed, this allowed me to link up the three different fieldsites together into a common

narrative about social value. A few other concepts that are used throughout the project are worth clarifying, following broadly from the glossary in *Pandora's Hope* (Latour 1999a) while also taking clues from a vocabulary provided by Akrich and Latour (1992).

At Busy Internet, the fragments of assemblages were only later on structured to provide a narrative account. Time is one of the factors in the narrative, as most accounts move in time; at times, however, the accounts move from one space to another, or alternatively between different types of actors. I was fortunate that on the first few days after entering Busy Internet, they had just started the Busy Incubator programme, and that I subsequently gained access to the entrepreneurs in this programme through making acquaintances and friends at Busy, who in turn would introduce me around the café. I later discovered that some of person I met informally were also members of the informal Busy Family, and thus had access to the café due to having organised some of the events and seminars that I will discuss in some length. These assemblages then became the focus of my study in some greater length.

Finally, at LAUG, the assemblages were a matter of encounters both in the physical meetings and through an online discussion list. Each event they organised was a separate assemblage, as there was a purpose for the event: it mobilised actors and created a temporary institution around itself, which then was discussed afterwards in a form of an evaluation. Projects such as a Ghanaian keyboard layout, digital libraries or long-range wireless Internet that LAUG took on, or planned to realise, were also assemblages. They had an existence of their own often with one or two enthusiastic members, the hardware and Internet connections on which they thrived, and often the actors met outside the meeting to discuss how to advance their own projects.

In each case, I did not limit the study to the boundaries of the social enterprise as an institution or an organisation. The social value translations were clearly overflowing both the institutional settings and constituted their own spatial assemblages. For instance, in the case of Busy Internet, I studied not only the institutional actors, but also some of the informal professional networks, such as the Busy Family, as well as the more formal institutions. In some ways the Linux Accra User Group (LAUG) was

also organising activities at Busy Internet, including both actual events and also informal space for meetings.

At Kuapa Kokoo, the presence of fairtrade<sup>4</sup> networks, a credit union movement across the world, and international donors were all integral parts of Kuapa's social value translations. Had I only studied the chosen place or the institutional boundaries of Kuapa, I would necessarily have missed out on a number of important stages of translation that were expressed during the fieldwork period. The move from traditional ethnography of place to an ethnography of translations of different assemblages is consequently seen here as an important methodological step, while it also brought some difficulties. It is partly a step back towards looking at the roots of ANT in ethnography (rather than in ethnomethodology), and making more explicit how assemblages were encountered based on my fieldwork experience. This description, however, allows me to step forwards and study indeterminate actors that I follow up based on such fieldsites.

I wish to explain these steps to make the ethnography easier to read and evaluate in terms of the findings. If I had strictly kept to the fieldsites as the basis of the ethnographic inquiry, I would have missed out on many interesting assemblages that linked up far beyond the original fieldsites where they were encountered. The Geertzian notion of studying actors *in* neighbourhoods, villages or other localities could be reversed in the sense that we study actors *through* these locations, but also reach out to look at the connections and linkages that exist outside a single field where actors are first encountered. Actors, when followed-up in their processes of translation, will experience meaningful translations and passages, which the

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<sup>4</sup> Fairtrade Labelling Organisations International (Fairtrade Labelling Organisation 2007a) defines the term 'fairtrade' in the collated form, and I will use this spelling as well. "The term Fairtrade is used to describe the certification and labelling system governed by FLO designed to allow consumers to identify goods produced under agreed labour and environmental standards [...] The term fair trade is a broader term often used to describe one or many of the above, but can also occasionally be used to refer to trade justice issues. In such cases, it can be as broad as to describe general fairness in trade, such as tariffs, subsidies, worker rights and other issues." This etymological distinction attempts to reinforce the break from the past trading structures, and it may very well become a standard way of referring to an ethical trading system organised by rules set by civil society organisations.

researcher can trace and conceptualise to the extent it becomes methodologically possible.

### **3.2. Doing ANT**

The way in which I approached this distinction between fieldsite and assemblage was to first approach the fieldsites and to start mapping and charting out the actors, issues and events that emerged through the interaction. In the case of Kuapa Kokoo, as they receive such a high amount of research requests, it was necessary to sign-post my interests quite early on and to propose a topic of study to the enterprise in question. There I proposed to study the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU) in more detail – and through it I discovered the wider networks that made up Kuapa Kokoo in greater detail as well. At LAUG, I was following up the activities of the group – both in physical meetings and on-line – and I participated in these activities as a group member and a participant. At Busy Internet I was simply allowed to walk into the café as an Internet user, and then subsequently gained access to observing the Busy Incubator by meeting up with one of the founders of the café who accepted the relevance of my research proposal. As a researcher, the first part of the fieldwork consisted of acquiring knowledge of the fieldsite as an entry point towards gaining a greater knowledge of who are the actors present in this field.

In ANT, one does not start from a hypothesis, which would then be validated or falsified by fieldwork. Rather, one starts from a proposition (Latour 1999a), which is like an opening to discussion, where the result can be widely different from a binary answer. The advantage is that the views of the research participants are likely to be better represented in such research. Making propositions is also different from grounded theory where no propositions exist, and the researcher simply goes to a field and collects data without having a specific prior topic or theme in mind. My initial proposition was to study social enterprises, as defined by the prior European criteria (Defourny 2001); and furthermore to study the social values (Dees 1998) of diverse actors associated with social enterprises. The action of taking notes (whether written by pen, recorded by tape recorder or typed electronically) is here known as an inscription, which means a “translation of any script from one repertoire to a more

durable one” (Latour 1991: 256). How does this process take place in practice? A picture can tell a thousand words in this case.

**Figure 2: Making Inscriptions**



Source: Picture by Andrew Yeboah, May 2005

In the picture above, I am using different tools of fieldwork including a Moleskin notebook. Meanwhile, the person being interviewed is holding a tool of his trade – a machete used to weed cocoa and cut the cocoa pods to take out the valuable seeds. In a way both of us are doing fieldwork. While the farmer is cutting weeds, the researcher is weeding through his networks to uncover new connections, which can lead to the discovery of interesting causal chains. What is established as knowledge includes not only the words, but also the cocoa trees, tools, natural environment, and how all these things link up to outside actors in relation to where the actual interview is taking place. The task of finding out the properties of objects, institutions and events is much more challenging. This Akrich (1992) calls *de-scribing*, whereby the researcher seeks to understand the properties, values and intentions of those who participated in the translation that constructed it in the first place. Akrich and Latour

(1992) suggest that the inscriptions of objects need to be found out in one way or another, as they are not obvious from the outset:

No description of a setting is possible or even thinkable without the mediation of a trial; without a trial and a crisis we cannot even decide if there is a setting or not and still less how many parts it contains. (Akrich and Latour 1992: 260)

What the researcher does is tracing and connecting some of the actors that lend themselves to be studied, and trying to de-scribe what intentions have been inscribed into them. Such de-scriptions can also be found in historical archives, which is one of the ways in which concepts and propositions can be tested (Akrich 1992). This type of 'testing' does not follow a positivist scientific method, but it preserves an element of empiricism, indeed called a 'second empiricism' by Latour (2005: 115)

This is why what could be referred to as the second empiricism doesn't look at all like the first: its science, its politics, its aesthetics, its morality are all different from the past. It is still real and objective, but it is livelier, more talkative, active, pluralistic, and more mediated than the other.

The rigid scientific method, which attempts to produce something of a false hope of falsifiable and completely objective truths that are universally applicable, is rejected by Latour. Instead, the empirical inquiry adds many of the social, aesthetic, political and value-based aspects that have been 'purified' from normal scientific enquiry. By discussing such plural assemblages, we find that the world is no longer composed of objective realities, but of relational entities that are constructed by the actors themselves.

For instance, to understand the social values of a Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union loan, I would need to look back at the rules that concern giving loans, the practices on all levels according to which rules are followed, and the material settings of monetary and credit economies in Ghana which influence the range of options that the actors have at different stages. To understand the social values of a Linux Accra User Group special event such as the Linux Install Festival, I had to ask the actors about the prevailing values of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) and follow these actors who defended them at the World Summit on Information Technology (WSIS). There I had a brief (while atypical) conversation with Richard Stallman, founder of the Free Software Foundation Richard Stallman; and Mark Shuttleworth, founder of the Shuttleworth Foundation who support the popular Ubuntu Linux distribution. Some inscriptions were much harder to trace, for instance, I did not get to the bottom of the

Busy Incubator project's intentions, nor did I find out why the meteorological office in Accra did not produce weather forecasts. In some cases, where connections are not found, I refer to the historical material presented in chapter four – or to secondary literature of possible connections.

In making a de-scription I use the notion of a 'test', which involves testing concepts and theories through the practice of fieldwork where the dynamics that we focus on are expected to be present. Callon furthermore introduces the idea of a 'market test' (Callon 1999), whereby a concept or a statement concerning markets is put to an ethnographic test.<sup>5</sup> This notion is put forward as a method of arguing about theory. I will use the concept here to indicate that we are testing concepts, theory and ideas in an ethnographic manner, in a pursuit of finding the contours, methods of evaluation, and the categories and types of measures for which actors are engaged. The 'propositions' to be tested need not be articulated by economists or other researchers, but can also arise from the fieldwork itself, public debate, or from other instances where 'matters of concern' are raised. The 'market test' links to building a sense of relational knowledge that is also discussed in anthropology, where such testing takes place through a dialogue with the actors themselves.

[K]nowledge has become – and must become – acknowledged (implicitly, at least) as *relational* both in the sense that it attaches itself to relations between people or between people and objects and in the sense that it emerges within a dialogical field. If relational knowledge is more implicit and ephemeral than object-knowledge, it may nevertheless transform into the latter with time, partly through the general process of objectification that goes along with classification and articulation (also known as 'ontological dumping'), partly through institutional endorsement. (Hastrup 2004: 456)

What is involved is the creation and co-creation of a specific type of knowledge that the field ethnographer engages in with persons as his or her discussants or interlocutors, who are not just simple 'informants', 'interviewees' or 'participants' in an ethnographic study, but who participate in the creation of new knowledge through

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<sup>5</sup> In the same article where he introduces the idea of a 'market test' he incidentally makes no such test himself, but rather relies on an ethnography of a strawberry market in the French region of Solonge studied by somebody else with a different research purpose (Garcia 1986). The use of secondary ethnographic material to make theoretical experiments and to find out inscriptions poses the question of how well inscriptions are translated across material that did not have the intention of asking such questions in the first place.

the dialogue and inscriptions that are taken. This is why I label every citation simply as ‘person’ in the order of being cited in the thesis as each one of them had a part in shaping the object of the study and the project itself through the conversation, public speech or other type of speech.

This thesis also makes use of historical references. History is a constituent of pathways and connections, allowing understanding the field sites that have been chosen in a more in-depth, archaeological sense. History is therefore not a chronology, but is itself also an assemblage of different fragments that provide a glimpse of the historical actors that have shaped events. In ANT, the work of the historian is described by Latour (1993a) similar to Foucault’s (1974) notion of archaeology of knowledge.

I use history as a brain scientist uses a rat, cutting through it in order to follow the mechanisms that may allow me to understand at once the *content* of a science and its *context*. For this reason the presentation of the documentary materials does not follow the historical path but rather the network of associations [...]. (Latour 1993a: 12, emphasis in original)

The method that Latour proposes here relates directly to the use of historical archival material, of journals, newspapers and reactions to the articles written by Pasteur at the time of the publication of his theory of microbes. This is where chapter four comes in, as when we talk of events like Structural Adjustment Plans (SAPs) or privatisation in Ghana, it is important to have an understanding of the processes that made the emergence of both Busy and Kuapa possible in the regulatory sense; and deregulation also facilitated the access to computers and ICTs, which were driving LAUG’s activities as well. This is not to say that an account is ever a complete or a comprehensive one, as such an aspiration is contradictory in the sense of ANT. Rather, an account contains what is accounted for, what is researched and dug up, as Latour well describes above with the example of dissecting events and connections one by one.

In researching the emergence of social enterprise in Ghana, I mainly looked at published books and studies, rather than looking at archival material. This limitation was due to my research design, which focused on ethnography rather than archival research. Here the historical research is found in libraries and bookshops both in Ghana and in the United Kingdom, in published articles, and in two key informant



interviews, which trace the history of social enterprise forms in Ghana. The account always remains incomplete and thus recognising this is important as much as is recognising the limits of the chosen method. These issues are mainly discussed in the concluding Chapter nine.

### **3.3. *The Fieldwork Period***

This thesis is based on an ethnographic study that took place in Ghana from December 2004 to August 2005, with four short periods outside Ghana<sup>6</sup>. In this thesis I explore three specific fieldsites, which in one way or another were identified as social enterprises (Laville 1996; Laville, Lemaître and Nyssens 2006; Defourny 2001; Kerlin 2009) or as having a high degree of social entrepreneurship (Dees, 1998; Emerson, 2006) in Ghana. I had three fieldsites: Kuapa Kokoo, Busy Internet and the Linux Accra User Group. Most of these linkages were traced on the basis of local interviews, but on some occasions when it was possible I traced the actors also outside of the country. These events and instances together make up my fieldwork trajectory, of which a full catalogue can be found in Annex 1.

The ways I came into contact with the each of the fieldsites was somewhat different. I came across with accounts of Ghanaian social enterprises in both the academic (Doherty and Tranchell 2005; Doherty 2005; Ronchi 2002; Tiffen 2002) and the trade literature in the UK (Social Enterprise London 2001; Department for Trade and Industry 2002), and had several examples of Kuapa Kokoo as the leading fairtrade cocoa producing co-operative. I came across with Busy Internet somewhat differently through first-hand accounts from my supervisor Don Slater, who was conducting fieldwork in Ghana at the time on the ICT sector and its potential contribution to

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<sup>6</sup> The periods outside of Ghana were: Ottawa, Canada, where I interviewed two policy officers the Canadian Co-operatives Association (CCA) who supported the Ghana Credit Union Association (the GCUA, in May 2005); interviews with the managing director of the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. (DCC) in London (March 2005); Lyon, France (14 October 2005) with Objis Consulting, which had held a training workshop for the Linux Accra User Group; and finally in Tunisia (15 November 2005), where I met with the Busy Family and AITI management to see how they presented Ghana's ICT sector at this conference.

reducing poverty. I then realised that social enterprises were becoming a topic of ever greater interest in the Ghanaian ICT sector with the founding of Busy Internet in particular. As the opportunity of studying the topic in a new country and in a different cultural context was both interesting and challenging, I made the decision to focus on Ghana, and set out to study these two enterprises that fit broadly with the economic and social criteria established in chapter four (Defourny 2001).

The data that was collected in its final form was extensive: it included field observation notes, accounts of public events and conferences in which I participated, semi-structured interviews, Internet discussions, and photographs. The fieldworker actually becomes a networker, in tracing the events, issues and actors, as they constitute their own spaces. I also took numerous photographs, of which about 120 are relevant for fieldwork purposes. Most pictures taken during the period of fieldwork were taken by myself, while some were taken by Andrew Yeboah, my fieldwork assistant and interpreter, who accompanied me during the interviews with Kuapa Kokoo village societies from March to July. In 2007, further pictures of Busy Internet were taken by Marja Hirvi, a PhD student at the University of Helsinki, Department of Development Studies. Finally, some pictures were sent to me by participants to the fieldwork experience, mainly by Linux Accra User Group members of their events after I returned. I conducted a total of 29 fully transcribed interviews. Most of these were captured with an electronic voice recorder, apart from the first three months from January to March when I used a tape recorder to record interviews; since then the tape recorder served as a back-up in case the electronic voice recorder should fail. There was also the possibility of recording data by giving the tape recorder to somebody else to record an event while I was not there. A catalogue of the fieldwork material is provided below in Table 1.

**Table 1: Fieldwork Catalogue**

<b>Type of Field Data</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Observations on the data</b>
Interviews	29 interviews	78 A4 pages of electronic notes	Semi-structured, around a certain theme, Kuapa Kokoo 10 interviews, (29 pages), Busy Internet 18 (48 pages), and Linux Accra 1 interview (1 page).
Public events	18 events	116 pages	6 CyberSeries Events (56 pages), as well as 12 other conferences mentioned above (60 pages)
Notes	4 note books, and 40 electronic entries	60 A6 pages hand notes, and 64 A4 pages of electronic notes	Hand written notes were diary and calendar entries. For the electronic notes 12 were from Kuapa Kokoo (22 pages), 14 were from Busy Internet (13 pages), and 13 from Linux Accra (29 pages)
Discussion group entries	697 messages	1078 pages	519 messages (866 pages) for Linux Accra, and 178 messages (212 pages) for Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS), pages including quoting of previous messages.
Pictures	120 photos		Including only pictures relevant to the fieldsites, personal pictures not included in the data set.
Total	908 items	1396 pages	Excluding photos.

The fieldwork data was not considered in terms of achieving a sense of completeness, or exhausting the possible connections or interlinkages. Rather, the amount of data is a representation of the length of the study and the activities undertaken under this research. Finally, my fieldwork impressions are guided by my memories and personal impressions, which cannot be quantified, but can be seen in the context of my life story and personal biography.

The fieldnotes stay the same, written down on paper, but the headnotes continue to evolve and change as they did during the time in the field. (Sanjek 1990: 93)

These headnotes are the ethnographer's memories of the field, general impressions, specific events and encounters, and moments of insight that are not always written down, and they largely remain with the ethnographer. Many of the generalisations

and conclusions therefore come from the headnotes, while detailed accounts and descriptive matter come from the fieldnotes. Some researchers may keep a diary of their personal reflections and evolving moments of insight, their 'headnotes' being part of their fieldwork diary (Beaud and Weber 2003). However, I did not keep such a personal diary during my fieldwork.

### **3.3.1. Busy Internet**

I visited Busy Internet on the second day that I had arrived in Ghana, as it was just a short stroll from where I was living during the year, on Hearts Lane in the neighbourhood of Kokomlemle. Walking down Kokomlemle, it was hard not to notice the striking difference between the corrugated iron shop fronts, small food portions packed in plastic bags on sale in street corners – and then the convenience of Busy Internet as a functional and clean space in the middle of a large urban sprawl of Accra. Busy Internet is the country's largest Internet centre, having some 100 PCs and with about 1500 visitors coming there every day. The reasons for its popularity were due to the unavailability and high cost of fixed line telephones, urban crowding and subsequent lack of personal spaces, lack of other public spaces, the high cost of broadband Internet, and the combined relative cost of owning a computer that could be equipped with Internet access. We can speak of a *café culture* developing in Accra in particular, where Internet café access is affordable, and activities of dating, music and chatting and emailing are a major pastime drawing crowds and becoming a talking point around town (Zachary 2002; Burrell 2008).

As a fieldsite, Busy Internet was much more than an Internet centre: a number of other services such as printing, lamination of documents (useful in tropical wet weather and sweaty hands), website design, sale of USB-pendrives and other appliances were also offered by either Busy or the enterprises selling their goods inside the café. The centre was founded in 2001 by a group of entrepreneurs and investors who were inspired by the discussions on the role of technology in Ghanaian society. The objectives were:

- To provide the best public ICT services in Africa
- To provide exceptional customer service

- To create fun, challenging and rewarding place to work
- To assist in the social and economic experience for the public
- To create a company that reflects the values of the community
- To provide value to our share holders (Busy Internet 2012)

The objectives that Busy advertised were a mix of social and economic objectives that were characteristic of social enterprises according to Defourny (2001), while also responding to the need for providing value to shareholders. Even though the money invested was designed to be paid back, there was not a strong sense of making a profit out of the venture, or expand it to the whole region or the continent.<sup>7</sup>

Busy Internet has been home to a variety of tech pioneers, including Ghana's embryonic call centre, a firm selling broadband capacity, and an online shop for African crafts. (Hale 2003).

Busy Internet as a company was the largest privately owned and operated ICT centre in Ghana and had a clear set of both social and economic goals (Busy Internet 2012). It also described itself as a leader in the ICT sector in Accra, a position that was emphasised by its role in organising some of the key public lectures about popularising ICTs as well as lobbying events regarding Ghana's ICT policy.

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<sup>7</sup> In 2010, Busy Internet had business premises at Ring Road Central, Accra-Kotoka International Airport, Accra Mall, and at the harbour city of Tema at Community 6. In 2005, I heard that the business model of Busy is already copied in Republic of Guinea, Benin and South Africa.

**Figure 3: A General View of the Location of Busy Internet**



Source: Picture by Marja Hirvi, 2008.

The three founders of Busy Internet were all foreigners: one was Welsh though had lived a long time in the Silicon Valley, second was French and the third was from the USA and operated the US-based holding company based in Delaware. Together they owned roughly half of the shares of the Busy Internet Limited, the Ghanaian company. Financially speaking, half of the capital required to start Busy came from abroad from the three entrepreneurs, while the other half came from Ghanaian investment banks Fidelity and Databank. These linkages provided spaces especially for Busy's entrepreneurs to gain contacts, to travel abroad in promoting their activities, and making new connections. This partnership ensured that the business plan since its start also fit the local market environment in terms of the right balance of services offered, their pricing and the appropriate scale to ensure profitability and sustainability of the venture. The centre actually became larger than what was initially planned, as larger scale brought some savings in operation costs such as generators and a back-up satellite Internet connection, while restaurant and café areas were considerably scaled down. Originally Busy Internet had hoped to tap into either

the call centre, or alternative voice-over-internet telecentre market, which at the time of research was not possible due to regulatory restrictions on voice-over-Internet calls.

I first encountered Busy Internet simply by walking inside, as it was of course open to any user in Accra, and expatriates were also a common sight there making my presence at Busy in no way exceptional or suspicious. I was therefore able to start my fieldwork on day one, by exploring the aspects of Busy that I could approach from the public space of the Busy Internet café downstairs. However, to gain access to the upstairs level, I had to be introduced by senior members of the management of the café. I met them through my supervisor, who was also conducting fieldwork in Ghana at the time. With this introduction, I was allowed to also participate in the Busy Incubator project as an observer.

**Figure 4: Entrance to Busy Internet from the Ring Road**



Source: Picture by Matti Kohonen, 2005.

**Figure 5: Internet Café Floor at Busy Internet**



Source: picture by Matti Kohonen, 2005.

Moving on to the assemblages that I encountered at Busy Internet, these were actors who were loosely associated with Busy either through their participation at events organised in the conference room, spending considerable time at Busy's café or restaurant areas, or participating in some of Busy's projects. One of these groups that I encountered at Busy was called the Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS), which was a local NGO based in Accra, promoting the concept of knowledge sharing and use of ICTs in relation to anti-poverty measures. GINKS had a co-ordinator with offices in the Osu district of Accra, and an advisory board drawn mainly from the private sector. At the time of research, GINKS was going through a transition period having recently hired a new co-ordinator. They were fundraising for a second position to relaunch their activities in the Northern Ghanaian city of Tamale, where they had a second office at that time without a permanent co-ordinator. The activities of GINKS were in 2005 limited to the CyberSeries, and to organising a network performance review as an evaluation of the work done in the past years. GINKS relied largely on international aid to conduct its activities, and its core members were individuals who worked as professionals within Accra's ICT sector. It



identified ordinary Ghanaians and especially those less well off as its beneficiaries. As an assemblage GINKS extended far beyond the walls of Busy Internet.

Another interesting group was the *Busy Family*, term coined by the Managing Director of Busy Internet and at times mentioned at Busy Internet's events such as the *CyberSeries*. It was a group of about 20-30 ICT professionals in Accra who gathered at Busy and participated in its social projects and events. They met regularly or worked at Busy and contributed to the social projects at Busy Internet. These professionals identified with the public-purpose mission of Busy Internet, and spent a considerable amount of time at Busy in meetings and working on their laptops between meetings or lunches. The Busy Family consisted of some of the employees of Busy Internet, other tenants, several self-employed consultants and people who worked on projects without an office. I took small roles such as taking notes at the *CyberSeries* and distributing them, as well as answering questions about enterprise and further study opportunities abroad. I was regarded as a junior member of the Busy Family.

The Busy Family were mainly behind both the *CyberSeries* lectures, and the *Busy Incubator* projects – either as volunteers or as consultants. *CyberSeries* events – on the first Thursday of each month – were my fieldwork highlights at Busy Internet. The lectures were organised by a group of diverse actors in Accra's ICT sector, including Busy Internet, GINKS and a few donor agencies such as the International Institute for Communications and Development (IICD), who funded GINKS, and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), which is one of Canada's official development aid agencies. In 2005 the leadership coach hosted most *CyberSeries* events. Her intention was to bring the entrepreneurial spirit to Africa, and coach African entrepreneurs across the continent to become more creative and innovative and take on new challenges.

**Figure 6: Entrance to Busy Incubator**



Source: Picture by Matti Kohonen, 2005.

A more formalised assemblage was the *BusyIncubator*, a project started in January 2005, and running for an 18-month period, which had places for four companies to participate in training, networking and mentoring scheme. It was funded at the time by the World Bank's InfoDev programme. The *BusyIncubator* was housed upstairs, and had a very clear focus on developing new ICT enterprises that could contribute to the development of the sector. Additionally, the management considered that all enterprises, not just the 'incubatees' should contribute to the social mission of Busy by organising events in the community, participating in some of the projects, or bringing their expertise to new tenants and entrepreneurs through mentoring.

I spent a lot of time at the Incubator, which also became in a way my office at Busy Internet. I often did daily observation there, and when possible had discussions with the incubatees, as they were referred to, over lunch or drinks. As an assemblage, Busy Incubator was more closely linked to the World Bank, as it had to comply with its measuring and evaluation methods. It had a more independent identity within Busy Internet as a result of having hired also a permanent co-ordinator for the project. Busy Incubator was also advertised and mentioned in the press, namely the *Daily Graphic*, and was a flagship project when mentioning Busy Internet's social impact at CyberSeries lectures or even on on-line websites where Busy's role in Ghana was discussed. However, the incubator relied also on outside consultants (of whom many were drawn from the Busy Family), outside aid funding and other external linkages, which made the programme possible.

My role at Busy Internet was generally seen as a researcher, but also a contact person who could help out in a few things like polishing documents that they were sending out to their potential sponsors or clients. This trust possibly allowed me to participate in events that would have otherwise been closed from me, and raise questions on some aspects that would not be visible otherwise in public. Out of the four companies, I ended up concentrating more on three of them, though I did interview and talk informally many times with all of their employees.

### **3.3.2. Kuapa Kokoo**

Ghana is the world's second largest cocoa-producing nation after the Ivory Coast, and the plant holds a special place in the history of the nation and individual Ghanaians, who prize its health and nutritional benefits as much as the revenues it generates for farming communities. Most Ghanaians I met in Accra or abroad would ask me to come and visit their cocoa farm, as many Accra inhabitants are also non-resident cocoa farmers. This for Hill (1963) was an example of 'indigenous capitalism' (Hill 1963; Hill 1966). She wrote that a Ghanaian controlled industry flourished in cocoa growing, its financing, export and marketing during the colonial era, but it came up against the colonial administration which established a government monopoly in the form of a cocoa marketing board, later taken over by the independent government.

The development of the sector was widely dependent on kinship relations, which were the basis for building trust for both tenancy agreements and credit relations often linked to solidarity among ethnic groups (Hill 1963). In this study, I looked at the values attached to Kuapa Kokoo, focusing on their approach to credit within the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU).

As a fieldsite, Kuapa Kokoo is actually composed of several different structures, which work together but are separate institutional entities with their own management structures. The basis of the Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Trust (KKFU) which is a co-operative company which is fully owned by the farmers themselves is approximately 1500 village societies and approximately 45,000 members, making it among the five largest Licenced Buying Companies in Ghana at the time. The co-operative not only organised cocoa purchasing from the farmers, but also planned and implemented village development projects funded either by fairtrade premiums, or by other grant funding or donations. These grants are given by the Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Trust (KKFT), which is the charitable trust arm of Kuapa Kokoo, governed under the charity statutes to receive donations such as the fairtrade premiums (Berlan 2008). KKFT had also received funds from Cadbury's in 2005 during the time of the fieldwork, which gave them additional funds to implement village development projects.

**Figure 7: Market Day at Kuapa Kokoo Village Society in Central Ghana**



Source: Picture taken by Matti Kohonen, 2005.

The commercial side was managed by Kuapa Kokoo Limited (KKL), which was registered with the Ghanaian government Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) as a ‘licensed buying company’ with the licence to buy cocoa directly from the farmers at a price fixed by the government. The day-to-day management decisions are made, however, by the management team which, while all being Ghanaians, creates a clear line of division between the KKFU and KKL (Ronchi 2002). KKL makes decisions regarding the operations in the different Area Offices, as well as a specialist Research and Development Office, located at the head office. Some members worked for KKL, but its top management was hired specially for the task and were all Ghanaians at the time. Kuapa Kokoo expressed the following objectives for the organisation (Kuapa Kokoo 2012):

- To provide a medium for social, economic and political empowerment of cocoa farmers;
- Enhance the participation of women in the decision making process at all levels of operation and organisation;
- Encourage environmentally sustainable cocoa production processes.

These goals made Kuapa Kokoo a unique company in the cocoa growing sector, as no other company at the time had social objectives subscribed in its constitution. As Kuapa was owned by the farmers themselves, the profits of the activity were also kept within the villages where it operated.

There were two units that operated outside the day-to-day operations of cocoa production. One was the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU), which organises and encourages savings among the members of the co-operative and provides micro-loans for those who apply for them. Established in 2001, the KKCU was managed by the same structures of the co-operative, making it an integral part of the wider activities of the group. As noted above, it provides small loans for individuals, while there are other specialised lending programmes that also provide for women's groups for income-generating initiatives. Kuapa Kokoo was also a shareholder in the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. (DCC)<sup>8</sup>, a UK-based confectionary manufacturing and marketing company. In 2012 Kuapa Kokoo owned 45 per cent of the DCC, up from 30 per cent in 2005. Since 2005 another change has taken place, namely the establishment of Divine USA in 2006 to market fairtrade confectionary in the North American market, while DCC focuses on the European markets.

The way these standards were operationalised in Ghana was to give farmers a 'fair price', meaning the application of a 'minimum' or 'floor' price, supplemented by 'fairtrade premium' which was an additional price for each tonne of cocoa sold on the fairtrade market. Additionally, fairtrade means longer contracts and advance payments for the crops upon producers' request. All these rules were also thoroughly monitored by the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (2007b; 2007c). There are different types of standards set in terms of fairtrade for the types of producers and different crops. The trade standards concern relationships between buyers and producers, and contain three broad points.

- At the very minimum, pay producers a price that covers the costs of sustainable production: the Fairtrade Minimum Price;
- Pay a premium that producers can invest in development: the Fairtrade Premium;
- Partial payment in advance, when producers ask for it;

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<sup>8</sup> At the time of research, the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. was still known as the Day Chocolate Company Ltd., but has since changed its name. The new name is used here for reasons of consistency.

- Sign contracts that allow for long-term planning and sustainable production practices. (Fairtrade Labelling Organisation 2007b)

Beyond such practices, certain rules apply to fairtrade enterprises depending on the type of organisation – whether they are producer owned or private companies using hired labour.

Small farmers can join Fairtrade if they have formed organisations (in co-operatives, associations or other organisational forms) which are able to contribute to the social and economic development of their members and their communities and are democratically controlled by their members. Organisations can be certified by FLO if they comply with the requirements in this document. (Fairtrade Labelling Organisation 2005: 2)

As a result, most cocoa and coffee produced in the fairtrade system comes from producer owned co-operatives, while other crops such as bananas, citrus fruits or cut flowers come from plantations, and rules for hired workers establish separate trusts for managing the fairtrade premium. However, due to Kuapa's large size, the fairtrade premium only applied to the cocoa it managed to sell on the fairtrade market. Being among the largest cocoa buying organisations in Ghana, Kuapa Kokoo's production was much greater than demand in the fairtrade market. At the time of this research, only 2 per cent of Kuapa Kokoo's produce was sold on the international fairtrade market, but the remaining 98 per cent was produced under the same norms<sup>9</sup>.

The total value of fairtrade cocoa sales towards Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. in the season 2004/2005 from Kuapa Kokoo was 996 tonnes, which provided an income in three parts (Doherty 2010: 148): USD 1,593,600 from cocoa sales, USD 149,400 in social premiums, and finally GBP 107,426 in producer support and development. The two first are according to the international fairtrade rules, where in particular the social premium forms an important part of additional payments. Additionally, as Kuapa Kokoo holds 45 per cent of the shares of the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd., in 2007 a dividend of GBP 47,000 was shared among the members – each member receiving one USD, while the remainder was invested in supporting Kuapa Kokoo (Doherty 2010: 150). After an agreement with Cadbury's in 2009 to supply cocoa for one of their popular chocolate bars sold in the United Kingdom, Kuapa Kokoo has significantly increased and diversified its fairtrade cocoa production (Ryan 2011).

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<sup>9</sup> This estimate is based on an interview with a senior manager at the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. in 2005.

**Figure 8: Kuapa Kokoo Area Office**



Source: Picture taken by Matti Kohonen, 2005.

**Figure 9: Kuapa Kokoo Staff Member Overseeing Cocoa Fermenting**



Source: Picture taken by Matti Kohonen, May 2005.



The assemblages that I studied at Kuapa Kokoo were two-fold: The Research and Development Office and in particular Research and Development Officers (RDOs) in the area office studied, and the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU). The purpose of the RDOs was somewhat different from what the name may suggest – they did not actually conduct scientific research on the cocoa crop, but were engaged in public awareness, village development, local management and training courses. I followed one of the RDOs in the area office that I studied at length in his daily trips in the villages that were under the management of the area office chosen for the study together with the head office staff. This gave me a unique insight to the work of the RDO, how he interacted with the farmer members, which issues were raised by farmers and how they were dealt with. While the issues discussed here are only fragments that I observed during the trips made to the villages, they in my view represent a picture of the work practices and methods of the RDO more broadly.

The second assemblage was the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union, which as I mentioned earlier was a strong savings and loans organisation of 20,000 members, constituted by Kuapa Kokoo farmers themselves. This assemblage was also incredibly broad (as discussed in detail in section 7.2.1) ranging from the village level loans committees. The interaction with the area office was often mediated by the RDO, and the head office KKCU president and accountant, as well as the national level association Ghana Credit Union Association (CUA). CUA was the apex organisation of all credit unions in Ghana, which provided software and technical assistance to KKCU, and finally by international aid donors who in turn funded CUA. These linkages and others constituted an enormously large assemblage that brought together diverse motivations and interests, and was based on an ethical notion of credit serving social development and advancing well-being – which KKCU members and staff considered was a unique characteristic of the credit union. These criteria were not considered too stringent by farmers, though the criteria certainly were a subject of intense negotiation of what types of loans could be applied under the KKCU rules.

I approached Kuapa Kokoo by submitting a formal research proposal to the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. in London, the confectionary company partly owned by Kuapa Kokoo. In my research proposal, I proposed to study the operations of the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU) as it was a relatively new part of the co-

operative group, and I was also interested in the social values of credit and money dynamics at an early stage of my research proposal. After the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. (DCC) accepted my research proposal, I had a meeting with the Kuapa Kokoo staff members in Kumasi, who then considered that the most relevant aspect of the co-operative functions for the purpose of my research was the Research and Development Office located at the head office. The study of the activities of the RDO was thus a convenient extension of the original research proposal as the RDO and KKCU were closely linked to each other.

I then arranged for the head office to recommend me a fieldwork assistant, to conduct interviews in the Twi-language, as especially in the village societies it would not be possible to conduct interviews in English. I asked the head office to recommend a field assistant, because this ensured that the people would also be trusted by Kuapa Kokoo, and he or she would already know the Kuapa Kokoo structures and practices to some extent. A week later when I came to the head office again, I was introduced to a student called Andrew Yeboah, from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), who studied at the Department of Land Economy. He was not only an excellent field assistant, but was also extremely knowledgeable about rural economies, land tenure and crops, as well as having knowledge of the Kuapa Kokoo system. He was able to describe the relevant issues facing farming communities during the bus rides to the villages, and the time we spent at the Area Office.

During my involvement with Kuapa the fieldwork assistant and I stayed in a private guesthouse in Kumasi (when interacting with the head office). At the Area Office we were invited to stay in the guest room of the office itself, which I accepted for a period of three weeks in two separate visits. During the time that we spent at the area office, the Manager, Accountant and Research and Development Officer all lived in the same compound, commuting back to Kumasi, where most of their families lived, for the weekends and holidays. This gave me good opportunities for informal talks, especially sharing ideas about the history of the city as a secondary gold mining town. Kuapa Kokoo shared with me their annual accounts, which had a social impact measuring frame, as well as some of the educational materials that were used to raise awareness of diverse issues with the farming communities at the village society level.

Through these discussions I learned initially that they were conducting an awareness-raising programme concerning the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union in several districts, and that one of these areas was in the Central Region, which was easily accessible by bus from Accra every morning for conducting fieldwork on the same day. The head office made the contact to the chosen Area Office.

The study consisted of interviews conducted at the Kuapa Kokoo head office, the chosen Area Office, and two villages near the Area office. For purposes of anonymity I will call them here *Akwapong* and *Nkrokro*, which are derivations of commonplace names in the Akan-speaking Central region of Ghana. In addition to the places of study, I also took notes of the vehicles and roads, and the sense of travelling between these places, which constituted a large part of the time for many actors at Kuapa Kokoo who together constituted the space of the co-operative through such spatial assemblages.

### **3.3.3. Linux Accra User Group (LAUG)**

The Linux Accra User Group (LAUG) was one of the few grass-roots level civil society groups that I encountered during my fieldwork period who worked with issues related to Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs). LAUG was founded at Busy Internet in 2003, but its meetings shifted to the Kofi Annan Centre of Excellence – Advanced Information Technology Institute (KACE-AITI) in 2004 due to better availability of meeting spaces. For the participants of LAUG Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) and in particular the Linux operating system was different, as it adhered to sets of values about ownership and participation in the creation and maintenance of information society. Linux started as a voluntary project from the outset in the early 1990s, and it was the users as members of the project who built new versions, supported it by building hardware drivers for it to work with different configurations, and built new distribution versions (called ‘distros’) such as the popular Mandrake Linux and Red Hat Linux versions. Both are released by private companies and are free to download – while the companies charge for related support, adaptation and training services. Besides the operating system, there is a number of both proprietary and FOSS applications for the Linux operating system. In some

cases, such as Open Office partly financed by Oracle, large hardware manufacturers and sellers support FOSS applications. While Linux dominates the server users, it has much more difficulties in becoming popular among private users. This is due to considerations of user friendliness and hardware configurations, and availability of relevant and usable software is of greater concern.

As a fieldsite, I got to know LAUG by meeting the group leader at Busy Internet after the February CyberSeries event. Following this introduction, I was invited to come along to the meetings of LAUG, which took place on Saturday afternoons at the KACE-AITI, commonly known as the AITI. Most of the members were computer studies students who in one way or another were interested in FOSS applications and issues. Some were interested in the philosophy behind the movement, while others were keen to benefit from the opportunity to increase their knowledge of computer science issues in general. The group leader, an elderly man and an ICT consultant, was keen to promote FOSS applications as a development model for the country. I went there one Saturday afternoon and kept coming back, partly also due to my own interest in Linux and FOSS, which was rooted in my background in working with civil society organisations prior to the research period.

One of the reasons for there being less discussion concerning FOSS applications was that not all group members had a computer and an Internet connection to take part in on-line discussions. The group could use some of the PCs at the KACE-AITI, but were not permitted to install anything on them or modify settings. The benefit of meeting up at the KACE-AITI was its strong Internet connection – a crucial condition for holding successful meetings, as much of LAUG's activity consisted of downloading software updates, examples of software programming code or other on-line content. Those who owned desktop or laptop computers often brought them along as they would rarely have an Internet connection at home, and connecting the computer to the Internet allowed software to be updated, the installation of new programmes and files, as well as emailing and engaging in online discussions.

**Figure 10: A Training Event Organised at KACE-AITI College**



Source: Picture by Matti Kohonen, August 2005.

As an assemblage, LAUG consisted of weekly meetings, discussion list postings, and events that took place outside main meetings. Each type of activity is worth discussing in some detail, and I start by looking at the weekly meetings. They would normally start around 2pm on Saturdays, and run on until quite late to about 7pm. The Saturday meetings required the participants to find their way to the KACE-AITI, owning a computer or being able to access one at the KACE-AITI, having access to Internet, and the presence of a senior LAUG member who would have the trust of the security at KACE-AITI to let the group use the facilities. The group had a number of key projects, which they intended to advance both through the weekly meetings and by organising special events. The group's website<sup>10</sup> considered the purpose of the meetings to cover the following aspects (Linux Accra 2012):

- Install distributions for newcomers and strangers;
- Teach members about Linux;
- Compare Linux to other operating systems;

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<sup>10</sup> The website has been launched after the fieldwork period, but serves as a useful reference point to the concerns expressed by the group also at the time of research.

- Teach members about application software;
- Discuss advocacy;
- Discuss the free software / open-source movement;
- Teach about Linux Kernel;
- Teach about the various types of Linux Programming Languages;
- Help solve Linux related problems;
- Networking etc.

The group, according to this list of activities largely focused on learning about FOSS applications and related issues. At meetings, the group leader would try to encourage both more experienced members and newcomers to work in groups. Each group had a project that they would follow, and the projects would link together to create, when combined, a localised and more accessible information society. These four activities were:

- Localisation of Linux into Twi and Gã [two main African languages spoken in Ghana];
- Wireless networking: spread the bandwidth;
- Digital libraries: e-learning / e-books for schools;
- Linux Terminal Server Project (LTSP), utilising 40 [low capacity processors] P2 recycled PCs to their maximum as terminals to a more powerful [high capacity processor] P4 server. (Person B)

Most of the efforts in the group were focused around the first and the last project, where it was seen as a priority to contribute towards efforts to localise some of the key FOSS applications into Ghanaian languages. Having access to computing in one's own native tongue, or at least a language that originated from their own country and culture was seen as an essential condition for familiarising ordinary Ghanaians with computer usage. This is why the priority was to focus first on translating popular applications such as the Firefox Internet browser, and the Open Office suite.

The wireless networking project involved experimenting with wireless Internet connections, which included anything from testing different types of wireless antennas, receivers and transmitters which would allow for sharing and spreading an existing Internet connection to a much wider area. The group leader explained that this would be important both in rural and urban areas. A rural school with the proper antenna equipment could set up an Internet connection during certain times of the day with another school even twenty kilometres away – and download content that was then stored on a local storage device which was kept at the school. This would allow for the project of digital libraries to function without sending digital content on pen-drives or portable hard disks.

The concept of digital libraries was considered one of the ‘killer applications’ where Linux and other FOSS solutions would really make a difference in Ghanaian schools, universities and also companies requiring access to up-to-date documentation. The difficulty of obtaining books, training materials, professional manuals and other published information at an affordable price in Ghana was considered as a major obstacle towards building an inclusive information society. Being able to download electronic books (e-books), and to store them locally for on-site reading was considered to be the most affordable solution to the problem. The main obstacle for building this system was access to the relevant e-books, and establishing reading terminals at a relatively low cost. An existing school-based telecentre project (SchoolNet Uganda 2011) served as a model, which LAUG members then developed further with Linux applications. This project will be discussed briefly in Chapter eight concerning *enrolment* of monetary assemblages.

The final project was called the Linux Terminal Server Project (LTSP), which aimed at bringing down the cost of computing for purposes of digital library or classroom usage. This project was a follow-up from the digital libraries project, as using the LTSP model the cost of each reading station would be cut to the bare minimum. The project involved utilising a special version of Linux, which was adapted for multi-user interfaces. One more powerful PC was planned to be used as a server, described at the time as a computer with a Pentium four processor, with four gigabytes of Random Access Memory (RAM), which the processor needs for speeding up computational operations. This server would host all the programmes, e-books and other data, and would be a point of access for all other computers in the library or classroom. The server could be linked up to forty less powerful second-hand computers described Pentium two computers with up to one gigabyte of RAM. They would work as terminals, as they had no local data stored on them and would not even need to have a hard drive.

The Linux Accra discussion list on Yahoo! Groups was also a reflection of the processes of the group – of meetings and organisational issues of the listed events – creating an on-line space which was an extension of the meetings held at AITI. It seemed that the activities on the list were significantly connected to the face-to-face

meetings, and for that reason it is doubtful if the list would continue without those meetings. This made the LAUG group somewhat different from other Linux User Groups. For instance, a study of the Finnish Linux User Group (FLUG) noted that most of the posts on the list were about technical help questions concerning Linux usage, other major topics were discussions concerning the group itself and Linux more generally (Silvonen 2002). Meanwhile, at the Linux Accra User Group (LAUG), my analysis of the posts on the Yahoo! Group list from March to November 2005 showed that a substantially greater amount related to organising events, followed by substantial attention given to discussing weekly meetings, advancing FOSS issues in Ghana and its philosophy. Some attention was given to technical questions, but much less than in the case of the FLUG.

What was interesting in LAUG is that it also mobilised actors involved in development issues, as well as serving as a space for discussions over the philosophical and political issues concerning information society in Ghana. The online discussions themselves were interesting, and were more diverse than I had initially anticipated. The online space was also used to organise meetings and special events, and in this case it was a more practical space, where links were made between the online and the offline activities, and a sense of accomplishment was achieved when an event was successfully staged, allowing for feedback and some type of evaluation of how well it went. This assemblage required the use and ownership of a personal computer, access to Internet, time for taking part in such discussions and the provision of a free Internet discussion list by Yahoo! available for Ghanaians. The assemblage therefore extended far beyond the borders of Ghana.

Finally, the assemblages constituted a series of events mainly organised at the AITI, but also outside its walls on some occasions when the group teamed up with some actors who were keen on having FOSS content represented at their institution. LAUG members showcased the LTSP project for the first time at the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) African summit in January 2005, and since then promoted the concept at diverse forums and events. They installed a whole container full of PCs with LINUX at the Accra Linux Install Festival, and organised the Software Freedom Day event at the AITI, to mention just a few. Each of these events was its own activity as there was little continuity between them. Thus they



constituted each an assemblage of their own, with different actors providing the space, facilities, computers, Internet, the content and possibly also food and drinks. I will describe these assemblages as separate cases when they are relevant to the topic, rather than as a single narrative thread.

### **3.4. Role of the ethnographic researcher**

Considering ethnography as an experimental methodology, and the resulting knowledge as relational, then, raises the question of who is the researcher taking notes in the Moleskin notebook. A brief introduction of my own intentions is therefore appropriate. The reasons for embarking on an ethnographic project actually start much closer to home, from my political and activist engagements (Kohonen and Mestrum 2009; Kohonen, Waris and Christensen 2011). Initially interested in the role of financial markets, I founded the LSE Attac Society with my student friends in 2001 to campaign for a Tobin Tax on financial markets and to close down tax havens (Shaxson 2011; Palan, Chevagneux and Murphy 2009). I was concerned with how financial markets have become ever more powerful in relation to nation states and their policy-making autonomy, and in particular, with how developing countries had lost their independence under successive structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) instituted by the IMF, due to the conditionality inherent in development aid, and membership in free trade agreements (Bello 2004).

I encountered the topic of social enterprises for the first time when I participated in the World Social Forum (WSF) in February 2002, held in the southern Brazilian city of Porto Alegre, when studying my BSc degree in sociology at the LSE. It was a workshop on co-operative economics organised jointly with the WSF by an association in London of which I am member, called *Friends of Le Monde Diplomatique* – the readers’ association of the French monthly newspaper of the same name. At this event I discovered that an entire movement for a *solidarity economy* existed in Latin America, while European researchers talked of a *social economy* by way of linking the new experiments to the much older co-operative and mutualist traditions. The low participation of African practitioners in the event was notable. The slogan of the World Social Forum – another world is possible – meant that

another society was indeed possible, and that it was being created in the here and now, rather than through any theoretical notions and debates alone. In the events at the WSF, I could see social enterprises as one solution, among many others, to the problems of dependence and the outright negative interference of international financial institutions and financial markets in the politics of the so-called Third World nations. Therefore, I could now place social enterprises among a host of other economic justice issues that were discussed at the same time, in the same spaces, and were mentioned as potential solutions to poverty and inequity. I also decided to write my BSc long essay on co-operative development agencies (CDA) in London and Finland (Kohonen 2003).

Though my fieldwork period was the first time I had ever visited the African continent, it was not the first time I encountered the continent's politics and social issues. I only wrote the historical Chapter four after my return, based on the experiences I had in Ghana rather than the impressions about Ghana, before setting out to the field. Talking about politics and society was something that I could easily engage in Ghana, without feeling completely out of place within the discussions that I had there with the actors. I had previously participated in events about African issues at civil society forums, and had exchanged views with speakers addressing contemporary African issues also at the LSE Anthropology Department regional African seminars. It was through my activist background that I dealt with common issues such as ethnicity and gender. I consider that I was able to transcend some of the ethnic and gender barriers due to my passion as a social activist, in seeing local concerns as part of a bigger picture of global inequalities, and taking views of the grass-roots actors as seriously as views expressed by those at higher positions. If anything, this placed a greater emphasis on conducting interviews to the actors on the ground level rather than the managerial level staff at any of the fieldsites. Also, I favoured unstructured participant observation techniques, which did not have the same level of personal narrative as in-depth personal interviews.

My research would possibly have been quite different had I been a woman – finding possibly more affinity with women's groups or women at Kuapa Kokoo, which had a much broader gender focus than I was able to address through their lending programmes to women's groups. At Linux Accra, there were only two women who

participated more or less regularly in the meetings – and indeed here I did not interview them in particular as women to know whether they had different views about the group’s activities. Also, I wonder whether another ethnic background would have made my fieldwork period different in the various situations described in the ethnographic chapters. In some cases, being a foreigner opened doors as some consider that the very fact of having travelled to Ghana meant greater wealth and power. In other cases it may have closed some doors, as talking to a foreigner may have been seen in a suspicious light. The very fact that I felt that my ethnicity did not matter much for purposes of conducting the research is a sign of it not being a big issue for myself. Whether it was an issue for the persons interviewed in this research is something I cannot know.

Any foreigner in Ghana is often called an ‘obruni’, which literally means a white person, but is equally used for a person from the Indian sub-continent or China. When on a given day I was more tanned, some would jokingly call me ‘obruni koko’ meaning a red-coloured white/foreign person. On other occasions I was asked the day I was born, which is an important matter in Akan culture, as days carry different meanings. I was born on Friday, and thus my Ghanaian name was Kofi – according to the male equivalent of a person born on Friday. On other occasions I’d be called Kwesi, which just means a person born on a Sunday, which signified luck – possibly due to my foreign origins or assumed wealth. I found no discrimination or dislike in any of these labels, rather they were part of conversations and ways of trying to build an identity through concepts and notions that were familiar. Some of these labels probably shaped my fieldwork experience, but it is impossible to know how, considering that I did not have a counter example or different view available. Talking to other ethnographers who have conducted research in Ghana, similar issues structured their fieldwork, though of course depending largely on the chosen topic.

Ethical considerations are essential in any qualitative research project, and they were also considered an important part of my research design. I notice that I had different kinds of ethical concerns in the three sites. At Busy, I made my research agenda known to one of the founders and managers of Busy during the first interviews. After hearing my research plan, one of the founders was pleased at my lengthy stay, enabling me to make a personal contribution the life of the café. In any case, I

considered myself as much a part of the scene and the normal flow of people there as anyone else. My presence at Busy was seen as nothing unusual; indeed, it was the Internet café in Accra most visited by foreigners. While researching the Busy Incubator, I needed a more formal approval to sit in the incubator office, and to have longer conversations with the incubatees on a weekly basis. The Incubator Manager granted the permission, and the management of Busy knew about my research and its intentions. Interestingly, the only question one of the founders of Busy asked in the beginning was the duration of my study. Once he heard that it was a nine-month period, he was actually – and to my surprise – relieved, as it meant in his view that I would gain a broader and a less stereotypical view of Busy’s activities. At Busy, my participation meant sharing the transcripts of the CyberSeries with the organisers, who found them useful as a record and in making a report to their own stakeholders. I also wrote one newspaper article in the *Daily Graphic* about Busy Incubator called ‘Incubations Booms at Busy Internet’, and it was well received by both the incubatees and the management.

Similarly at LAUG, I was a computer user like everyone else. I was not the only foreigner in the group, as in fact one of the senior members of the group was also from Sweden, who participated fully in the activities of the group. No formal access was required separately. I participated in meetings, tested Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) applications such as Linux on my computer, and was thus in many ways an ordinary member of the group. In May, I was subsequently made a group secretary, as I was taking notes of the meetings as a matter of course, and I often sent them to the mailing list as meeting summaries for the benefit of the wider group and for anyone who could not attend any particular meeting. The only time I tried to organise something myself was to promote LAUG at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) conference in Tunis, in October 2005, but my attempts to have a LAUG member to be sponsored by a UN agency were not successful. I also learned a lesson about the attempt, in separating activism from research. I made a long conference report back about the summit on the on-line discussion list from the conference.

With Kuapa Kokoo, I needed to apply for access formally, and so I submitted the application to the London head office, the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. (DCC),

and in March 2005 I was permitted to conduct research within the co-operative. The official accreditation was crucial, as I could not have done this part of the research project without it. I would only visit the two villages on agreed dates, and then have, first, group sessions where I would ask general questions about money and credit; these would be followed by visits to individual farms and talking with people in the village, with whoever wanted to chat with me. The reason for this was that Kuapa had numerous research requests, and farmers were of course also busy farming their fields. My visits to Kuapa village society were perceived by the villagers as the curiosity of a visiting foreign traveller, but yet as somebody who was clearly approved by and linked with the co-operative, as in both villages I was introduced to the farmers by the Kuapa staff, namely the Research and Development Officer. At the Area Office, the atmosphere was fairly relaxed at the times of the visit, as it was not the peak cocoa season. Finally at the Head Office, I took care not to take up too much of the staff's time. Where possible, I participated willingly in their daily tasks while talking to them rather than needing them to stop working to hold a separate interview. At the Head Office, I did participate in designing a leaflet about Kuapa's efforts in promoting gender equity called "Kuapa Women", and in this instance my campaigning experience in student associations proved useful – but it was the only instance of participation in Kuapa's on-going efforts and using my activist experience.

### **3.5. Conclusions**

This chapter has charted the way in which I used actor-network theory (ANT), making some additional conceptual clarifications with regard to how my research was actually operationalised. It was crucial to distinguish between a fieldsite as an entry-point in studying actors, and the assemblage, which emerged as a theoretical notion in Chapter two and needed defining on a practical level. The sequence of different events is established in terms of the turning points in the process of translation, which gives the ethnographic account of its structure. What is studied here is ultimately a translation within space and time, constituting social values within social enterprises.

I have discussed the way in which actor-network theory claims validity over the fieldwork or other qualitative data that is generated during the fieldwork period. A

researcher makes 'propositions' which are then followed up with the actors that he or she encounters during the fieldwork period. The objective is to be able to 'test' theories or concepts, and see how they relate to the activities of the actors. This is followed by the process of translation, which constitutes assemblages and becomes the object of study in ANT. By following particular events and 'matters of concern' I traced actors within their fieldsites. This type of inquiry can be called empirical, but it still preserves within the account the diverse connections, relationships and other entanglements, rather than 'purifying' them outside the account. Social enterprises and social value are studied in a plural light in this thesis.

In this thesis I look at three fieldsites, but many different assemblages are identified from these fieldsites which are then followed up either fully or partially. I identified in each case when an object of study is considered an assemblage. The three fieldsites were chosen to reflect differences in how both social enterprise and social entrepreneurship were taking place in Ghana. Despite these differences, what was common between the fieldsites was the pursuit of social value through creative combinations of market-based revenues, international aid and voluntary work contributions. The different activities that took place in the fieldsites during the fieldwork period were described here, and a fieldwork catalogue is presented at the end in an annex.

Doing fieldwork is, in a sense, both a disruptive and an interventionist process whereby the researcher takes part in daily activities of the individuals and groups being researched. The ethical considerations in conducting fieldwork were connected with gaining approved access to each fieldsite, which was a vastly different process in each case, ranging from the formal research proposal submitted to Kuapa Kokoo to the informal invitation to join LAUG, or simply just walking in Busy Internet and telling my intentions to the staff members to gain approval for my project. These access issues were also related to other ethical concerns about my position as an ethnographer, the disruptions to the activities it might present and finally the ways in which interaction for research purposes might change their activities, if at all.

## 4.0. Emergence of Social Enterprises in Ghana

The concept of framing/overflowing helps us to understand why speeches – optimistic as well as pessimistic – on the ‘inexorable growth of the marketplace’ have no foundation in fact. [...] [T]he market must be constantly reformed and built up from scratch: it never ceases to emerge and re-emerge in the course of long and stormy negotiations in which the social sciences have no choice but to participate. (Callon 1998b: 266)

This historical chapter discusses how the Ghanaian economy has undergone a process of ‘purification’ (Latour 1993b) whereby economic value was slowly recognised as a special set of values through processes of greater private sector participation, deregulation and reregulation of markets, based on textual evidence from official documents and secondary sources. Actors have not stood still as the purification of markets has progressed. We have also seen the emergence of social enterprises in Ghana, which have articulated spheres and types of market-based activities focusing uniquely on social values – such as protecting cocoa farming communities from price fluctuations, providing access to ICTs at a lower cost and in ways adapted to the needs of those marginalised by technological developments.

This section analyses the dual historical processes of purification and emergence of social values within types of enterprises that can be understood as social enterprises in Ghana. I start (section 4.1) with the way in which the process of purification has been achieved in the cocoa and ICT sectors in Ghana, as a result of successive efforts of structural adjustment packages and proposals aiming at market deregulation. In both sectors, however, we see how social values also emerge as a result of either mitigating social externalities, or recognition of the cost of adaptation to a new liberalised regulatory regime. The emergence of different types of social enterprises (section 4.2) then relates to how social values have been constituted in different types of economic organisations over the history of Ghana. The five types of social enterprises represent different historical movements towards greater economic justice. Finally, (in section 4.3) these historical movements are compared with key informant interviews.

#### **4.1. Shifting Social Values of Markets in Ghana**

When Ghana gained its independence in 1957 under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah – popularly known as the Osagyefo or the *redeemer* – the country chose a path of state-led development. The government relied on central planning by introducing thirty-year and five-year planning cycles, which gave the overall policy frame for early development. Despite the momentous changes there was a remarkable degree of institutional continuity – as earlier marketing boards and strong state participation in the economy had also been a cornerstone in the colonial times. Social value was seen as being synonymous with the newly independent state, whose actions would bring about prosperity, development and dignity in comparison with the colonial past. Many citizens placed their trust with the state in achieving the aspirations of a young nation. Ghana in many ways has a special place in Africa, as it never lost its sight on the fact of having been the first sub-Saharan African nation to gain independence from colonial rule.

As in many other African countries, the key historical shift shaping the relationship between economic and social value in Ghanaian markets were the successive agreements with the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the early 1980s. At that time, in 1982-83, Ghana was hit by the most serious economic, social and food crisis in its history since independence, leading to the second coup d'état by the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), ending up to a decade of further military rule. The new military government led by the Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings, a widely popular young officer in the air forces, went on to ask for international assistance from foreign donors and multilateral agencies. This led to the Structural Adjustment Programme, and Economic Recovery Programme (SAP and ERP), which were negotiated with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Martin 1993; Asenso 1991). The conditionalities<sup>11</sup> attached to these policies led to the privatisation of many state-

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<sup>11</sup> Conditionalities refer to conditions attached to aid policies, donor grants or debt forgiveness. It is not a term yet found in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), but is in common use among practitioners and in the field specific literature of actors who contest the market framing of the IMF or the World Bank (Action Aid International 2006; Molina and Pereira 2008).



owned enterprises, starting in 1987 with the establishment of the Divesture Implementation Committee (DIC) within the State Enterprise Commission (SEC), which involved relevant ministries, private sector and state-owned enterprises themselves, and trade unions. The composition of this committee was unique in sub-Saharan Africa, as the shared experience of an independence struggle had united Ghanaians to consider the state as belonging to all stakeholders. It led to the sale of 212 enterprises, which were either sold off completely or partially by 1999, in what was one of the largest privatisation programmes in sub-Saharan Africa (Appiah-Kubi 2001). Surprisingly enough, the crisis and the SAPs in the early 1980s created both an economic and social environment where social enterprises could grow out of the many experiments through which concerned citizens, entrepreneurs and stakeholders would come together. The following sections on the cocoa and the ICT markets show how privatisation and deregulation, ‘purified’ markets, and were also accompanied by a simultaneous process of greater emphasis on diverse social values, which would be achieved through initiatives that funded themselves mainly through market-based trading.

#### **4.1.1. Purification of Value in the Cocoa Sector**

During Ghana’s early years of independence, the nation’s prosperity was built on cocoa, and the entire sector, apart from smallholding farming<sup>12</sup>, was controlled by the state – a legacy of the colonial administration that was keen to extract benefits from the farming population. In times of independence, the legitimacy of the state marketing board changed over time in a dramatic fashion, being first a resource for funding nation-building activities. More recently after the SAPs, it has become a way to secure price stability for the farmers, and a high quality for the buyers. Ghana’s cocoa sector is an interesting case in the sense that there was no full-scale privatisation after the SAPs, partly due to the strong framing of the sector as being the source of national ownership and pride as the key social values attached to cocoa up to this day. Cocoa growing is still the single largest sector creating employment and

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<sup>12</sup> Due to landownership being passed on family lineages and lack of colonial era settler communities, most of land in Ghana is held by small holders (Hill 1963) and very few plantations exist.

income in the country. Overall, Ghanaian farmers produced 586 tonnes of cocoa in the season 2004/2005 (International Cocoa Organisation 2006), representing 17.8 per cent of the world market share. This increased to 662 tonnes in the season 2008/2009, which represented 18.8 per cent of total world cocoa production (International Cocoa Organisation 2008). The world market leader is Ivory Coast, which in 2008/2009 represented 34.7 per cent of total world production. While most of the grinding and processing of cocoa takes place in consumer countries (International Cocoa Organisation 2008), government initiatives in 2004 have focused on giving tax and other incentives to foreign investors who establish cocoa processing facilities in the country.

The way in which the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) were implemented in Ghana was that the government retained an export monopoly even after the SAPs had been put into effect; whereas in other African cocoa-producer countries – including Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Togo and Cameroon – the move was towards fully liberalised markets with little intervention (Varangis and Schreiber 2001). The Ghanaian government wished to maintain the export monopoly due to indirectly gaining revenues from the cocoa sector through export taxes, but also to protect farmers from price shifts during the growing season. Meanwhile, international lenders and donors such as the World Bank preferred a full-scale privatisation of cocoa markets (Fold 2002) with the view that competition in cocoa buying would be beneficial to both producers and buyers. As farmers have been caught in the middle of these international policy preferences, they do not have adequate representation through industry bodies, but Ghana's increasingly representative political party system has assured that their voice counts due to cocoa sector regulation being a significant electoral issue in Ghana. While Kuapa Kokoo farmers are in a privileged position as they are organised in a co-operative which can make an impact through the Ghana Co-operative Council (GCC), and other representative bodies, most cocoa growers do not belong to organised farming sector interest groups.

The part-liberalisation took place in 1992 and saw the creation of a new tier of companies called the Licensed Buying Companies (LBCs), which would compete freely among farmers for buying their crop. Kuapa Kokoo is one of the many of LBCs in Ghana, being among the largest five, and producing an estimated 35,000 tons

of cocoa annually (Ryan 2011). All exports of Ghanaian cocoa still pass through the Cocoa Marketing Company (CMC) unlike in other cocoa producing countries, which have completely dismantled the state marketing companies. The only exception is the marketing of so-called ‘cocoa waste’, which are below consumption-grade beans that would not pass the strict checks of the Quality Control (QC) unit of the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), but can still be used for many cocoa derivatives such as cosmetics.

The main beneficiaries of this ‘part-liberalisation’ have probably been the farmers, due to a reduction in the government share of export taxes and subsequent increase in producer prices. This is somewhat surprising given the resistance by many Ghanaians to the SAPs, and the generally negative perception regarding them (Asenso 1991). The other more obvious beneficiaries are international commodity buying companies who were able to enter the market as Licenced Buying Companies (LBCs); however, this group would have benefited even more had there been a full-scale privatisation of the sector. While the state lost initially in cocoa sector taxes, it could be argued that increased revenues for the two above are circulated in the economy – and as the government maintains the export monopoly it can still tax exports through the difference between the ‘farm gate’ and the world market price.

In the early 1990s the ‘farm gate’ prices in Ghana were less than half of the so-called international market Free-on-Board (FOB) prices<sup>13</sup> (Varangis and Schreiber 2001: 60), but they have since increased to about 75 per cent according to more recent estimates (Modern Ghana 2007; Ryan 2011). The increase of the ‘farm gate’ prices has had an enormous impact on the lives of ordinary farmers, as they effectively receive a higher share of the price for the producers, whereas previously the government took a bigger share in what was effectively an export tax due to a state-controlled cocoa-buying sector. In other cocoa-producing countries such as Ivory Coast, diverse middle-men also used to take their share of the world market FOB price, and the effective producer prices have also diverged more from world market prices (Ryan 2011). The Ghanaian system of fixed producer prices reduces price

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<sup>13</sup> The Free-on-Board (FOB) price includes customs processes and other handling costs, and is the basis of comparison rather than the spot-price quoted in international commodity markets.

volatility, while the Ivorian system has historically provided slightly higher prices on average to farmers who are able to negotiate with the commodity buying companies. Small farmers are probably better off in Ghana.

Privatisation in Ghana took a very different path than in other West African countries, where full liberalisation took place, abolishing the state marketing boards completely. Thus low regulation resulted in poorer quality cocoa entering the market elsewhere, causing higher price volatility to farmers. This, I would argue, was due to an unusual alliance of cocoa growers' interests, mobilised within the political parties in Ghana (Ryan 2011), and those of international commodity buying companies, who accepted the part-liberalisation due to assurances of steady supply of cocoa production with higher regulation and government oversight. Indeed cocoa production fell both in Nigeria and Cameroon after the liberalisation process, while in Ivory Coast and Ghana production increased somewhat. Part-privatisation on the negative side also led to a sense of losing national control over the cocoa production chain (Larbi-Jones 2001; Berlan 2008). While export taxes, suppressed cocoa production due to reduced incomes for cocoa growers, they had also funded large parts of public expenditure in the 1960s up to the late 1970s when cocoa production and cocoa prices were at a high point.

Social enterprises were mobilised around the social values of protecting national ownership and pride in cocoa production at a time when the entire sector was being opened up for international competition. Kuapa Kokoo's creation was partly motivated by the willingness to gain a greater market share for nationally owned cocoa companies. Even after part-liberalisation, the former state monopoly company, called Produce Buying Company (PBC), continues to operate as the second nationally owned company, having the highest market share as the 'incumbent' in the industry. However, the PBC at the time of research was losing market share to new entrants. Kuapa Kokoo could not exist if cocoa purchasing had not been part-liberalised in 1992. Kuapa Kokoo was launched as a joint effort of fairtrade export organisations such as Traidcraft and Body Shop (Tranchell and Doherty 2005), Ghanaian farmers, and regulators of the cocoa industry at COCOBOD. In this way, quite unexpectedly the 'liberalisation' process brought a greater simultaneous emphasis on social enterprises as a way of defending the interests of farmers at stake in the deregulation

process. Kuapa Kokoo was also able to attract staff from the previous state monopoly operations, as one of the founders of Kuapa was a former manager at the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD).

New actors also entered the scene, as both national NGOs such as the SEND Foundation, and international NGOs such as Oxfam and Christian Aid have also participated in the framing of cocoa markets, thus having a role in the marketing of fairtrade (Berlan 2011). In 2005 there was a major ‘trade justice’ campaign, which called for ‘trade not aid’ and ‘fair trade’, which called for discussing systemic issues about trade rules, and ownership of commodity chains (Nicholls and Opal 2005). Many industrialised countries either kept their markets closed or heavily taxed and regulated for goods from developing nations, a move that was criticised by the NGO community. While there are no punitive import restrictions on raw cocoa beans since it is a plant thriving only in tropical climates, processed cocoa paste and confectionaries may face import restrictions upon entering markets in Europe and North America. This was deemed as being unjust for producers in developing countries, who could not add value to their produce without facing commercial restrictions.

The NGO sector introduced a new type of a social value to the discussion, namely the impact of cocoa growing activities on poverty reduction efforts and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established by the United Nations. Cocoa sector’s profits and margins were directed towards small holders thus contributing to reducing poverty and increasing the incomes of the very poorest in Ghanaian society. As the current system in Ghana is seen as the most beneficial for cocoa farmers, this priority has currently halted the otherwise eager voices at both the IMF and the World Bank who wish to push for ever greater liberalisation of cocoa markets as an end in itself in order to increase so-called market efficiency over government regulation. The power of the international commodity buying companies has been curbed to some extent, enabling a co-operative such as Kuapa Kokoo to emerge as a result of this framing. The social value of cocoa sector has shifted from a project of nation-building towards supporting the livelihoods of the marginalised and the poor in Ghana, who are today seen as key actors in promoting bottom-up development. In this

process social enterprise is one of the concepts that have become increasingly popular in recent years.

Private sector actors such as cocoa buying companies, confectionary companies as well as the multilateral institutions accept this position of government regulation in Ghana due to ensuring a stable and growing supply of cocoa on the market, which is an overriding priority. Any shortage of cocoa, even short term, would result in price hikes and potentially disruptions in production of cocoa and other confectionaries in an ever more competitive consumer market. Corporate social responsibility arguments, meanwhile, are not in support of government regulation, but rather corporations have established charitable funds to help the poorest cocoa farmers through the International Cocoa Organisation (ICCO) and other industry groups. The balance of forces is currently in favour of government regulation of the cocoa market in Ghana, again an unusual position in light of other African countries having deregulated the sector and dismantled such price control and government export monopolies.

#### **4.1.2. Purification of Value in Ghana's ICT Sector**

The postal and telecommunications services - the precursor of information and communications technologies (ICTs) - during Ghana's early independence were considered as important for greater communication both within and outside of the country – but were not promoted as a strategic sector. Initially the number of telecommunications lines increased significantly bringing the number of telephone subscribers to over 16,000 in 1963, and each subscriber had an average of two telephone devices (Allotey and Akorli 1996). This figure had by 1979 only increased to 36,000 lines despite population growth and greater urbanisation (representing a penetration of 0.32 per cent). The lack of adequate telephone services was becoming a concern, as demonstrated by the 16,000 customers who were registered on a waiting list (International Telecommunications Union 1984: 109). Fixed-line telephone services were initially seen as part of public works, much like bridges, dams, electricity and roads, and were managed under the Public Works Department – partly due to the infrastructure of telephone lines being built at the same time as roads and

electricity. Their social value was compared to that of other infrastructure, which helped people to communicate, and businesses to function.

It was much later on, with further specialisation of the field of telecommunications, that a separate government department of Postal and Telecommunications Services was established in 1970. It was declared a public corporation in 1974, called the Postal and Telecommunications Corporation (PTC). By the 1980s, global concern was building up within the International Telecommunications Union (ITU 1984), who assessed the state of the world's telecommunication infrastructure in the *Maitland Report* (International Telecommunications Union 1984). At the time, there were 600 million telephone lines in the world, of which three quarters were in only nine industrialised nations (International Telecommunications Union 1984: 3). The report requested addressing the 'telecommunications gap', calling for international efforts to do so. This report was the precursor to the concern over the 'digital divide' that was articulated with the advent of the Internet and other newer ICTs from the late 1990s onwards. The *Maitland Report* involved a shift in addressing the access of individuals to telephony, postal and other information and communications technologies – rather than their role within wider nation-building efforts.

At the time of the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) in the early 1980s, the ICT-sector was considered to be largely outside the market, much like roads and waterways, which were not considered something where private sector participation would be seen as desirable due to their position as natural monopolies. As a result, in the early parts of the SAPs, there were no significant changes to telecommunications sector regulation and ownership. Largely due to the *Maitland Report*, international attention and solidarity, efforts were rather mobilised to increase staff training at the PTC, and its independence with regard to the ministry as a public utility.

It was not until the advent of mobile telephony that private sector participation entered the telephony market in 1992. This technological revolution provided an opportunity for private sector lobbyists to enter into the picture arguing that they would be both more efficient and customer friendly in comparison to government-provided services. Mobile telephony licences were granted to three private operators in 1992, and services began in the following year. In 1996 the Ghana Post and

Telecom Company was split into Ghana Post and Ghana Telecom as separate entities. Then in 1997 two new licences were granted to a second operator called Western Telesystems (Westel) Limited for landline access, and Capital Telecom for predominantly rural access. Finally, a regulatory authority called the National Communications Authority (NCA) was created to regulate the sector (Ahortor and Regobeth 2003) under the NCA Act (Government of Ghana 1996).

In granted the licences, the regulatory clauses included the establishment of targets for expanding both landlines and mobile subscriptions (Frempong and Atubra 2001). These targets would become the key manner in which the government could exert control over private-sector companies. The number of fixed line subscribers increased from 77,900 in 1996, to 212,500 in 2000, and it was at 321,500 at the time of research in 2005 (World Bank 2012), still leaving fixed line telephone penetration below two per cent of the population. The number of mobile telephony connections started at 21,900 in 1997, increased to 130,100 in 2000, and then grew exponentially to 2,874,600 in 2005 with four main operators competing for the customer base. The advent of mobile phone technologies meant that telephone penetration had by 2005 reached approximately twenty per cent of the population. Quantification of targets introduced a new metrology, where measuring of telephone lines and their penetration brought in new actors such as international development agencies, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), and the World Bank who prepared the set of Millennium Development Goals indicators in this sector.

The first part-privatisation took place in 1996, with the sale of a 30 per cent stake to Malaysia Telecom. The government was not content with the operator's services, and fought in courts over contractual terms to regain control. During the time that the battle for control was on-going, the government signed a management contract with Telenor of Norway, which included bonuses for achieving certain improvements in the service and number of both fixed and mobile subscription lines. The contract ended in 2007, and then the government prepared for full privatisation of the telecommunications company. The full privatisation of Ghana Telecom to Vodafone was completed in 2008, with a record sale price of USD 900 million for a 70 per cent stake in the company.



The purpose and objectives of private sector participation in Ghana's ICT policy became a matter of increased debate (Fuchs and Horak 2008), where 'visionaries' considered that increased foreign investment would allow Ghana to 'leapfrog' to the digital age. Meanwhile 'conservatives', possibly better seen as being interventionists, preferred the government to be clearly in a regulatory and guidance role in setting targets concerning social and economic criteria (Van Dijk 2005). Those favouring foreign investment were allied with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), which saw ICTs as a way for increasing international trade and investment into Ghana. The UNECA advised the government on the development of a policy framework in this direction, in line with the broader export-led growth model. Opposed were national interest groups, who wished to see telephony as part of broader national development goals, supported by ITU's approach.

Ghana's ICT policy was designed to fit the overall development planning framework, known as the Ghana Vision 2020 long-term plan (Government of Ghana 1995), which aimed at establishing Ghana as a middle-income country by the year 2020. Subsequently, these goals also entered the Ghanaian Poverty Reduction Strategy (Government of Ghana 2003), which for the first time mentioned mobile phones and Internet as having a key role in poverty reduction. Also in the 2000s, telephone and Internet penetration ratios entered into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targets under goal number eight concerning a global partnership for development. The number of Internet users stood at only 30,000 in 2000, but increased dramatically to 401,300 by 2005 (World Bank 2012) especially due to the increased number of Internet cafés. Targets for further increases were operationalised in the national regulatory and development frameworks. Selected international development agencies took on the ICT for Development agenda, notably the Canadian IDRC being a major donor to several local NGOs in Ghana on the topic, including Ghana Information Network on Knowledge Sharing (GINKS). These NGOs addressed the poverty reduction aspects of increased ICT coverage, and were also able to address these concerns in international forums.

A Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF) was established at the first World Summit on Information Technology (WSIS) in Geneva in 2003. It was officially launched with a secretariat in Abuja, Nigeria, at the second edition of WSIS in Tunis in 2005. Its

funds were meant for small-scale and community-based telecommunications projects, especially for the establishment of rural telecentres and linking up with existing civil society initiatives. During the time of the fieldwork, one training project with the Linux Accra User Group (LAUG) was financed with the DSF funding. These aid initiatives were a complement to wider market liberalisation, whereby public policy initiatives were to be achieved through targeted aid initiatives rather than strong public sector interference or regulation.

The social values of ICTs at the time of research had shifted dramatically from being seen as part of a national project of connecting each citizen with communications lines, much like roads and electricity – to becoming a disputed terrain between on the one hand poverty reduction targets, and on the other hand actors calling for deregulation to meet the needs of ICT industries such as call-centres and other Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) businesses. Busy Internet could not have been founded without an established regulatory framework for Ghana's ICT policy allowing private participation in the provision of telephony and Internet access in 1996. The policy also allowed for repatriating profits abroad for the founding members, crucial for foreign investors to enter the market. LAUG might exist nevertheless, but the import of computers and the availability of reliable Internet connections was a prerequisite for its activities as well. The history of the different social enterprises is thus clearly entangled with wider stories of market framing.

#### ***4.2. Emergence of Social Enterprises in Ghana***

Social enterprises are part of an on-going movement to examine association and reassemblage of markets in relation to diverse social values such as equality, fairness, rights and representation. This constitution of social values as a counter movement to attempts by economists, lawyers, accountants, multilateral institutions and other market professionals, which Callon (2007: 335) calls 'economics at large', who create 'purified' notion of an economy. Social enterprise has gone mostly unnoticed as they are not measured or represented in lobby groups, investment outlooks, business environment studies and other representations of the Ghanaian economy. Their presence and recognition has been minimal due to a 'purification' of economic

markets through the performativity of market professionals, which assumed that all enterprises would be focused on profitability alone. This meant that social value considerations would either be secondary or non-existent.

#### **4.2.1. Community-based Organisations**

Community development (CD) and community-based organisations (CBOs) are at the core of the contemporary notion of a social enterprise in Ghana. Well before the invention of the social enterprise as a unifying concept, these two concepts articulated issues about local-level solidarity, exclusion from mainstream services, and possibilities for supporting positive values in such a sector for greater social change. The concept of community organisation has long existed in Ghanaian society, as seen in the ‘Nwoboa’ or ‘Nnoboa’ labour groups among the Akan-speaking communities (Ghana Department of Co-operatives 1990; Dadson 1988).

The work differs from place to place but it is usually expected that the host member will provide the meal for the occasion and maybe some drinks also. It is clear that, for success of the system, honesty, hardwork and punctuality of the members are essential. It is usually in farming activities that this system is organized. Among the Akan, it is known as the *nnoboa* while the Ewe equivalent is *fidado*. (Nukunya 2003: 97, emphasis as in the original)

These groups organised farm work, specific tasks such as fence building and roof making, as well as public works such as clearing pathways and building dams. The practice of the Nnoboa groups had certainly also spread to other parts of West Africa, as instances are also noted from Liberia, known as Susu-Ka, where the term ‘susu’ meant to pool and ‘ka’ meant labour (Person A). Susu has also a more specific meaning of a rotating credit association (ROSCA), which have been analysed at length by anthropologists (Geertz 1973) across the world. Geertz made the argument that they are indeed a prototype of capitalist formation, and modernisation. ‘Susu’ originated among the Yoruba traders who spread across West Africa (Aryeetey and Gockel 1991: 25), leading to various interpretations of the idea of pooling labour ‘Susu-Ka’ (Person A), or ‘communal labour’ in the service of a community or a traditional ruler. These examples indicate that practices similar to what are today known as co-operatives, in fact, predate the colonial period in Ghana.

There is a long historical strand of community development, which was already a feature of the colonial government in the 1940s, when ‘mass education’ campaigns were started with a strong element of community involvement. It led to the adoption of radical pedagogical thinking in Ghana, focused on the value of self-help.

[I]t means working with people at their own level of progress and teaching them to help themselves, by the methods which are readily available to them, to improve their standard and manner of living by all practical means, no matter by how little. Community development also pays great attention to what the people themselves want – provided of course that it is of genuine social value. (Du Sautoy 1958: 8)

An agenda of community development as described by a member of the colonial administration, subscribed to improving livelihoods through practical means, without having any high expectations for vast improvements over a short period of time. The use of the term of ‘social value’ here seems to signify the attachment to self-help, and expression of the community’s own will. These community development campaigns focused on the advancement of literacy, household economics and childcare, various self-help initiatives as well as extension services of diverse forms of expertise for the communities. Meanwhile, it was also a way in which the colonial government saw welfare services and social safety nets being created for Ghanaians, without spending public resources from the colonial administration.

While one could see these efforts in a cynical light of the colonial government wanting to focus nationalistic energies on communities, instead of striving for independence, the positive reading is they have reinforced local self-help and democratic organisation. There were Community Development Associations founded, as well as Community Development Officers (CDOs) hired by the government at the time (Du Sautoy 1958: 87). Community development was placed under government control in the early years of independence. In 1969, the Community Development Section of the Department of Social Welfare and Community Development renewed itself by creating new institutions such as local government institutions. These included Village Development Committees (VDCs), which were given the task of organising literacy courses and pursuing self-help strategies (Dorvlo 2006: 32). The committee heads were appointed by the District Commissioner in charge of the regional government (Dorvlo 2006: 37). This meant that the VDCs were under effective government control, and would not constitute an autonomous or self-managed sphere of social activity at the time.

Community development issues were commonplace in the three fieldsites. The Research and Development Officers (RDOs) at Kuapa Kokoo can be seen in continuity with the Community Development Officer (CDOs) and the agricultural extension workers who were introduced in Ghana in the immediate independence era, and at the time were promoted by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (Food and Agricultural Organisation 1997). Also the constitution of Kuapa village societies owes to the tradition of community development in Ghana, which was growing already towards the end of the colonial period and introduced democratic governance structures in the village level, providing an alternative to the influence of traditional or religious authorities on the local level. At times the community is understood in terms of the traditional structures of kinship and in particular chieftaincy, as exemplified in the delivery model of Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS). These are government-run services that have used the community-based logic to provide a better health service. Previous attempts with ‘outreach’ and ‘extension’ officers – which were otherwise based in area offices, and had been cut in the 1980s and subsequently – have not been as successful in responding to health needs.

The introduction of CHPS into districts occurs through extensive planning and community dialogue on the part of the Health Service and the community. A key principle of CHPS introduction is that traditional leaders of the community must accept the CHPS concept and commit themselves to supporting it. CHPS relies on participation and mobilization of the traditional community structure for service delivery. (Nyonator 2005: 26)

The literature on community-based initiatives and organisations also considers the role of traditional rulers and healers in forest conservation (Marfo 2008) and rural medicine (Nyonator 2005). Other studies indicate that communities are not necessarily led by traditional rulers; women's groups (Asiedu 2002b) and non-governmental organisations (Leach, Mearns and Scoones 1999) are also important for building community-based organisations. This experience is not unique to Ghana; the lessening of the impact of structural adjustment on the poorest citizens was recognised also in Zimbabwe and Zambia:

The call by NGOs for ‘adjustment with a human face’ during the SAP era created a new wave of social enterprise development, with the explicit goal of protecting poor and vulnerable communities. Massive resources were mobilized for enhancing the productive capacity of the poorest

producers, especially women, and targeting the most marginalized areas.  
(Masendeke and Mugova 2009: 122)

In Zambia and Zimbabwe, the use of NGOs on the whole was seen as being instrumental in lessening the severity of the cutbacks. While the scale of resources allocated for such an adjustment with a human face is debatable, a large part of aid is indeed now destined for the non-governmental sector, to such an extent that the NGO influence on politics and subsequent weakening of the state is seen as a threat (Chabal and Daloz 1999). The timeline of the development of social enterprises in Ghana could be compared to that in Zimbabwe, where Masendeke and Mugova (2009) note the gradual diversification of the types of activities that social enterprise-type organisations have undertaken.

The more visible emergence of community-based organisations (CBOs) can be dated to the Structural Adjustment Programmes. A fund called the 'Programme of Action to Mitigate the Social Costs of Adjustment' (PAMSCA) was initiated in 1987 with special attention to vulnerable groups (Asenso 1991; Asiedu 2002a), after the social cost of structural adjustment was recognised. Social enterprise strategies were also considered within the new focus on poverty reduction via ICTs. The National Communications Authority (NCA) was set to collect a voluntary 1 per cent of operators' turnover for the Ghana Investment Fund for Telecommunication (GIFTEL) to promote rural telephony in particular, and the development of telecommunications in general (Haggarty, Shirley and Wallsten 2002). This plan, however, was not followed and GIFTEL was not operating during the fieldwork period in 2005.

The programme established a grant with the explicit aim of creating employment within CBOs, which were considered to be well-placed to assist poor communities that may be the worst hit by adjustment packages (Asiedu 2002a). After the structural adjustment period ended in the mid-1990s, the national poverty reduction strategies also included support for community-based organisations on the basis of special funds. The first Ghana Poverty Alleviation Programme (GPAP) included a national Social Investment Fund (SIF), attracting donor support from the UNDP and loans from the African Development Bank (ADB). These funds also found their way to the ICT sector, and at Busy Internet public lectures were organised together with NGOs who were advocating the rights of those excluded from participating in information

society. In the same vein, the Ghana Information Sharing Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS) emphasised mentoring, peer learning and other methods developed within community development strategies.

CBOs demonstrate that civil society has had a significant role in the development of alternative economic structures throughout the recent history of Ghana. CBOs, either associative or enterprising in their pursuits, have changed the landscape of Ghana's development by partnering both with private enterprises and government agencies to facilitate market access, deliver services, and make links to the traditional hierarchies of ordinary Ghanaians. Community development (CD) has been practised by government agencies to extend their reach and improve people's access to government; thus for a long time, even during the period of colonial administration, it has been a way to improve access to government service provision. The promotion of community development rested on the premise that the state would not be capable to reach all Ghanaians – a premise which is now being reconsidered with the launch of the Ghana National Health Service in 2006, and other campaigns for universal health coverage. The focus on community-based services and organisations has also promoted a bottom-up culture of development in Ghana, where citizens' own initiatives are seen as important to national development concerns, and should be helped where possible through specific funds, recognition and initiatives that bring citizens together. In this way both LAUG and Kuapa Kokoo village societies are a continuation of the community-based ethos.

#### **4.2.2. Co-operative Enterprises**

The development of co-operative enterprises in Ghana is possibly the most significant part of the growing social enterprise movement in terms of both number of workers as co-operative members and the turnover and creation of income. While co-operative enterprises were banned for the greater part of the colonial rule, examples of co-operatively organised enterprises exist since the 1920s onwards especially in relation to labour migrations and establishment of informal co-operative farming 'companies' (Hill 1966). They were organised to defend the interests of farming communities with respect to the colonial administration buying cocoa from farmers.

Organized groups like these were loathed by the British colonial administration because they presented a strong challenge to the political and economic status quo. This explains why the cooperative groups in Ghana and other Anglophone countries were initially denied legal backing. (Develtere, Pollet and Wanyama 2008: 7)

It was later on that legal structures emerged, as co-operative development was seen as a non-controversial manner of expressing African farmers' interests. The legal recognition of co-operatives placed them under government surveillance and regulation. The legal structure of the co-operative in Ghana dates back to the Cooperative Societies Ordinance No. 4 of 1931 (Cazzuffi and Moradi 2010). In 1944 a Department of Cooperatives was created by the colonial administration (Dadson 1988: 173). In 1960, after independence, the state took firm control of the sector, which led to the formation of the United Ghana Farmers' Cooperative Council, "which was given sole responsibility for cooperative development and became the apex of the movement" (Dadson 1988: 174). Many state-formed co-operatives were set up subsequently in the agricultural sector. As the Nkrumah government was overthrown in 1966, old co-operatives were allowed to re-establish themselves, along with the Department for Co-operatives and a separate Ghana Co-operative Council (GCC), but growth of the sector was relatively weak. Both colonial and early independence governments saw co-operatives as a threat to their rule, as a potential alternative power base, which was best controlled and put under surveillance.

In the 1980s the co-operative movement was in deep crisis due to the economic crisis that led to the advent of the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs). Co-operatives lost their autonomy and independence, in the sense that they had to belong to national unions or associations of co-operatives, until this law was overturned by a Ghana Supreme Court decision in 1997 upholding freedom of association and non-association for all co-operatives (International Centre for Civil Society Law 2011). The political liberties gained in the 1990s also led to a revival of the co-operative movement, exemplified by the founding of Kuapa Kokoo in 1993 as a co-operative. The work done by the Ghana Co-Operatives Council, Credit Union Association, and Susu Collectors Association revived the different co-operative forms with a more autonomous approach than the one practised up until the 1980s. The revival has led to a phenomenal growth of all of these movements in Ghana. There are about 2850 co-operatives of different types in Ghana, with approximately 2.4 million members



(Develtere, Pollet and Wanyama 2008), meaning that as many as one Ghanaian out of ten may be a member of a co-operative in one way or another. In reality one can be a member of several co-operatives at the same time, though multiple memberships mean a more intensive participation in the co-operative movement on the whole. Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Union (KKFU) was the largest co-operative in Ghana measured by membership or by sales. The co-operative law provided it with the legal frame in which it operated.

The definition of a co-operative is adopted from an initial statement in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Lancashire, England, among factory workers in the town of Rochdale. From the very early days, co-operatives have distinguished themselves from the 'purified' notion of profit-seeking enterprises, which they associated with exploitative labour and retailing practices. The definition of a co-operative comes today from the International Co-Operative Alliance, which traces its history to the early industrial revolution in England.<sup>14</sup> The most recent set of co-operative principles was agreed in 1995.

- 1) Voluntary and Open Membership
- 2) Democratic Member Control
- 3) Member Economic Participation
- 4) Autonomy and Independence
- 5) Education, Training and Information
- 6) Co-operation among Co-operatives
- 7) Concern for Community (International Co-operative Alliance 1995)

These principles are still currently used to describe the aims and objectives of co-operative enterprises across the world, and are often subscribed in foundation documents. They provide a way of distinguishing co-operatives from mainstream businesses that solely focus on making profits in their official statements of objectives. These principles have undergone several revisions, and no longer are based on the old founding principle of co-operatives that were focused on the principle of one member, one vote – now simply noting 'membership economic participation' as the fourth principle. Principles of not redistributing profits to investors have also been changed to a broad principle regarding autonomy and

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<sup>14</sup> The ICA was founded in 1895 in London. Its founding document used the Rochdale Principles laid down by the pioneers of the co-operative movement in Rochdale. The founding of the international co-operative movement took place at the same time as the worker's movement formed the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The two organisations signed a "Common Co-Operative Agenda" in 2004.

independence. The final principle, concern for community, has been added in the latest revision as a recognition that co-operatives also have to consider the needs of those who are not members, but are affected by its activities nevertheless.

There are many national variations of co-operative enterprises, and forms that co-operatives take in Ghana. One classification is provided below:

**Table 2: Types of Co-Operatives in Ghana**

<b>Agricultural</b>	<b>Industrial</b>	<b>Financial</b>	<b>Services</b>
Production and marketing	Local gin (Akpeteshie) distilling and retailing	Credit Unions	Transport
Poultry and livestock	Handicraft and artisan groups which are worker cooperatives	Susu Cooperatives, which are small, locally based savings cooperatives	A Pharmaceutical purchasing cooperative
Fishing and fish marketing			Consumer cooperatives
Food processing and marketing			

Source: Opong-Manu 2004: 2

In 2004 one estimate of the membership of different types of co-operatives indicated that 49 per cent were agricultural, 36 per cent industrial, 11 per cent financial, and 9 per cent were services (Opong-Manu 2004). The average size of a co-operative was relatively big, about 800 to 1,000 members each. Large farming co-operatives such as Kuapa Kokoo are therefore not an exception, while Kuapa is the single largest co-operative in Ghana. Susu organisations are not always included in the definition of co-operatives, but in Ghana they are recognised as part of the co-operative movement. According to estimates by the associations themselves, there were 1,463 Susu organisations in Ghana in 2010, with an estimated number of 30–1,000 members each. The total client base in the Susu-type co-operative associations was reported as 307,805 persons (Ghana Co-operative Susu Collectors' Association 2011). Credit unions make up the bulk of financial co-operatives in Ghana, and in 2010 there were an estimated 433 credit unions, with a total membership of 336,147 (Ghana Co-operative Credit Union Association 2011). This represents a significant number of economically active Ghanaians, and if credit unions were one single bank, it would constitute the largest single banking organisation in the country measured by its customer base.

The sector has therefore survived both military governments as well as Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs), and is likely to grow further if the government continues with its positive approach to the sector with simplified banking and tax laws that have rendered previously informal activities now fully legal and regulated. While official government policies today make no special mention of co-operatives within a wider private sector, co-operatives themselves are keen to differentiate from other private sector actors through their distinct organisations, legal structures and practices.

The revival of the co-operative movement has also benefited from international aid flows and partnerships since the 1980s. For instance, the Ghana Co-operative Credit Union Association (CUA) has had a long-lasting bilateral partnership with the Canadian Cooperatives Association (CCA) who does staff exchange, technical assistance to local credit unions, software development and training of trainers programmes. This has increased the capacity of CUA as an apex organisation for all credit unions in Ghana, including notably the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU), which is studied more closely later (in section 7.2.1). Had there not been a well-managed national apex organisation for credit unions in Ghana, the creation of the KKCU would certainly have been more difficult.

### **4.2.3. Informal Economy Organisations**

The informal economy can be considered as the largest part of the Ghanaian economy, as it covers well over half of employment in the country. It is in no way a unified sector, and it is rather defined as a sum of all practices in the economy that does not have formal contracts, or takes place in formally registered companies or within formally designated business spaces. Labelled as informal, they are outside the conventional analysis of economic models, and are considered mostly either delinquent or lacking capacity to participate in the conventional markets. This ‘purification’ of the economy touches on the types of organisations that are allowed to participate in business and trading activities. There are no accurate estimates of the size of the informal economy in Ghana, but one indication is the number of taxpayers. According to a recent study there were only just over 1.2 million taxpayers in Ghana

in 2009 (Prichard 2009), which has a population of over 20 million and a workforce of at least 7 million.

The informal economy is most commonly seen as something unlawful, even criminal and dangerous to get involved in, but as Hart (1976) explains, the reality could not be further from this image. Studying the informal economy in Ghana is particularly interesting as the very term was coined through an extensive ethnography by Keith Hart in the early 1970s in the neighbourhood of Nima, in Accra. Hart looked at immigrant Frafra community residents of Nima, where entrepreneurs and other actors are seen as constituting an entire *informal economy* (Hart 1976). While economists consider persons outside formal labour markets as being unemployed, Hart points out:

despite the constraints on entry to informal occupations, the range of opportunities available outside the organised labour market is so wide that few of the 'unemployed' are totally without some form of income, however irregular (Hart 1973: 81).

The informal economy thus emerged in contrast to the 'modern' economy of formal wage-labour contract, and such contracts were both new and lacked institutional settings for their existence at the time in Ghana. Also, informal jobs were often both a complement to formal employment, as well as a survival strategy outside such formal relationships. At times, informal jobs were even a means of accumulating significant amounts of capital, and could lead to high status for those engaged in such informal activities. What Hart argued was that the split between 'formal' and 'informal' was somewhat artificial, as many took 'informal' jobs to supplement 'formal' work incomes, or used different types of labour, capital and exchange markets compete with one another.

Most of the farming families in the Kuapa villages were part of the informal sector, but they were granted a legal status with respect to the administration due to a registration exemption that applied to smallholding farmers. Many other traders, street vendors, transport companies, taxi drivers and several other professions that I met during my fieldwork would also be part of the informal economy. As Hart described, many of those who hold formal sector jobs also do informal work on the side – an example of this would be the language lessons that I took at the University of Ghana, where a lecturer at the language centre gave me Twi classes privately at early mornings before he started his working day at the university. Some others who

held formal jobs either at Kuapa or Busy could have a separate venture as a market trader for instance for smoked fish, or imported poultry. At the Linux Accra User Group, hardly anybody held a formal job, and only the group leader and two members were actually employed – as most were IT sector students. Whenever possible, they would engage in casual labour in fixing websites, wiring companies' IT infrastructure or making small-scale computer repairs.

From Hart's categories (Hart 1976) it is not possible to distinguish which informal sector activities might have social purposes, as he tended to list professions rather than the motive of the activity. Certainly, excluding the outright criminal activities, any of the legitimate activities may actually constitute a social enterprise. Such self-help strategies also include forms of community and solidarity, which are exemplified by what Hart notes about local lending activities:

[T]here survives among many groups a system of patronage and reciprocal support among migrants from the same area which provides a further buttress to the individual in addition to his or her rural base. (Hart 1976: 492)

In stating that some informal economy organisations can be studied as social enterprises, researchers are de-emphasising the role of 'informality' and rather looking more at the role of such actors in creating social value, through engaging with market-based trading initiatives. Some types of informal economy activities include aspects and practices of sharing and redistribution of income and wealth due to an 'affective connection' (Leclercq 1992: 143-147, cited in Peemans 1997: 113). In Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the urban 'popular economy' was considered to have its own set of values, which were different from the mainstream economy:

It has to be seen at the same time in its economic and social dimensions which in fact are interdependent and together define a certain style of life. It rests on its own system of values. (Peemans 1997: 112, translation from French)

These values can be both criminal and legitimate, distributive as much as accumulative. In Chile in particular a 'popular economy' is understood as being constituted by the inhabitants of 'popular' neighbourhoods, and arising from a wider 'popular' culture (Aman and Parker 1991). Some researchers consider that a 'solidarity economy' (Singer 2000; Eme 1994; Defourny and Develtere 1999; Razeto

2010) may emerge through such experiences of mutual bonds, reciprocity and specific values.

In Ghana, many informal activities have been understood as constituting ‘community-based organisations’ (CBOs), which conveys in a more positive manner what the activities are actually about. An informal activity is literally just an activity that is not formal, while a CBO is understood as being an activity started by a group of persons within a community and serving its interests. By labelling informal activities according to the actors’ constituency or purpose of activity, they have gained a better foothold and their lack of formal registration can be relaxed due to a recognised social purpose of the activity. These framing exercises actually contribute to changing them in significant ways, as such new identities in turn change the ways in which these very same enterprises can act with public and private actors in return.

#### **4.2.4. Fairtrade Organisations**

Fairtrade organisations in Ghana have grown since the 1990s as a result of an increasing awareness of global poverty in the industrialised countries. They can be traced back to the 1980s and the opening up of world trade, which severely depressed agricultural commodity prices worldwide. The links, however, are often made to older movements and historical events. Some see fairtrade as a continuation of other consumer movements. In the USA, there was a movement to boycott slave-traded cotton in the 1790s (Croft and Cole 2011). In Britain, a slave-produced sugar boycott was organised by the London Abolition Committee in 1791, which signed up as many as 300,000 supporters (Sandiford 2004: 124). These moral concerns over market-based trading, and in particular the use of slave or slave-like labour have surfaced from time to time. For instance, the popularity of fairtrade cocoa is also linked to a growing concern over the use of child labour in the cocoa sectors in Ivory Coast and Ghana (Ryan 2011; Harding 2011).

The origins of the contemporary fairtrade movement can be found in the post-War period, where both charities and faith-based organisations started importing handicrafts from Chinese refugees in Hong Kong, or from war-ravaged communities

in Greece (Bucolo 2007). The fairtrade certification began as Dutch development workers entered into a dialogue with Southern Mexican coffee producers in 1988 at a time of falling coffee prices (European Fair Trade Association 2006), in trying to understand how they could play a positive role in the promotion of the community's needs. This led to the creation of one of the first certificates by Max Havelaar, a company that now also carries Ghanaian cocoa from Kuapa Kokoo in its collection. Subsequently, various fairtrade labels were created for different types of goods, which then federated in 2003 to form the international fairtrade mark.

A fairtrade organisation has to comply with the requirements established by the Fairtrade Labelling Organisation (FLO-CERT), which was established in Bonn, Germany, with national affiliates around Europe and North America. Fairtrade is closely associated with other ethical trade initiatives, including the organic movement, as well as The Body Shop's in-house practice 'community trade' standards (Roddick 2001). Community trade does not have a certification system as fairtrade does, but it operates on broadly similar principles of 'fair price' and community benefit via distribution of additional trade income. In Ghana, there are several examples of 'community trade', most notably a Shea butter producer group.

Since 1994, a group of women in northern Ghana has been supplying Shea butter to The Body Shop, as part of the company's community trade initiative [...] The Tungteiya Shea Butter Association now provides a living for more than 400 women in 11 villages in the Tamale region of northern Ghana. The women earn independence and self-respect; their communities earn valuable resources, the women have directed their profits into water pipes and wells for their villages. (Sayers 2008: 31)

These initiatives show that there is a spillover effect from fairtrade (Aspers 2006), where producers adopt higher ethical standards even outside fairtrade markets as standards have become part of the competitive outlook, and not having standards can hurt the reputation of a company among ethical consumers. Ghana has no current forms of fairtrade labelling<sup>15</sup>, but a plethora of ethical and ecological products are on sale in central Accra. There is no Ghanaian apex body for fairtrade organisations, but

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<sup>15</sup> Very few labelling organisations currently exist in developing countries, while in some larger countries – such as Brazil with the 'Cercles' or 'circles' of fairtrade, 'Label Comercio Justo' in Mexico, (Bucolo 2007: 212) and 'Fair Trade South Africa', the latest launched in 2005, and becoming operational in 2009 (Fairtrade Label South Africa 2012) – there are similar national labels emerging out of solidarity-based economy movements.

handicraft fairtrade export associations are often members of COFTA (Cooperation for Fairtrade in Africa), which wants to launch local certification processes and lower the access to fairtrade markets. The lack of Ghanaian fairtrade organisations demonstrates that fairtrade is connected to existing community-based organisations (in the case of handicraft producers) and agricultural co-operatives (in the case of agricultural crops); and in some cases where plantation crops are exported as fairtrade, as is the case with sugar there are some contacts with trade unions as well. Meanwhile, fairtrade has established a much greater institutional presence in the consumer movements in the global North (Berlan 2011).

The key manner in which the injustice of global markets is framed in fairtrade is the global value chain (Nicholls and Opal 2005). In fact the entire set of rules of fairtrade is based on the theory of global commodity chains, which dates back to the theories concerning ‘centre’ and ‘periphery’ in the world economy, and disparities in the North-South trade flow analysis (Keune 2009). These theories assume that the general problem is that developing country governments have little or no power to negotiate better deals for their own farmers, through either regulation or taxation. For economists, no such ‘commodity chains’ exist, as the market is made up of individual buyers and sellers who meet on what they consider being a level playing field. Conceptualising markets as commodity chains, with unequal positions for producers, importers and consumers has created a moral mobilisation around certain commodities that are produced in poor countries – cocoa, coffee, tea and bananas in particular. Fairtrade focuses on the social values of single commodities, and in such a sense it contrasts with the three previous movements, which focused on ways of organising economic relationships. Therefore fairtrade is a complement to the previous issues, not a stand-alone issue on its own.

Fairtrade can, however, be criticised for focusing too much on simplified commodity chain relationships, which ignores many aspects of social and economic values that actors themselves are engaged. For instance, on the village level, while cocoa was the most important commodity crop that was sold for money, most farmers produced their own food crops alongside their cocoa plantations. In some cases, food crops could be grown under cocoa trees, in other cases farmers kept separate food gardens where these crops such as yams, cocoyams (a specific type of yam that grows in the shade of



cocoa trees, where also leaves were eaten), maize and plantains were grown. In the further stages of exports, processing and manufacturing and retail of cocoa beans into confectionaries important considerations of potential social values are not significantly considered by the fairtrade system. For instance, in fairtrade the tax payment of commodity exporting companies is not being monitored, while private sector exporters who are fairtrade labelled may be engaged in tax dodging either in the producer or the retail steps of the production chain.

#### **4.2.5. Social Entrepreneurship**

The inclusion of social aspects and objectives in the definition of ‘entrepreneurship’ is the most recent definition of a social enterprise in Ghana – emphasising the role of the individual entrepreneur, rather than the role of the institution or association where he or she is situated. This in turn helps to frame entrepreneurship as something that no longer needs to be based simply on making the maximal profit (Dees 1998; Bornstein 2004), but also on the attainment of social value and social objectives, and is often derived from Schumpeter’s works (1983). This new frame of social activities as something entrepreneurial, and also involving risk and innovation, has again helped to open new doors and break down some of the previous barriers to existing initiatives that now operate under the banner of ‘social entrepreneurship’.

What has taken place is the addition of some private-sector qualities to socially motivated activities. By talking about social entrepreneurship, or its variant public entrepreneurship (Kuhnert 2001) we include social values into the concepts that previously had been considered as predominantly economic. This emphasis came at a time of significant state failure in many countries, and the search for social initiatives in unusual places. Characterising such ventures as examples of social entrepreneurs means understanding the phenomenon in a qualitatively new way, which is quite different from previous categories of activists or reformers. Also, social entrepreneurship can take place outside the market, e.g. in innovative and entrepreneurial approaches within the public sector or within civil society (Bornstein 2004).

In the 1990s several foundations and international NGOs were started with the purpose of promoting social entrepreneurship, among them Ashoka, Skoll Foundation and NESsT in the USA and the Schwab Foundation in Switzerland. The only one present in Ghana since the 1990s is Ashoka, which selects ‘fellows’ among community leaders into their network of social entrepreneurs. Ashoka was founded by former employees of McKinsey management consultants back in the 1980s in order to look at innovative ways to solve social problems faced both by developing and industrialised countries. The first instances of selected ‘social entrepreneurs’ in Ghana were the Ashoka fellows, chosen in 1993 as part of the establishment of an Ashoka network in West Africa. Victoria Koomson, who was chosen as an Ashoka Fellow in 1993, founded the Central and Western Fishmongers Improvement Association in 1990. The association focuses on income-improvement activities using more environmentally friendly ovens to smoke fish, invests part of the profits in community-improvement projects, and has made it possible for disabled persons to take part in the project. She describes the problem in the following manner:

With its limited resources, Ghana's government has not attempted to reach the isolated, unorganized, and politically insignificant coastal fishing communities. The area has been bypassed by the main expressway, and fish cannot easily be carried to market before spoiling. When the fishermen bring in their catch in the evenings, the lack of storage facilities forces their fishmonger wives to dispose of the fish before nightfall or lose much to spoilage. Thus, they sell fish with little profit and are exploited by middlemen. (Ashoka 1993b)

The ways in which entrepreneurial activities are being experimented with in Ghana are also exemplary in terms of how different roles are being brought together in an entrepreneurial venture. The activities of another Ashoka Fellow from the same year, Lucia Quachey, are explained as follows:

Lucia created and coordinates the Association of Women in Development Experts as the institutional vehicle for her vision. While she herself specializes in entrepreneurial skills development, the Association is comprised of a team of women – in both staff and volunteer roles – who bring a range of skills and experience that enables the Association's activities to move beyond straight economic activities to wider community needs, such as health, education and infrastructure development. Her team includes program analysts, nutritionists, and experts in rural technology. (Ashoka 1993a)

From these two examples, and there are three more Ashoka Fellows in Ghana, and thousands more world-wide, the story of social entrepreneurship becomes clearer – either recognised in this manner, or often one that goes unrecognised. A Ghanaian

initiative called the SEND Foundation was also critical in popularising a slightly different approach to social entrepreneurship (as described in section 2.2). SEND Ghana was founded in 1998 with the aim of promoting entrepreneurial activities, co-operative credit unions and rural livelihood programmes that create awareness and practices around key development issues in Ghana. Their approach was based on peer-promotion, as explained by a staff member of the SEND foundation.

[P]eer in the sense of that young people of their age group, so they are trained to provide services. Then we go in, you train them about the use of a condom, you train them about breast feeding, you train them about family planning, so they have basic education that they can give to their peer group when they come there. [...] So for example if you are a hair dresser working with us, you would get trained how to do education in your shop, and then we give you condom to sell in your shop. [...] We have a blacksmith who is a member of our group, if you went to his shop, you see that he has a condom in his shop. Then you get interested, and you can discuss that, but he can also talk to you about breast-feeding. (Person A)

The example illustrates how SEND Foundation worked, in combining social and economic aspects of development within professional associations and networks, such as hairdressers as well as artisans. Their approach consisted of then after the initial developmental phase to later introduce microcredit and other generating income, once the social enterprise approach was already in place. Surprisingly, he felt that the development of the social skills was more difficult than the development of economic skills.

We feel that that is very important, trying to develop the social capital. That is more difficult than developing basic economic skills, they already have some basic economic skills. I mean, so that comes later. So that's why we try to combine the social with the enterprise aspects. (Person A)

The way in which SEND Foundation worked, was to combine both social and economic aspects in different stages of community development. This approach, which they had developed and was at the origin of their name, was key for their understanding of how social entrepreneurship worked. The examples from Ghana are similar to the academic literature on social enterprises, though the terminology and words that are used are somewhat different. An example from Dees (1998) is illustrative.

For social entrepreneurs, the social mission is explicit and central. This obviously affects how social entrepreneurs perceive and assess opportunities. Mission-related impact becomes the central criterion, not wealth creation. Wealth is just a means to an end for social entrepreneurs.

With business entrepreneurs, wealth creation is a way of measuring value creation. (Dees 1998: 3)

Social entrepreneurs, just like for-profit entrepreneurs, commit their time and effort, and take home a salary or non-financial benefits such as a higher status and recognition (which is also a form of success). While in Ghana the language of a 'mission' is not used as much, but rather words like 'social development' and 'community development' are more commonly used to understand social value creation. The greatest difference between them is that the social entrepreneur is seen primarily as an individual, unlike community-based organisations or co-operative movements, where actors were seen as collectives. Some authors view them as collectives, or as using collective resources (Light 2008), but most see them as a work of persons acting in a difficult environment. This perception has led to initiatives that tend to focus on the start-up and creation phase, and the entrepreneurial phase, but do not look sufficiently into the social structures that could sustain social value creation in the long term.

Since the first pioneers of social entrepreneurship, other initiatives have been created that support social entrepreneurship in Ghana. One example is the Ghana Young Women Social Entrepreneurs, founded in 2010 to train young women entrepreneurs in high-technology sectors. Launched in January 2010 in Ghana, it is working with the support of several international donors who work in the area of 'social entrepreneurship', the Ghana Rotary Foundation, and professional networks of the ICT sector. The programme has the objective of training 20 young woman entrepreneurs in a business incubation programme, advancing leadership and mentoring, creating a social investment fund, and furthering social investment opportunities in Ghana. The term of 'social and environmental entrepreneurship' was pioneered in Ghana by the SEED Programme, launched by the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) in 2004, and the first awards were given in 2005.

Social entrepreneurship thus proposes a shift from thinking about entrepreneurship in the light of profit-maximisation, having at least the potential of contributing towards social value creation as well. The current interest in the term in Ghana demonstrates that the term is currently more fashionable than promoting co-operatives as institutions, or even ethical or fairtrade initiatives on the ground. However, looking

carefully, the examples of social entrepreneurship – the Ashoka Fellows and the earlier examples from the SEND foundation – both apply the principles of community-based organisations as they consider that social enterprise initiatives need an existing kinship network to thrive. In the three fieldsites, all could be said to demonstrate significant aspects of social entrepreneurship. LAUG was an example of social entrepreneurship – social innovation and mixing public, private and voluntary resources – and was very active in this respect.

### **4.3. Key Informant Views on Social Value**

While the qualitative criteria above are useful for identifying social enterprises as field sites, they were not so helpful in understanding the social values that these enterprises created. To understand these processes better, I discuss here interviews during the fieldwork period with persons who I consider key informants. As the person at the SEND Foundation mentioned, (above and in Chapter 2, section 2.2), the key assumption behind this idea is that first of all people have a good understanding of the problems facing their own communities, and do not necessarily need outside assessments of the causes and relationships of poverty in their communities.

Busy Internet had a similar intention, as they also saw that bringing business and social activities together was the key to the growth of Busy Internet as a social enterprise. The key objective of Busy was to enhance the skills and opportunities of Ghanaian Internet users in the construction of an inclusive information society within a viable ICT sector in Ghana. One of the founders of Busy described his initial interests in starting up the venture.

The purpose was an experiment, to see how Africans would respond to the tools of technology. You know, I had made enough money that I didn't look at this as an investment. I looked at this as an adventure, a challenge and I still do and [...] in a way I suppose I felt that, you know, Africa is the misunderstood and the ignored and the continually exploited continent, and I feel that we all have a responsibility to address that one way or another. (Person C)

Social enterprise was chosen as the approach (instead of philanthropy or purely voluntary activities) because social enterprising was seen as the most flexible and

diversified approach, providing entrepreneurial challenges with a focus on social benefit.

In a similar way, another founder of Busy Internet mentioned very clearly that he was interested in more than making money in the case of Busy, and he would not have been involved if social development had not been part of the business plan.

[...] it's very difficult to maintain this social development there, but it's a strategy for Busy Internet. If it's just a fast food and fast Internet joint, I'm not interested. (Person D)

In the case of Busy Internet, they were able to attract the efforts of highly skilled computer and business experts in Ghana, to start up the business by focusing equally on the social development aspects of the centre. They did so by looking at ways in which developmental programmes would not ultimately harm the profitability of the café, and found out that providing a public space was among the easiest things to do as it did not cost much to maintain. The same founder of Busy also commented on the compatibility of social values and economic values, stating it was more a matter of the circumstances around the specific decision being taken.

Really it's a difficult thing to find a balance, but it has to be done. [The managing director] is certainly constantly bombarded for requests, 'I want this room for free, I want to have this for free', but she makes the right choice, what is important for the community and what we can contribute to it. Sometimes it's just part of trading, it's not a matter of cash; we give this service for another service. (Person D)

While the interviewee clearly considered that there are both social and commercial uses of the same resources, he accepted that the managing director would make these choices according to her best judgement.

Another view comes from a staff member of Busy Internet, who had then the task to operationalise this approach, and to consider the different uses of resources and time for either social benefit or economic use.

IT companies were able to benefit from our infrastructure, the great public space that we have, from our great in-house technical support, [and] our financial support if they required it. (Person E)

The way the public space was described by this interviewee translated it into tangible benefits for either the paying Internet café customers, or the companies that were commercially renting offices upstairs of the café due to greater access to interesting events, issues and actors who were present within the same building. Busy also took pride in providing technical assistance where it necessary for the enterprises involved.

Meanwhile, I heard of no cases where they actually had financial support. Another way in which the focus on social development is tied to the operations is by acting as an information and expertise hub for the whole ICT sector in Accra. Starting business incubation was always part of the idea around Busy Internet for one of the founders.

Incubation was part of our business from the very beginning, but as a commercial entity we were only operating serviced offices [...] (Person E)  
Instead of financial support, the concept of incubation caught on at Busy Internet early on, and it developed into a service that the café started offering just at the time that the research period started. It was a culmination of years of work into providing first informal incubation, which then through outside donor funding from the World Bank InfoDev programme materialised into a fully functional incubator programme for four start-up enterprises. Social and economic development at Busy went hand in hand, and this was a key strength of the Busy Internet model.

At the Linux Accra User Group, as it was a voluntary group, the problem in building on the group dynamics was considered as being a constant issue of keeping members enthusiastic and organised in the group's tasks. The group dynamics depended largely on the activities of the group leader, who could be characterised as a 'social entrepreneur' (Dees 1998; Bornstein 2004) in the sense that he was engaged in changing the technological and social environment around ICTs in Ghana towards adopting Free and Open Source Software (FOSS).

So I turned up and apparently we were forming a Linux Accra User Group, and I said great, fine, let's go ahead. [...] I immediately got an idea of how this all works and the spread of the whole thing [...] (Person B)

The realisation of the power of the Linux operating system for the founding member and group leader was when he saw the first install of the operating system being demonstrated to him. The system was free of charge, it used efficiently the limited resources available, and it could be modified and localised further to user needs. The key concern for the group leader was with regard to developmental concerns.

For me the big way forward, I don't know how much they see it, he sees it. I think is to give it a wider platform, we're trying to that in several ways. And we've put out lots of proposals so hopefully when some funding comes our way we'll do some of these things. What are some of the ways? One way is for small and medium scale enterprises, they can't afford computers. Just the micros, no way. (Person B)

The social objective of low-cost and adaptable computing was the key social goal of the group leader, who used his entrepreneurial skills to bring together people,

computers (known as boxes) and bandwidth – the three components in his view of making a successful LAUG meeting.

The problem was further about keeping the right people interested in the activities of LAUG, as there was a movement of persons from Ghana to other African countries, and even further afield after they graduated from the computer training schools, or advanced in their career. This problem of organising volunteers led to establishing some hierarchy of members, coming up with the idea of participating and proposing further events that had a specific focus rather than advancing the projects at weekly meetings alone.

We pick up and share projects, [...] you go and learn about this. We come and share ideas. Ok, how does this thing work, just like a group, because if you go and join on-line you just go and join, you don't think about it? So, you come and share ideas. How is this one working? Who knows about that, who knows about this? At least to take one person, and a person can really do the job and do it good. (Person F)

The establishment of events and projects took the form of talking both to the AITI training school that provided the space also for conferences that would bring all Linux enthusiasts in the country together. This then was the objective of the Software Freedom Day, which was “celebrated” at AITI in September 2005. A further project consisted in making a business case for Linux, and it was the topic of another conference at AITI the same year. The events then mobilised also other than voluntary resources, including AITI paying for banners and other materials required in the conference, freebies being sourced from sponsors and Linux distribution companies. Having a tangible event also gave more visibility for these institutions and donors, which they could in turn report back to their respective stakeholders as having promoted Linux and other FOSS applications in Ghana.

The case of Kuapa Kokoo was slightly different, as it was an organised co-operative of Ghanaian cocoa farmers, and it did not rely on voluntary contributions of labour or time in the same way as did Busy Internet or LAUG in creating their social impact. Rather, Kuapa Kokoo relied on trained staff who had specific social development objectives attached to their work plan, such as the case of the Research and Development Officers (RDOs), or the Purchasing Clerks (PCs). For instance, both also operated as Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU) loans officers distributing loans forms and ensuring they were duly filled in, and explaining the rules of the KKCU in



detail to often illiterate farmers. KKCUC did use hired staff, as emphasised by a key informant at the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd.

Kuapa Kokoo is the head company, which is community owned, which owns all the other companies. The commercial company then has a distinctive role, and truth of what they done is that as farmers, they need some professionals and a trading company, they've recruited some fantastic people, who've done very well. They've then recognised that if they were doing to administer the social premium, they needed to do that in a transparent way, and they've set up the Farmer's Trust [KKFT]. [...] And then they've recognised that if you look at some of the problems of the farmers, then access to finance was clearly a problem as it is with anybody in the poor world. (Person G)

This gradual building of social value at Kuapa Kokoo started by first building a community-owned enterprise, as a co-operative, which then having acquired fairtrade status early on would start to distribute the fairtrade premiums in a transparent way through a separate organisation called the Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Trust (KKFT). Having done that, they moved onwards to establish a credit union, which was then the focus of my study period at Kuapa Kokoo. When asking about the way in which Kuapa Kokoo and the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. (DCC) differentiated from both other Licenced Buying Companies in Ghana who also bought cocoa from individual farmers, as well as among chocolate and confectionary consumers in major retail markets such as the United Kingdom, the main focus was on differentiation as a social and an ethical enterprise.

I think it's about being a mission driven company, [...] so your first aim is to achieve the mission, and in order to do that you need to make the money, whereas the first aim of a commercial company is to make money, and they might do some good because why not. (Person G)

So working with other social enterprises, and making it clearer in their definition that they are distinctive, was an important approach for the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd., and they could communicate this distinctiveness to consumers. This was done through promotional materials, such as the unique stories that are inside each and every chocolate bar wrapper:

Divine is made with the 'best of the best' fairtrade cocoa beans (or Pa Pa Paa as they say in Ghana). Grown by a co-operative of several thousand Ghanaian cocoa farmers called Kuapa Kokoo. In 1997, to ensure a sustainable future for their cocoa farms and families, the farmers voted to start their own chocolate company. A year later, the only fairtrade chocolate company co-owned by cocoa farmers, was launched in the UK with the help of NGO Twin Trading and the Body Shop, the support of Christian Aid and Comic Relief, and a loan guarantee from DFID. [...] Kuapa farmers take great pride in their chocolate company, and you can

be sure that, while you enjoy every melting mouthful of divine, you are also supporting a long term trading relationship which empowers cocoa farmers to have a voice in the chocolate market and work their way out of poverty. That's good business! (Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. 2012)

The linkages that the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. made were from making the produce they sold on retail markets in the UK distinctive in terms of its social and ethical standing from other chocolate bars. They also appealed to quality conscious consumers, as they produced chocolate bars with a higher than average cocoa content. This also was linked to the pride of the cocoa farmer, in producing the 'best of the best' to consumers, rather than a mediocre quality produce.

Kuapa Kokoo and Busy Internet could be classified as social enterprises according to the criteria established in Europe for social enterprises (Defourny 2001) as discussed in Chapter two (section 2.3.), while the Linux Accra User Group, due to its involvement with specific event organising, training and even Free and Open Source Software advocacy work, could be seen to have a high degree of social entrepreneurship (Dees 1998; Emerson 2006). Social entrepreneurship is often located among the leaders and founders of voluntary and third sector organisations, and here it was most clearly manifested in the founder of LAUG as well as leaders of specific projects and event organising committees. The three case-studies presented here offer a diverse view of what social enterprises and social entrepreneurship constitute in Ghana, in what new aspects the movement provides both for business enterprises and for voluntary and third sector organisations. It is interesting to note that organisations studied here did not use the label of social enterprise in any of their own description, marketing or advocacy work. Rather it was only their partners in Europe, namely the Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. (DCC) in the United Kingdom which used the term to position the company in the UK confectionary market, as well as in the sectorial space by identifying with other social enterprises for creating business-to-business partnerships.

In Ghana, other movements such as community development and co-operatives were much stronger and more historically rooted to the Ghanaian tradition. More recent movements such as fairtrade and social entrepreneurship were starting to make their entry to the public discourse in Ghana, but there was no organisation or sectorial umbrella which would combine all of these organisational types together to form

either a social enterprise (Defourny 2001) or a social economy (Amin 2002; Jeantet 2006) in Ghana. While such a definition may eventually emerge, currently the community development and the co-operative movements seem to be somewhat apart and have not yet found each other in pushing for a common agenda. The discrepancy may be the large informal economy which divides the opinions within the two movements in their approaches and future legal statutes that may or may not accommodate for formally registered organisations as members. The credit union and Susu-type credit offer an intermediary solution, where previously informal activities are seen to be partly formalised through participation in common apex organisations, and having simplified regulatory and legal frameworks adapted for the sector's needs.

#### **4.4. Conclusions**

The actors who participated in the framing of social enterprises and social entrepreneurship in Ghana consists of diverse assemblages, including government regulatory authorities that both enabled, and at times impeded, social enterprise development. The Structural Adjustment Policies initiated by the International Financial Institutions radically changed the ways markets were regulated in Ghana in the 1980s and 1990s, with a gradual process of privatisation of ICT sector operators. This increased private sector participation in the cocoa sector, as well as an overhaul of the regulatory environment while the state maintained a quality control and licencing role in both areas. However, these policies also created some of the market opportunities, which social enterprises were able to use in order to constitute themselves under new regulatory regimes in the cocoa market and licencing, and intellectual property arrangements in ICTs.

By looking at the historical movements, the contemporary case-studies can be related to both historical trends, and an overarching trend of community-based initiatives is found to be at the foundation of the social enterprise movement in Ghana in a much wider sense. Five movements within the Ghanaian economy were considered to contribute towards an understanding of social enterprise and social entrepreneurship in Ghana. Community development and community-based organisations were found to exist at the heart of many of these movements. Its beginnings were found in both

the economic forms of Ghanaian society that predate the colonial administration, and were further reinforced through providing a way for Ghanaians to access social welfare services during the colonial period when the state was unwilling to fund any such programmes. During independence, the concept of ‘extension’ and community-development were redefined as ways of expanding the reach of government services in health, agriculture and education. With the Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) such services were cut, and a greater focus was placed on community-based organisations (CBOs) which were acting independently of the state, though funded with adjustment funding as donor agencies were increasingly concerned of marginalisation and poverty. The second movement was that of co-operatives, which also have a basis in the African economic practices prior to colonialism, but were formalised in the later years of the colonial period in 1940s after increasing demands for legalising these participatory and democratic economic structures. Co-operatives include a wide diversity of sectorial outreach, and have seen a significant growth after the SAPs diverted attention towards private sector development.

The informal economy is another Ghanaian movement, which is even recognised as an institutional form due to lobby groups including hairdressers and private transport unions act as representatives of their members in sectors with high degrees of informality. Aspects of the informal economy would be included in the definition of social enterprises, and the lack of a legal status should be no impediment for finding social and solidarity-based economic forms. Fairtrade enterprises are a newer movement, one that started in the 1990s in Ghana as commodity prices were at an all-time low level creating a consumer mobilisation in the global North for better contracts and conditions for Ghanaian farmers. It today is a growing sector, including not only cocoa but also Shea butter, pineapples, and cashew nuts among agricultural produce and different types of craft produce as well. Finally social entrepreneurship is the latest addition to these movements as it recognises the activities of individual entrepreneurs and change-makers who have contributed to their societies and communities in a positive manner. Different foundations and schemes now exist who support social entrepreneurs in Ghana.

The key informants in each case-study noted that they had plural motivations, and that for different reasons for starting a social enterprise. It was seen as being more

interesting and potentially having a higher impact with regard to their underlying objectives than starting a purely charitable venture, a voluntary sector organisation, or then an advocacy group to ask for rights for farmers, or Internet users. A social enterprise was seen as the most adapted manner to advance diverse socially motivated interests in all three cases. The initial identification of social enterprises and social entrepreneurship was made both with historical references and key informant interviews, but the focus was not on refining such interviews in terms of how ‘pure’ each organisation studied was, regard to pre-defined criteria for social enterprises. This is why typologies such as the one provided by Defourny (2001) are only partially helpful as they are static pictures of what goes on. Rather, the focus was on the creation of social value which is mapped out as a process of *translation* in the following Chapters five to nine. Instead of focusing on these ‘ideal type’ definitions of social enterprise, we move to looking at what they *do* rather than what they *are*, in terms of objectively understood entities and ideal types. This change of perspective led me to look at actor-network theory, and the theory of *translation* in the following Chapters five to eight. The intent in the following chapters is to make comparisons of the three cases to uncover some common features of social value translation according to the four stages discussed in Chapter 2 (section 2.2).

## 5.0. Problematizations of Information Assemblages

Could ideology, whose demise is much talked of, perhaps be defined simply as a philosophy that takes its values and foundations exclusively from the information provided by the so-called social scientists, or one that, inversely, takes them exclusively from the so-called hard sciences, as though using only one source of light? Reciprocally, can any thought conditioned by only one of these sources be considered as ideological? What ideologies are we bowing down before when we give the experts the “enlightened consent” they demand? (Serres 1995: 181)

Issues concerning information had a strong presence in all fieldsites, and therefore, the topic of information assemblage emerged as the key source of *problematizations*. Here, I look at the ways in which information assemblages gain different qualities that are then problematized by the actors in social enterprises in diverse ways. By seeing information assemblage as a first stage in a wider process of *translation* we find that information as such does not have a social value as a tradable ‘commodity’. It is not the intrinsic qualities of information that were the focus of the actors’ concerns in the different fieldsites. The social value of information was neither found in its ‘perfectness’ or ‘imperfectness’, as assumed by many economists who have endless debates on such subjects. For the economists, it is the ‘purified’ information that has the most value, and the ways in which it can be communicated across borders. By focusing on *problematizations* as a first stage of translation, we see the diverse ways in which information is conceptualised, negotiated and debated, and how it enters into actors’ decision-making processes.

Increasing quantity or quality of information as such was not seen as an objective, as the example concerning the Ghana Information Network on Knowledge Sharing (GINKS) demonstrates. In most cases, solving the problems surrounding ‘connection men’ and ‘hoarding information’ required building new types of actors and spaces where they interact and institutions that are built to address newly emerged needs within concrete projects. By doing so, actors created and contributed to new information assemblages. Information assemblages were also considered as crucial

when accessing rights, such as rights to benefit from government programmes at Kuapa Kokoo, which were dependent on information being assembled by the staff and members of the co-operative. At LAUG, the ownership of information itself was an issue, and diverse means of localising the ownership of information assemblages were considered the key problematisations. Only very few problematisations make it that far in the process of social value translation, and therefore in this chapter I focus on the types of issues that actors brought up.

I will start this chapter (section 5.1) by looking at the ways in which economic sociologists and in particular actor-network theorists have studied information. Through this discussion of theory related to this substantial material, I propose that information itself should be discussed as an information assemblage, rather than as a distinct object of information. Following this theoretical discussion (in section 5.2) I study the information assemblage processes in the three fieldsites in terms of how they constitute problematisations in a wider process of translation of social values. The three fieldsites all propose different types of problematisations, ranging from the problem of ‘connection men’ and ‘hoarding’ of information identified at Busy Internet; to discussing access to information as a matter of constituting human and economic rights at Kuapa Kokoo; and finally to problematising the very ownership of information at the Linux Accra User Group (LAUG) in terms of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) applications.

### ***5.1. Information as an Assemblage***

I will review some of the practical case descriptions, as they construct the information landscape in Ghana. From these instances I started inquiring how information assemblages – or the lack of effective information assemblages – were emerging as new types of inequalities in an information society. In stating that information is always an assemblage, we first need to go back to the very notion of information as it is commonly understood. Terranova (2004: 3) notes two obstacles for understanding information:

[T]wo prejudices that have actually hindered our understanding of information dynamics: the idea that information is 'the content of a communication'; and the notion that information is 'immaterial'.

Information as an assemblage is certainly not 'immaterial' in any sense, as the 'purified' notion of information especially among economists would often make it seem. This is why I propose here that information should be seen first and foremost as an assemblage, since the requirement of prior assemblage applies to all social forms, including information.

Framing, as discussed earlier, requires that the social and material actors (Latour 2005) be used to rank, order and file potential states of the world. Information should not be talked about in the objectified form of information as a single concept, but rather considered an assemblage, a collection of bits and pieces, of different material artefacts, of plural qualitative narratives that humans carry along with them, and various methods of recording and note-taking which define the way we conserve information. Information is effectively a prerequisite for actors to become calculative in the first place (Callon 1999), as discussed in Chapter two. Without information, there can be no calculation in the proper sense of the term, since being able to rank different states of the world requires an order of importance, whereby setting preferences becomes possible. Thus focusing on information assemblages allows us to see how actors are able to become calculative, take decisions and constitute themselves in such a process.

Looking at information assemblages also allows us to turn our attention to different material artefacts that have inscriptions (Akrich and Latour 1992) of information assemblages within them. This includes material artefacts such as medical records, bank notes, hand painted signs, Internet cables, human memory, recorded speech, not to mention the ways in which the information assemblages hold together via bumpy roads, purchases of petrol in a car or a truck, weak Wi-Fi connections, dusty computer parts, and low battery life in a mobile phone. Thus the idea of an immaterial information assemblage does not hold, and information still is very definitely material, despite the arrival of new technologies. In fact it has increased in materiality, as more and more data are recorded, and also more is lost. Finding out



the information assemblages is then a work of de-description (Akrich and Latour 1992) where the researcher traces the ways in which assemblages are put together.

If information is not immaterial, the materiality of how it is constituted becomes a matter of power struggles. Here Latour (1987) introduces the notion of a 'centre of calculation', which elaborates on the issue of power and domination from a point of view of concentrating information and reducing the outside world to manageable geometrical and numerical entities. These can then be compared and evaluated between each other in ways that the actual locations would not permit. The notion is discussed by Latour in relation to map-making:

This paradox [between overflowing centres of calculation] is resolved by devising inscriptions that retain simultaneously as little and as much as possible by increasing their mobility, stability or compatibility. This compromise between presence and absence is often called information. When you hold a piece of information you have the form of something without the thing itself (for instance the Map of Sakhalin without Sakhalin, the periodic table without the chemical reactions, a model of Rotterdam harbour without the harbour itself). (Latour 1987: 243)

Latour considered a 'centre of calculation' as a space where activities are brought together (like a colonial office, or a corporation) with the purpose of looking over vast areas and territories and being able to enact in these terrains due to information that is calculable through agencies and devices, and reducing many spaces to simple informational tables and schedules. Large spaces (harbours, territories, or other spaces) are brought together through reducing them to geometries, statistics, or other types of reductions, which retain little of the original content, but increase the mobility of events and objects. In this study, such centres of calculation were constructed in both institutional and personal spheres. Inscriptions that are collected, become ever more mobile when they are recorded and stored, and can be mobilised at a given time when needed. This included issues as diverse as health records, meteorological information, access to government officials and agencies, as well as knowing who are the actors in Ghana's information landscape.

The second prejudice about information is that it is about a message or content, without really knowing the dynamics of this message and how it is assembled. The unproblematic vision of the existence and preservation of information has led others to propose that a more democratic 'information society' (Castells 2001) is being built,

by the use of new electronic media in particular. The key problem of the information society for international policy makers is the 'digital divide', which according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2001: 5) is defined as:

the gap between individuals, households, businesses, and geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard to both their opportunities to access information and communication technologies (ICTs) and to their use of the Internet for a wide variety of activities.

International efforts, subscribed in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) under the eighth goal of a 'global partnership for development' all focused on increasing access for individuals to the technologies and contents that already existed. But what do the MDGs really promote when they promote access and participation? Information in information theory usually involves a sender and a receiver, while it tends to disregard the content of the message and how it travels (at most some consider imperfections or broken signals). Terranova refutes also this claim, by stating that:

In as much as communication is not simply the site of the *reproduction* of culture, but also that of an indeterminate production crossing the entirety of the social (from factories to offices to homes and leisure spaces), it also constitutes a kind of common informational milieu – open to the transformative potential of the political. (Terranova 2004: 9, emphasis in original)

This takes us quite far from the simple vision of 'information' as an object of communication as supposed in the earlier signal-based communication theory that Terranova criticises. A right to access information is not the same as the right to be an active producer of information assemblages. Instead of simply switching on or off from the messages we are receiving, information politics can become a site of creation and transformation of an information milieu.

Riles (2000: 92) goes as far as to consider the interest in information and in information society as equally fundamental as the interest earlier sociologists had with respect to capital.

As capital did for an earlier generation, "information" gives academics of all orientations and disciplines a shared purpose. When we can agree on little else, we share an interest in information, its patterning, and its distribution.

This according to Riles has created a whole subfield of studies (Castells 2001), and others who consider information to constitute a key dynamic in contemporary society. Instead of taking the contemporary discourse concerning information society at face

value, one can see the focus of information as a way of not looking at other important dynamics, especially those of land and capital. In such a sense, critical information studies adopts a different point of view:

Rather, my point is to query the particular understanding of information that characterizes late modern social science in general and the literature of globalization and the mode of information in particular - the notion that information is potentially infinite but in actuality scarce. (Riles 2000: 94)  
The discussions concerning information actually are about the same old concepts of power and domination, seen today more often through information dynamics than through dynamics of capital<sup>16</sup>.

The actors saw information as constituting a critical area of social change. The creation of information assemblages at LAUG also considered the issues linked to ownership and intellectual property rights. The right to assemble and take part in production is regulated by legal conventions, and the innovation of FOSS lies in creating transparent information assemblages through the concept of 'open source' where the underlying source code can be viewed and modified by everyone. Secondly the right to modify the assemblages creates an environment where localisation and modifications become possible.

One example of the kind of transformation Terranova is speaking of could be Geertz's notion of the Bazaar Economy. Markets do also exist in non-Western countries, they need to be carefully traced and studied without any prior assumptions of similitude to Western models of markets. The reservations, however, include the lack of elaborate information and product standardisation. The anthropology of information has tried to problematise the relationship between having and seeking information, but never actually the notion of information itself. Through language, represented in signs and clues, the main activity that Geertz sees is that the 'bazaaris', as he calls them, are active in searching information as if it were an object.

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<sup>16</sup> One contributing factor may be that money and credit as forms of capital have become increasingly opaque as mentioned by Riles in passing (2000: 93) and discussed in much more detail by investigative journalists and academics who focus on tax havens (Shaxson 2011; Palan, Murphy and Chevagneux 2010). Financial secrecy, and opacity of offshore financial centres makes capital a much more difficult area of research in contemporary society.

Information search, thus, is the really advanced art in the bazaar, a matter upon which everything turns. The main energies of the bazaaris are directed toward combing the bazaar for usable signs, clues as to how particular matters at the immediate moment specifically stand. (Geertz 1978: 228)

Geertz makes sense of the information problem in linking information with communicative action. Here I will reverse Geertz's notion of searching, calling it rather assembling, since the very activity of searching for something is already part of assembling it, in terms of the time spent searching, the clues, the rumours and notes taken, prove that all are part of an information assemblage. Information is nothing else but this assemblage put together by human and non-human actors, and there is no 'perfect' or 'purified' information out there to be found. Terranova's vision of information is somewhat different from those put forward in economic sociology and anthropology, helping us to turn around the image of information as a message or a signal.

## ***5.2. Problematisations in Information Assemblages***

The social value of information will be discussed here as the first step in a process of translation. What struck me in the three fieldsites was the difficulty of assembling the persons and objects, establishing the communications or transport channels, being understood, and having the necessary time in hand to do the work of assembling the bits and pieces in order to construct relevant information in a given temporal situation and in a precise place. In all fieldsites information is an information assemblage. Information assemblage is a deeply contested and disputed notion in the local terrain, with its values relating to ownership, accessibility, usefulness and other qualities. The social enterprises in the different fieldsites had a significant role in linking up information, facilitating its assemblage, and adapting the information for the users, their needs and purposes. In the following sections, I will walk through the three fieldsites and examine information assemblages, the actors who were actively constructing social value through practices of mediation in linking up information assemblages for new publics, and persons who were keen to participate in processes of forming information assemblages: Busy Internet and its professional networks,

Linux Accra User Group meetings and events; and Kuapa Kokoo's Research and Development Office (RDO).

### **5.2.1. Participation in Assembling Information at Busy Internet**

The *CyberSeries* events were organised on every first Thursday of the month, addressing not only ICT professionals, but also anyone interested to hear about ICT and technologies. The intent of the organisers was not to invite politicians or other dignitaries (as is often the custom for events that attempt to influence public discourse). Rather, the assumption was that open information assemblage was more important than inviting dignitaries, to allow ordinary people to *problematise* issues that they saw as being important. This openness was something that was emphasised both by the founders of Busy Internet, as well as the organisers of CyberSeries. One of the founders expressed his views on the priorities of the stakeholders present at Busy in the following manner:

- Merchants who use the Internet to trade goods and services;
- educational users and young people more generally looking for scholarships;
- persons travelling in and out of Ghana via dating, arranging meetings, finding pen pals;
- business people who see Busy Internet as their office;
- lawyers who use the Internet for research purposes
- minority groups, and in particular the lesbian and gay community in Accra,
- other groups like atheists, disabled, deaf, women, gender groups, HIV, younger people. (Person C)

Allowing these people to enter the Internet café without the need to buy anything was essentially providing a space for encounters between persons from different walks of life. During my fieldwork I could see that elsewhere the representation and participation of some minority groups, especially sexual minorities and the disabled, was difficult in public life as there were no urban spaces that would openly advertise themselves as accessible to sexual minorities – while disabilities were mostly hidden from the public view as well. Interestingly, the addition of atheists, in what to an outsider seems like a fervently religious society with competing churches and pastors in many public spaces, was also one group Busy wanted to cater for.

Busy Internet had a strategy to invite stakeholders to events, such as these, in order to highlight the importance of public information within the Ghanaian information society. The mediation provided by Busy Internet and the informal group of the Busy Family is similar to the proposals that have been made for a technological society (Barry 2001) following the lines of a 'hybrid forum' (Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe 2009), where non-experts and other stakeholders can define the technological or political object in question. As noted above, Busy Internet staff, and especially the Managing Director were very closely involved in organising the *CyberSeries* debates, and at times voluntary or paid contributions were sought from members of the Busy Family, the informal network of professionals who gathered at Busy.

On some occasions, it was the speakers who were invited to the events who would raise problems and discuss them in the open sessions. On one occasion, the *CyberSeries* titled 'ICT and Health' held on Thursday 14 February 2005, a medical doctor was invited to speak about the topic of telemedicine and its prospects in Ghana.

About three days ago a gentleman came in [to her surgery] and he was diabetic, and he had a hypoglycaemic attack, low blood sugar attack. He was being cared [for] at a clinic called [Clinic A], which most of you would know. I just wanted the records; he didn't know the names of the drugs he was on since we had corrected his hypoglycaemia, but if you don't put him back on his regular treatment then he'd go back to [hypoglycaemia]. [...] I rang, [Clinic A], second step of telemedicine. They said that, 'no we can't give the records'. So I asked if it's because of confidentiality, is it because you don't know who's on the other [end of the phone]. I can get you someone to prove it, because there's are so few doctors in Ghana that practically everyone knows everybody, and if you don't know someone, there's someone there who'd know you. So I would have just asked: 'who are the doctors there?' and one of them would have met me somewhere, and they would be able to identify me. But, they said to me 'no, we have to go to [the] records, and our records are not on computers, and so we have to go and fish out the records, so we need his [patient] number'. But I said 'can't you check it? This is his name, this is his date of birth', they said 'send his wife down, with the number [...] and then we can see [...] the wife'. I asked 'are you sure? Just go to the records', and they said 'no, we can't do it without the numbers!' She [the clinic administrator] was getting very [angry] with me. I said 'ok, please stop, I'll send the wife over'. So [his wife] went there [to the clinic] at about 10 o'clock and wife came back at about 3 pm. She went to join the queue and everything. And this was an easy case. What if it was something which I really needed? (Person H)

In this case, information is an assemblage of the patient's memory, who knows that he was treated at Clinic A, the doctor calling the clinic, and ultimately convincing the patient's wife to take the patient's card with the patient's number to the clinic to find the matching record in the filing system, which was based on the numbers and not on patient surnames. After hard work the doctor was able to put together these actors as a piece of information concerning the drug that the patient was on previously. She was happy that this assembly was not urgent, since speeding up the process of assembling the actors to constitute information in that time and place would have been difficult. As some of these linkages demonstrate, it was a bit of luck that this information could be put together. It was lucky that the clinic was able to find the patient's records without knowing the patient number, and also had there been a longer queue at the clinic the patient's wife may have taken much longer to assemble this information.

The doctor in this example presents several *problematizations*, she starts with the unavailability of a medical registry where she could check the patients' previous medication. The problem had several layers, as there was no shortcut to accessing medical records without having the original printed medical card presented at the clinic. The example reveals many other problems linked to medical information, such as the question of patient data confidentiality and the waiting times at Clinic A. These problems combined could have created a serious medical emergency – luckily it was avoided in this case. These problems had no immediate answer, but the public debate in itself was able to highlight the issue, and the concern could be picked up by somebody in the audience. Problematizations with regard to information assemblages such as the one above, emerged in a constant fashion, and were a common topic of discussion. One was not able to access a specific government service, due to lack of knowledge of its existence, opening hours, persons who would need to be convinced of the need to gain access, and modalities of doing so. Gatekeepers and contact persons were often barriers to accessing services to which the person might even have a legal entitlement. At times, negotiations over favours or money could emerge, and services could become in a sense 'privatised' through such contacts that were required for their access.

Some ideas and proposals materialised, while others created more confusion than served the purpose of creating new problematizations. When mediation was lacking

the result was a breakdown of the information assemblages. One participant at the June 2nd 2005 CyberSeries on Business Development expressed his frustration with using the Internet:

Why do you sit on the computer and see there pop-ups? What do they tell you? They give you information. Then you can act on and make more money, these messages keep on coming, sometimes you are just browsing and suddenly something just pops-up, American visas here, some people may need that, things are constantly coming to us, they are useful for us.  
(Person I)

The person in question seemed to believe that pop-ups can potentially be useful, but was surprised of the sudden character of these offers presented while browsing the Internet. At Busy Internet, some mediation was available, for instance, the café operators were trained to answer common questions, and point out some reliable sources and references on the Internet to verify the authenticity of some of the information that was assembled on-line, where actors had a hard time to trace these assemblages and their origins, motives and intentions. Also the lack of public information and reliable persons to check the authenticity of some of the information assemblages made it difficult to know which information was authentic and which were providing false hopes.

Meteorological information in Ghana provides another example. The discussion arose during a *CyberSeries* sessions about the relevance of ICTs in agriculture. The presenter was talking about a high-efficiency cooking pot that would increase energy efficiency, cut down the need for firewood, and reduce deforestation. However, as may happen in a public debate, the topic on the floor quickly turned to *problematizing* something else, namely the weather:

We were talking of ICT in agriculture and I think before they started their project they should have contacted meteorological services, and they would have given them the data for the climate. (Person J)

The participant considered that one crucial actor was not invited to the event, and that was the Ghana Meteorological Services<sup>17</sup>. The information that the farmer wanted to

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<sup>17</sup> See the Ghana Meteorological Service (2005) website, which only has an electronic weather forecast from outside of the country displayed on the main website, as they did not provide up to date meteorological information to the wider public at the time of research. Some statistical information on the onslaught of annual rains were, however given. No doubt more detailed weather forecasts for key industries such as aviation was available on a private contract.



know was whether to cut maize today or wait until tomorrow and let the torrential rainfall pass, whether to let cocoa ferment in the sun or protect it overnight from rainfall that may spoil a very valuable crop. One female participant at the CyberSeries points out that “I’ve lived next to the meteo for nine years I’m in Mompasom [a suburb of Accra] and I didn’t know, hello nine years oh, I didn’t know what those people do” (Person K). She related to the meteorological services as her neighbours, but ones who do not talk to her, who had essential information. In the same event, an elderly male participant in his view corrects the woman’s perception by pointing her to another weather service office: “I would just say that you didn’t reach the right person, they didn’t direct [you] to the Airport office.” (Person L) Probably, the Kotoka International Airport meteorological office sells weather information to the airlines, as Accra has become a regional hub for many European, African and Middle-Eastern Airlines. International aviation authorities often require an accurate ground weather forecast, information that surprisingly enough was not disseminated to the public on the Ghana Civil Aviation Authority (2010), or any other media.

Some participants placed great value to knowing the weather, while other members of the public did not care too much. The same elderly man at the CyberSeries mentioned also that “the issue is that meteo information should be public information; why is it not on the *Graphic*, on the GBC network?” (Person L) He noted that weather forecasts should be made available through what he regarded as reliable government media, such as the *Daily Graphic* newspaper, and the Ghana Broadcasting Network television station, a bit like is the case in many other countries. Meanwhile, a younger participant considered a different approach mentioning that: “meteo information should be everywhere” (Person M) mentioning private radio stations. He continues:

The issue is that as Ghanaians we are not particular about information, information is an asset. You can’t do anything without information. What the gentleman was talking about, the radio stations, the radio stations are there to educate and entertain. (Person M)

The young man thought that Peace FM a popular private radio station should have also carried meteorological information. He comments afterwards that the radio station presenters should call up the meteorological services themselves if needed. The case of meteorological information shows that this issue aroused a lot of ‘problematization’ in the public debate, but there was neither a single solution nor

even a proposal, apart from trying to hunt down the weathermen in their offices either at Medina or at Kotoka International Airport.

Part of the perceived problem was also the inaccessibility of certain government agencies and services to ordinary persons. It did not take much part in the government initiatives for developing the ICT sector, as it did not have much interest in the e-government or e-education initiatives that the government was planning, and often funded by international aid money. Participants who gathered at Busy Internet for the May 2005 *CyberSeries* also agreed about the distance that existed between policy makers and ordinary citizens.

Every time do you think of electronic, you think of elite; and I think it's so right, e-agriculture – it's [about] exclusive and exceptional cases. So when talking about, taking it to the upper level. Because that was my question, where are the policy makers here? (Participant N)

This participant was clearly concerned that the talk about information society was not something that was even ever meant for ordinary persons in the first place. For him the very notion seemed to exclude rather than include more citizens around the table from talking about common problems and solutions to them. A staff member of Busy Internet answered the question on why the policy makers do not come to the *CyberSeries*.

Well *CyberSeries* is not *e-CyberSeries*, *CyberSeries* is *CyberSeries*, it's on the ground, it's not the elite sitting in a conference room with four people throwing some boring information at you and no conversation and no intake. So unfortunately, or fortunately, we don't have those e-people coming and joining us. Really, that's why we try to make it very simple and very informal, to let everyday people feel that they can come, share and learn and talk about. (Person E)

Busy characterised the government's ICT projects as being guided by donor funding priorities or elite interests, rather than by citizens' concerns. It only rarely invited political representatives to its events, keeping the *CyberSeries* especially open to everyone who was interested in information society in Ghana. The intent was to brainstorm and come up with new solutions, rather than lobby the government to address their needs.

These examples of privately owned information are quite common in Ghana, as information is often held by so-called 'connection men' who are seen as holding tightly to information that they can then merchandise. Every area and sector in Ghana

has its own ‘connection men’; for instance in my neighbourhood of Kokomlemle most connection men were those who assisted with educational applications and study plans, since Kokomlemle was in the vicinity of two large Indian-owned ICT training schools, NIIT and APTEC, various small ICT academies and the Accra Technical Training College (ATTC), which provided courses ranging from car mechanics to carpentry. In the residential neighbourhoods such as Lapaz or Mamobi there were people who helped with job market introductions, business-to-business introductions, or access to government documents such as driving licences, health certificates or passports, either legally or illegally.

Busy Internet had the role of facilitating these exchanges where *problematizations* were expressed. The social objectives of Busy Internet were formulated around different types of information assemblage problems, which are discussed in more detail in the next chapter regarding *association* where new types of actors emerge to answer these earlier problematisations. Most of the problematisations never go further than just this stage, they are voiced and expressed, but often no obvious solution is at hand. They may add up to the frustration of the actors, and their discontent, but the fact of being able to voice them already creates a sense of agency in terms of their position within the information landscape. Knowing that others face similar problems creates new solidarities, which in turn may lead to *associations* being formed.

### **5.2.2. Ownership of Information Assemblages at LAUG**

It was ownership rather than just participation in information assemblages that was *problematized* at the Linux Accra User Group. The group had physical meetings at the AITI computer training school, which provided LAUG a space to voice its concerns, as having access to free Internet, a meeting space and using some of the computers at the school (though not installing anything on them) allowed participants to become connected to a much wider world of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS). Unlike proprietary software, FOSS meant that applications could be freely and legally appropriated for Ghana’s own uses, without paying high royalties or licensing fees to foreign software companies. When discussing the status of FOSS in

Africa, there was a lively discussion regarding intellectual property rights, which form an important part of the cost of proprietary software. A participant on the LAUG discussion list on July 2005 wrote the following:

More seriously, I think it is not in Africa's interest at this time to adhere to Intellectual Property laws. The musicians will probably and very vocally differ, but between music and national development, I know what I would choose. At church, why doesn't the congregation demand performance fees? (Person O)

The participant in this question compared the use of software to listening to music at a church service, where nobody would ask for churchgoers to pay royalties for music played from a gospel CD. Why would using software be any different in this sense? The question relates to what is best for African countries, whether paying royalties (and using software legally) is better than not paying royalties at all (and face accusations of piracy). Another member of the list related the issue to a more fundamental principle of free information, both in the sense of free to buy, but also in the sense of free to modify:

INFORMATION MUST BE SHARED, don't give a damn as to who has it and the price to be paid for it, if ya don't want to share it freely and decide to make it proprietary, then keep it to your self.

old and new editions must be shared, don't follow intellectual property.

if you don't agree, new borrow books (old and new) from friends, relations, library etc.

this also amounts of stealing, why?

(Person P, punctuation and spelling as in original)

Here another participant considered that using software is similar to using books in a library, where the information in these books does not belong to anybody in particular, but rather belongs to the public. In the 'creative commons' licensing, the rules under which something becomes 'public' are quite strictly defined. Most FOSS applications follow the 'share alike' version, where the only restriction is to share all the modifications which are made to the software in the future in order to keep all future developments also within the realm of FOSS. A stricter licence denotes a further non-commercial restriction, where sale of existing work or its derivations are not allowed.

The ownership of information assemblages had interesting derivatives among the LAUG members and participants to the discussions on e-lists. The ability to make

derived projects created the possibility to modify existing distribution versions of Linux, and translate them into Ghanaian languages. The most widely spoken language in Ghana being Twi,<sup>18</sup> the first localisation efforts concentrated on making a Twi-language distribution version of Linux called TwiNux. Another popular topic on the discussion list was the creation of a Ghanaian distribution ‘distro’ of a popular version of Mandrake Linux that had already a group working on it, and it was organised under a dedicated TwiNux website at the time<sup>19</sup>. In one of his messages on the Linux Accra mailing-list was giving an overview of localising Linux into the Twi-language, as Agyepong comments in an on-line article:

From our government to the man on the street we are all looking to someone to help us solve our problems. [...] [G]etting Microsoft to come up with a Twi version of Windows so our problems will be solved. There is a Linux operating system like Windows. In several ways it is better than Windows. It is open source and free. Why can't the government working with Ghanaian businesses adopt Linux, modify it to suit our needs [...]. (Agyepong 2005)

The issue of localising Linux into Ghanaian languages was seen also from the post-colonial angle by Agyepong in this article, where Linux would allow claiming ownership over the modification, distribution and ultimate sales of the operating system and profits would stay in Ghana as a result. Other localisation efforts were started in relation to the Open Office package and Mozilla-Firefox web browser, and the combination of these three FOSS applications was seen as the first milestone in localising efforts. Ghanaians often compared their efforts to those elsewhere in Africa:

The last time I visited their site [South Africa's Impi Linux], they were working names for devices (mouse, keyboard, hard drive, CD-ROM etc.) in the local languages.” (Person Q)

The impression of the participants in the meeting was that LAUG participants were relative latecomers in terms of their efforts to localise key FOSS applications, which

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<sup>18</sup> Twi is spoken by approximately twelve million people in Ghana, most of whom are secondary speakers as the language has the role of a vehicle language between different linguistic and ethnic groups. There are also several variations of Twi, namely the Akan-Twi spoken in the Ashanti Region, and Fanti-Twi spoken in the coastal areas where the Fanti are the dominant ethnic group. Akan is also spoken the Eastern parts of Ivory Coast.

<sup>19</sup> Today the TwiNux project has died, and it has been superseded by the BlackStar Linux project, referring to the star on the Ghanaian flag. It plans to be a national project, rather than just focusing on one Ghanaian language.

could potentially help many citizens in the country to access computing in their own native language, and modify it with the FOSS principles in mind. Some thought that the localisation efforts were actually a distraction in making available Linux distributions such as the popular and easier to install Ubuntu distribution developed in South Africa. Other group members considered using the Ubuntu distribution version, and translate it into three most common Ghanaian languages, namely Gã, Ewe and Twi.

Despite these efforts, the participants also saw major drawbacks in using Ubuntu or any other Linux distribution, such as the necessity to have an Internet connection to access hardware drivers, security updates, and other programmes that made the computer usable. Linux, just like most other software these days, was not ready to use out of the box. The user interface was also considered to be less user-friendly than the one in Microsoft Windows, and finally the hardware support was limited, as drivers for hardware could not be found even when searching on the Internet, and manufacturers only rarely made drivers for Linux users. The issue for using Linux, like most software in Ghana, was that there was a significant cost in making it usable. Another member proposed “de-geekifying” Linux, and introducing a more user-friendly version which could work out of the box, making it more functional with popular software already installed with the distribution – rather than having to look for functional software on the Internet over a poor connection – and making a list of most popular hardware and providing drivers for them in the package.

Languages on computers are inputted via the keyboard, and typing Ghanaian languages often means missing out on some of the characters that do not feature on US or UK-based keyboard layouts. There were three such symbols that were considered of particular importance among the Ghanaian languages, and a project was in place by Ghanaian employees working for Nokia in Finland to manufacture new keyboards with these keys in place. Making of a Ghanaian keyboard was by no means just a technical issue, as it involved decisions about a template keyboard, whether to use stickers on the keys of recycled keyboards or manufacture proper keys separately fitted to existing or new keyboards. The person in the following post proposes to enlarge the number of actors who would decide how to place the keys.

I understand the difficulty in designing a new keyboard is deciding where to place the keys. For instance, on your layout you have the (eeh) key placed far right next to the enter key. [...] So we may wanna place this key where it doesn't cause too much strain on the hands. This is just an example. I believe we should open this discussion to a wider audience so we can make the best use of the iterative process and come out with a better layout. (Person R, spelling as in original)

The placement of the keys on the keyboard was a matter that some participants hoped would emerge through debate and discussion, while others considered that the Ghanaian engineers at Nokia could be in a position to find the most suitable version due to their technical experience. Responses to this post included doubts whether it would be better to use recycled keyboards from the USA and UK, to place stickers on them for the missing characters and thus gain cheaper access to localised keyboards. Being able to use in one's own language in ICTs involved many other similar considerations, and for Ghanaians to gain greater ownership of their information assemblages, it was felt that these steps were necessary in order to fully participate in an information society.

Doubts existed in the LAUG group about whether it was addressing the ordinary computer users with its efforts to localise the Linux distribution (distro), or whether it was trying to create a package that was mainly accessible to 'geeks' who were some of the most experienced users. Maybe because they were unable to reconcile the interests of these experts with those of the ordinary user, the solution of localising a 'distro' did not get beyond its initial *problematization* – that of ownership of information assemblages rather than their usability and user-friendliness. The issue at LAUG was essentially about whose problematisation was more important, whether that of the 'geeks' who wished to concentrate on purely using FOSS solutions and advance the on-going projects mostly outside of Ghana's borders, or the concerns of the ordinary users who would wish to 'de-geekify' the Linux experience and try to reduce the cost of accessing computers and the wider digital landscape. Between these two options, it was the choices of the group leader that prevailed, as he approached outside institutions and maintained the linkage with the AITI computer training school where the group met on Saturday afternoons. Having such an arbiter helped in focusing the work of the group on specific projects and events.

### 5.2.3. Rights and Information Assemblages at Kuapa Kokoo

The key concern over information assemblages at Kuapa Kokoo related to ways in which farmers were able to access information concerning both markets and government services. Kuapa Kokoo saw itself as having a role in building stronger cocoa farming communities, which would be able to stand largely on their own when faced with challenges. Here I review some of the *problematization* that came up during the time of my fieldwork in the two villages, which here are called Akwapong and Nkrokro village societies.

On one of the visits which I had arranged at Akwapong, which had an established women's group, they were discussing how best to market their palm oil. The problem they had was in finding the right purchaser for the ready-made palm oil, and to determine whether the seasonal price for palm oil would be higher later in the year. The palm nut season had passed, so they figured that in the low season the price of palm oil might be higher. Since they had a storage space, it was feasible to store the oil in a plastic barrel for some time. Knowing the price of palm oil was not simple; it often required members of the women's group to travel to the nearest market town and to market it to different market stalls and restaurants, and find quotes for the palm oil and possibly close a deal – which would then be delivered a few days later by the women transporting the palm oil in a tro-tro bus. In this negotiation, the women would not know the price of the oil, but would rather have to second-guess a realistic rate on the basis of the offers they were getting. To improve their negotiation position, Kuapa Kokoo was able to mobilise an information assemblage which was more beneficial to women. In this case, it was Kuapa Kokoo village purchasing clerk (PC), who was also looking for the correct prices for the palm oil and its seasonal variations for the women's group, to reduce their need for travel and looking for prices themselves.

In Nkrokro I was asked to take quantities of kola nuts with me for transport to northern parts of Ghana, where in the Muslim tradition kola nuts are offered to visitors at a house or a business premises, and to members of the extended family. It was a private producer, a member of Kuapa Kokoo, who was producing these bitter



but energising nuts for sale elsewhere, and could not travel himself to Bolgatanga or Tamale – two major cities in Northern Ghana – to market them. I heard from the village that doing long-distance trade was quite common, with many members of the village having migrated from Northern Ghana and settled in the cocoa-growing regions of the south. In this case, as kola nut production was not organised by the village society, the farmer had to search for buyers for his kola nuts himself. This increased the time and cost to him, and he might have to travel himself to the nearest market town with the kola nuts to market and sell them. Meanwhile he had other commitments, such as taking care of his family, and cocoa farming – so he could not leave for long periods of time. In the Nkrokro village, assembling information was even harder due to the village purchasing clerk being just newly appointed after the previous PC had left the village. The farmer was at the time still waiting for a convenient buyer to appear in the village, and he marketed the kola nuts to the person who I had hired as an interpreter – who for a while was interested in making the trip to Northern Ghana.

Kuapa Kokoo also had strong links to the Ghanaian government, especially they Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and through the schools and clinics in the rural areas or towns where the area offices were located – allowing them to mediate also between the village society members and government officials. There were local terms to convey the ways in which village societies were classified according to their capabilities and level of autonomy. These terms were used by the Research and Development Officer (RDO) who worked at the Area Office that I studied. Some villages he characterised as being *weak* due to the weakness of their village society, whereas others he saw as being *strong* if they had well-functioning village societies which were able to help the welfare of their members on their own. The maintenance of village societies was important for keeping their membership to the Kuapa Kokoo structure, as in the absence of a village society the village could not sell its produce to Kuapa Kokoo – unless another village society was located nearby. While Akwapong was considered a ‘strong’ village society by the RDO, as it had taken part in Kuapa Kokoo since the beginning, Nkrokro was considered a ‘weaker’ village society. For instance, it had undergone a change of both a Purchasing Clerk as the employed person in the village society, and had only recently started to participate in the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union.

While facilitating the search of market prices was not their core activity, the networks of Kuapa Koko were at times mobilised for these purposes. At the time of the field visits, the Head Office, as part of a campaign to increase KKCUC membership, was also conducting an educational campaign to its members about this possibility. Two of the members of the village society had participated in a 'peer training' session on the benefits of a credit union, where they were asked to inform other villagers (peers in this sense) of the possibility of accessing loans. The session had two members from each village society in the remit of the area office, and their task was to tell about what they had learned back in their village societies. In the case of Nkrokro they had experienced a change of the purchasing clerk, and thus they had to rebuild this information assemblage anew, with training programmes and personal connections established on relevant issues. This meant that this village had just started a KKCUC branch before the research period. Some village residents had heard about KKCUC loans via a Kumasi-based radio station called Fox FM, which had broadcast a radio show where officers from the KKCUC had been invited to talk about loans in the local Twi-language. The village residents were then able to ask the RDO and the purchasing clerk how to access such loans, and so the credit union was founded in this village. Due to information being assembled via local radio, they were able to access the Research and Development Officer (RDO) directly, and ask to establish a KKCUC branch through this contact.

Another example of how information assemblages had social value was the provision of new health cards with personal pictures of each cardholder at Akwapong. The scheme was part of the establishment of the Ghana National Health Service, which was being introduced gradually in 2005, and the farmers had several questions about these cards and their availability. The key issue at the time of one of my visits was the visit of the government photographer, and the timing of this visit so that as many people as possible could be ready to have their picture taken.

The government had no simple way of informing the public about such things, as there was no municipal or town hall nearby, and the administrative system was through District Assemblies, which grouped much larger entities together. The closest district office was over an hour away by bus, and thus information flowed only

sporadically from there to the different villages that it served. It was the Research and Development Officer (RDO) of Kuapa Kokoo who took on the task of finding out the exact time of the photographer's visit and communicating this information to the purchasing clerk or the village society president to arrange the time of the visit. To assemble this piece of information, the RDO had to be in touch with the village society president through slips of paper they would hand over in the local 'tro-tro' bus, as there was no mobile phone, let alone an Internet connection, electricity or computers in the village. The information assemblage thus passed from the government worker to the Research and Development Officer via buses, paper notes, the bus driver and his 'mate' who handled passengers goods and collected their fares, and further on to the village society purchasing clerk, who would finally tell the villagers about the visit at a convenient time. This was often during their day off from farm work, which fell on a different day in each village, to allow for ambulant traders and hired workers to adjust their schedules to fit these days as well.

Another example of helping to put together beneficial information assemblages was the issue of cocoa bonuses in Nkrokro. These bonuses were paid at the end of the growing season, and were based on the world market price that the government obtained in any given year. When the government revenues were significantly higher than that resulting from the fixed seasonal 'farm gate' price paid to the farmers, the government would issue a bonus based on how much each farmer had produced. In this entire region the government suspected that cocoa being trafficked from Ivory Coast was being reported as cocoa produced in the region – so they decided to pay bonuses directly to the farmers, rather than through the intermediaries of Licenced Buying Companies (LBCs). The Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) thus had to have up-to-date lists of how much each farmer had produced. Some farmers had either missed out on their bonuses, or the government had recorded the wrong amount. In this case, it was again the RDO who would use Kuapa's records to trace the right amounts for all the farmers involved, and then take a written complaint to the COCOBOD office located in the town of the Kuapa Area Office. This would reach the right person after a period of waiting around, and the RDO would then ensure that the bonuses were delivered to the farmers.

All of this would have been a bureaucratic process of far too much complexity for farmers, especially for individual complaints, and would not have been worth the effort for the benefit that they would receive, particularly if they had only produced small amounts of cocoa; but it was easy for the RDO to write up a list of those who missed the bonus, and take a short journey and give the claim to the person in charge of the bonuses at COCOBOD. At the time of the next visit to that village, in the next month or so, he could discuss the results of the actions with the farmers, and in the meantime inform them of the outcome via messages written on paper passed on via taxi drivers from the Area Office RDO to the village society purchasing clerk.

Rights among Kuapa farmers were not only about determining the existence or non-existence of an abstract notion of a right, but also about its very materialisation through strong information assemblages between the farmers, information intermediaries such as the RDO, and government agencies responsible for delivering rights to cocoa farmers. During my fieldwork I encountered other financial concerns such as the cyclical nature of cocoa revenues compared to constant expenditure needs. Additionally, there were stories of farmers – men in particular – spending their annual cocoa income within a few weeks, to return to the village empty handed.

In addition, issues surrounding women's' livelihoods were particularly important among members at the Kuapa Kokoo village societies. The way in which *problematization* took place at Kuapa Kokoo was by identifying such issues mostly among the members of village societies at the local level. Identification of issues was done by village society members themselves, or issues could also be identified by the Area Office staff when they visited village societies. The resulting information assemblage required the concentrated efforts of the entire Kuapa Kokoo network, and assembling information was seen as a major task for villagers, especially in cases when information was both volatile and hard to access, as in the case of the price of palm oil and kola nuts. In the case of health cards in Akwapong the village purchasing clerk was able to link up to government officials, as he was part of the district level committees and travelled quite often to the nearest town where government health clinics were located. Finally, some *problematizations* had started at the Head Office level, such as the need to emphasise the common co-operative

values, and to educate farmers on issues such as gender, farming practices and availability of KKCUC loans.

### **5.3. Conclusions**

It was somewhat surprising that many of the problematisations were discussed in terms of information, but the debate that followed was extremely rich in content and revealed many unexpected dynamics. In this chapter I started by looking first, in theoretical terms, at the very notion of information as some kind of an object which is out there or as being either available or unavailable for use or consumption by actors within the fieldsites studied in this thesis. Information, rather than being an object, emerges here as an information assemblage, requiring the active engagement of actors as I describe in the three fieldsites, in order to put and hold together the social and material elements which constitute information assemblages.

I considered information assemblages in terms of *problematisations* within a wider process of translation. These issues were related to common issues such as the availability of weather forecasts, which could not be taken for granted without the technological and social assemblages that make the weather a matter of everyday knowledge. The assemblage concerning the patient's wife, health cards, personnel at the clinic in question, and travel required by foot to reach the clinic, all constituted information in the most concrete and practical sense. At LAUG ownership was a concern since actors wanted to alter and know the underlying source code (or the actual information assemblage) underlying the software they were using, rather than using it as a ready-made object. Ownership in the eyes of LAUG allowed localisation efforts to take place, both in the actual Graphical user interface (GUI) to be translated into major Ghanaian languages, as well as the keyboard to include the necessary special characters and accents used in these languages Gã, Ewe and Twi. At Kuapa it was the assemblage of rights through stronger information linkages that constituted the key concerns in both villages studied. The linkages that the Research and Development Officer (RDO) had with both with the village societies, as well as government offices and private institutions in the nearby towns facilitated the

assemblage of information concerning their rights, services and markets for Kuapa members.

Information assemblages were thus discussed in terms of participation, ownership and rights – terms which are not often associated with information, considered more often as a medium rather than being the content of social interaction (Terranova 2004). However, in the three fieldsites I studied, many of the social concerns were expressed in terms of politics and negotiations around information assemblage. This finding, similar to that of Geertz (1978) concerning the Bazaar Economy, indicates that through information assemblages one establishes values, both social and economic, which then become calculable objects of assessment, evaluation, trade and valuation.

## 6.0. Association in Spatial Assemblages

Most of the difficulties we have in understanding science and technology proceeds from our belief that space and time exist independently as an unshakable frame of reference *inside which* events and place would occur. This belief makes it impossible to understand how different spaces and different times may be produced *inside the network* built to mobilise, cumulate and recombine the world. (Latour 1987: 228)

Here the second stage of translation, *association*, is discussed through spatial assemblages. Conceptualising spaces as spatial assemblages also turns our attention to the tools and devices needed to assemble spaces and create new associations. Many of the associations that were proposed as partial solutions or remedies to earlier problematisations were discussed in terms of new types of spatial assemblages. This was especially true at Busy Internet, which prided itself of having created a *public space* downstairs in the Internet café floor, and a *professional space* upstairs where rented offices and the Busy Incubator was located. At Kuapa Kokoo, new *associations* were discussed in terms of *women's spaces* and the subsequent formation of women's groups, or through the processes of linking villages together in the functions of the co-operative. At LAUG, the expansion of the Free and Open Source Software space towards an increasing number of institutions including schools, businesses and Internet cafés was considered as a key way to solve earlier problems around ownership of information.

Spaces are discussed within the social enterprise literature as constituting 'intermediary spaces' (Rouilleau-Berger 2003) which are considered to exist between institutional and informal spheres, or finding new forms of 'proximity services' (Eme 1994; Laville, Lemaître and Nyssens 2006), which signify new types of services that are related to local spaces. Such services may include child and elderly care services that are organised in neighbourhoods, and between households and communities. In Ghana, the concept of community development (Du Sautoy 1958), community-based organisations (Asiedu 2002b) and the use of extension services both in health and agricultural information are among the types of *associations* that emerge within spatial assemblages.

Spaces (in section 6.1) are not singularly identified as either public or private, or linear in the sense of expanding distance and hierarchy between local, regional or international areas. From this discussion of spatial assemblages, I move (section 6.2) to discuss how spaces are understood in the three fieldsites as constituting new *associations* within the wider process of translation. Spaces are understood through their capacity to assemble, and provide an inclusive and non-discriminatory location, which allows for actors to bring together their diverse interests. The three different fieldsites all show different spatial tools and devices, which are used to achieve such spatial distinctions.

### **6.1. Spaces as Assemblages**

I draw upon the concept of topology as it transcends earlier categories of space, such as the local/global, micro/macro, centre/periphery and public/private. Topology is a mathematical term commonly used in ANT, which refers to the terrain that actors need to cross to get somewhere else. Space is not considered as constituting a linear continuum, from local to regional and global – but it is marked by diverse configurations. Law and Mol (2001: 4) invite us to leave our spatial common sense at home, and rather look at actual spatial 'topologies'

The answer is that topologists think about spatiality by asking questions about the continuity of shapes. And such related issues as their proximity or relative location.

Thinking of space in terms of topology means considering that it may not be the absolute distance or proximity in terms of measured distance, but rather, a relational form of distance mediated by continuity of certain devices that make spaces (such as statistics, standardised formulae, types of institutions). Lury and Moor consider such spaces to constitute 'topological cultures', in which practices of valuation play an important role.

We want to suggest that these characteristics of brand valuation metrology – the putting of multiple, heterogeneous dimensions into relationship with each other, the adoption of internal calibration or internal measure relations, and the projection of a space of future possibility against which the present is discounted – are indicative of the emergence of what we are calling topological culture. (Lury and Moor 2010: 46)



The term of topology simply means breaking with the linearity of certain practices of valuation and measuring, and this is done through reimagining the use of spatial devices and tools. The idea itself is not entirely new, as examples from earlier sociological works have not always had a linear sense of space. Rather, space can also be seen as mediated closeness through technologies that allow text, voice, sound and video to be transmitted over distances that create a sense of face-to-face interaction. Proximity becomes a manner to convey values as Goffman already noted:

the term *face* may be defined as the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact [...] as when a person makes a good showing for his profession or religion by making a good showing for himself (Goffman 1967: 5, cited in Jordan 2008: 140)

Goffman's use of the term of 'social value' stems from its representation in face-to-face contact, as showing one's face means being proud to represent one's origins and carrying a degree of self-respect. Spatial assemblages provide ways in which proximity can be constructed either temporarily or more permanently. Simmel presents the loss of knowledge about the more detailed knowledge of the 'other' as one of the key dynamics of urban life.

It is at first the consequence of those rapidly shifting stimulation of the nerves which are thrown together in all their contrasts and from which it seems to us the intensification of metropolitan intellectuality seems to be derived. [...] The essence of the blasé attitude is an indifference toward the distinctions between things. (Simmel 1971: 15)

The blasé attitude adopted by the metropolitan person is one of indifference to most of the issues, events, and feelings described as mental stimuli. It is a loss of social value, or the potential to take interest in what is happening around the actor. In terms of actor-network theory, we could talk of 'overflows' (Callon 1998b). According to Simmel, these overflows render it hard for urban residents to make distinctions, and to take decisions on the information presented to them. Simmel contrasted this blasé attitude with the life in a small town, where the quantity of stimuli was much less, and life was more stable with common challenges and problems shared by everybody.

For Simmel this ignorance is necessary for maintaining mental stability and sanity as otherwise the person would be involved with a series of unnecessary situations. Rather than talking of public and private spaces per se, we could study concepts like overflowing (Callon 1998b), which give a more detailed picture of what is actually taking place in a space, and how it works. As an alternative to the 'purified' notion of

the public space, social movement activists and theorist have proposed the notion of an ‘open space’ (Whittaker 2004: 113).

A space has *no leaders*. It is only a place, basically a *horizontal space*, just like the earth’s surface, even if it has some ups and downs. It is like a *square without an owner*. If the square has an owner other than the collectivity, it fails to be a square, and becomes private territory. Squares are generally open spaces that can be visited by all those who find any kind of interest in using it. Their purpose is solely being a square, whatever service they render to its users. The longer they last as squares the better it is for those who use them for what they offer for the realisation of their respective objectives.

Whittaker considers ‘open space’ as a spatial assemblage, which allows for self-organisation, diversity of methods and interests, and is characterised by a lack of leadership or authority. Activists, as a way of reorganising democratic politics, are claiming spaces for autonomous uses without prior perceptions of order, hierarchy or intent of specific use (Patomäki and Teivainen 2004; Teivainen 2002). It is contrasted to a social movement, which often has predefined objectives and hierarchies. Whittaker considers that spaces can also serve as a basis for actors to attain their own objectives, which previously was associated with social institutions and movements.

## **6.2. Associations in Spatial Assemblages**

One of the key advantages of using ANT is that it allows us to move beyond the usual spatial boundaries into looking at what actors constitute them, with what devices and in which processes. The devices will be discussed here in terms of meteorological and calculative tools and devices, and appear along the text as we come across them. These assemblages are not necessarily permanent, and many of them only exist for the time that the necessary ingredients are brought together. At times they are as simple as a piece of paper on which to take notes, whereas in other cases a longer chain of devices is required. In the fieldsites this meant observing how actors themselves conceived the spaces that they were engaged with – and the same physical space could become a different spatial assemblage as the persons and material settings change over time. For instance, as a CyberSeries event opens, a privately owned space at Busy Internet becomes during this event a public space, and as the event closes it reverts back to its original closed identity. Other types of spatial assemblages also existed at Busy, and here I will look at the relationship between

different spatial assemblages, such as those involving professional spaces and developmental spaces, to see what types of translations took place in each of them.

At LAUG, the topology of spatial assemblages was also at times temporary, for example, in the case of the events that the group organised in spaces outside the AITI training school. At these events it was able to attract wider publics, involve new people and material resources, and gain ground with institutional actors who would not normally come to the weekly meetings. This is why LAUG also considered that it needed to enlarge its spatial assemblage to include actors who would not normally attend meetings among computer enthusiasts – and extend the projects aimed at popularising FOSS beyond the core group themselves. At Kuapa, spatial assemblages were built through the representative structures of the co-operative and its national and international linkages, as well as through the establishment of women's groups.

### **6.2.1. Spatial Assemblages at Busy Internet**

Accra lacks the kind of spaces that could be understood as being public spaces, such as parks, squares, or even pavements and safe passageways for crossing roads or overhead walkways. Pedestrians had to negotiate with cars for space between roads and open gutters while – women especially – carrying heavy loads of fresh fruit or other goods on their heads. For these reasons, it was difficult to see how streets could be public spaces in Accra, as it was harder to appropriate street corners for socialising when these corners were not protected from passing cars. Accra has also been characterised as a post-colonial city (Freund 2007), which does not include recreational spaces, such as well-maintained parks, open avenues or otherwise spaces that could be appropriated as public spaces. As a result, public spaces are created by Accra's citizens themselves around 'lorry parks' where people often wait for buses and shared taxis, or around large open-air markets in the central Accra zone of Makola. Markets in general were used as a space for socialising, both formal ones like Makola or Keneshie, and informal street markets such as those around the Nkrumah traffic circle (known just as 'The Circle') near Busy, which is one of the main traffic junctions in Accra. Monumental spaces such as Independence Square, served only for official celebrations and contained the memories of Ghana's

independence, but they could not be easily appropriated as public spaces. Interestingly enough, even spontaneous expressions of national sentiment around key sports events and presidential elections rather took place in the popular market and traffic junction around Nkrumah Circle, or the main commercial and shopping district of Osu. Independence Square was reserved for rather formal celebrations on Ghana's Independence Day, which involved marching, speeches and music.

In contrast to these spaces, Busy Internet had a policy of creating a public space in its Internet café, in the downstairs space. This section of the café as a public space was an entertainment venue as well as an Internet café where some 100 PCs were in constant use by the café's clients. The space itself is set up in a way that it allows for encounters: well-lit areas, seating, open plan with enough space to stand around along the ramp or in corners. What characterised the space of Busy Internet, and unlike many other Internet cafés at the time, was that Busy allowed people who had little intention of using its services to sit on the rails and gates outside Busy, or hang out in the waiting lounge and the other spaces that served as meeting places. Many areas at Busy Internet were actually semi-public spaces, fulfilling some of the common criteria of a public space, but with a bit of negotiation, or for a limited period of time.

Busy, as a space, can be divided into two main parts: downstairs of the café as a public space, an entertainment space, and the commercial Internet café; and upstairs a professional and a developmental space where the *Busy Family* would meet up, and the Busy Incubator was located. The spatial divide was achieved through use of devices such as sign posts telling that the upstairs was reserved for Busy's own management offices, and especially by a security guard who was on post at the top of the staircase shown in the picture below (Figure 11). The guard needed to know each person with access to upstairs offices and conference rooms.

In both areas of Busy several spatial assemblages were present, which could be described as spatial *associations* that were at least partial solutions to the problems raised earlier in terms of information assemblages. Downstairs Busy Internet was mainly a public space, which existed around the commercial Internet café. Its spatial divide from outside of Busy Internet was mainly the front door, and the customer service desk which one faced upon entry. There were no guards at the door, but the

vehicles in the parking lot were guarded, spotting out any disorder around the café, which was also a popular meeting spot. This topology of the space of Busy did not stop at the building itself as Busy Internet was linked to further spaces outside of Accra. It was part of the global ICT incubator network supported by InfoDev, and development practitioners in the field of ICT for Development were keen to learn from Busy's experiment of combining business and social projects under the same roof.

**Figure 11: Waiting Area Downstairs at Busy Internet**



Source: Picture by Matti Kohonen, 2005.

In the picture above, we can see how the downstairs of the Internet café is a multi-purpose space, where computer terminals, and printing and laminating machines in the background are the business side of Busy's operations. The social aspect of Busy is exemplified here by how it is also a public space with a waiting lounge, providing an informal meeting area, and entertainment from a small television set (sounds were turned off during the day). The advertising board was an illustrative example of the dual mission of Busy, as two alternating posters took turns on the screen – one promoting web-hosting services, and the other being a HIV/AIDS awareness poster.

This was an example of how the both social and economic values co-existed at Busy, on different sides of an advertisement poster.

In addition, Busy had a clearly expressed objective of promoting the interests of minorities, and this came through in both the design of the space, and how the staff was trained. The entire downstairs area of Busy was completely wheelchair friendly, which was achieved by using spatial devices such as a ramp leading to a lower level where conference rooms and the laptop lane were located, with disabled accessible toilets downstairs next to the ramp, and no staircases in accessing the front door. Elsewhere in Accra, the lack of sidewalks and the presence of gates on many houses, estates and even public buildings made accessibility a real issue. Busy Internet, as it was guarded and open all day and night, did not need a gate.

During the nine month period, I saw only a few wheelchair users at Busy, so I could not say it was a common sight, but the very fact that such users could access Busy made it possible for persons with mobility disabilities to use the Internet in Accra. At times one could see deaf users at Busy, who would talk in sign language around the ramp leading to the lower part of the café floor where the conference rooms were located. What was important for the deaf users was that Busy Internet's computers had webcams enabling talking on-line using sign-language, which in many ways was quicker than typing words on a keyboard, and also more interactive by allowing for facial expressions to be communicated. For the deaf, having this access meant that they could extend their spatial assemblages to discussion groups and actors outside of Accra, and especially to on-line communities or just other friends who lived further away but had knowledge of sign language.

Another group whom I observed at Busy Internet were students. The Liquid Bar on the edges of the parking lot of Busy Internet also had a free wireless Internet (Wi-Fi) hotspot, which attracted many laptop users. This hotspot brought together many computer users – especially younger users who either could not afford the hourly charges, or who just felt more comfortable using the Internet while sitting on the couches at the Liquid. The connection was significantly slower than the commercial Internet connection inside the café, but it was enough for many users to download their emails or access popular websites for browsing the Internet. I spent some time

with students from NIIT whom I had met through the contact with the Linux Accra User Group (LAUG). The main advantage for them was to see Busy as a social space, where they could use the Internet free-of-charge while sitting at the Liquid Bar or the restaurant area beside it. They would only rarely be asked to leave, when the restaurant was either very busy, or when staff decided to ask non-paying customers to leave on a rare occasion for some other reason. In such a case, they might order a bottle of Coke or Fanta Cocktail and share it among a few persons.

The rather more formal way in which *associations* were put in place was through some of the NGOs and professional networks present at Busy. For instance, the *Busy Family* was engaged in mentoring some of the young ICT students who would come to Busy to spend time at the Liquid Bar using the Wi-Fi Internet access free of charge. Members of this group would also propose formal development projects on their key areas of interest. For some it would be HIV/AIDS counselling, for others the use of ICTs in agriculture to obtain price information, or contacting persons who could advise on better farming especially by using local radio stations. These actors together created *associations* which could be called ‘intermediary spaces’ much like the ones discussed in French housing estates by Roulleau-Berger (2003). At Busy, the term of an ‘information intermediary’ came up when talking of such aspects of mediation, and overcoming the earlier problems with ‘connection men’. One instance of this was presented on the GINKS e-list in August 2005.

The Agona Swedru Agricultural Information Centre and Radio Peace are information intermediaries that the Ghana National Agricultural Information Network System (GAINS) has selected to disseminate research findings to farmers in the Central Region of Ghana. (Person S)

This quote is an example of a partnership between the government Agricultural Information Centre in the city of Agona Swedru, in the Central Region, and Radio Peace, a local Twi-language radio station. This case was highlighted by GINKS as an example of how information technologies can be used to create new types of linkages in the rural communities. In a similar way, Busy Family members were themselves information intermediaries, and they used both the public space and the professional contacts at Busy Internet to make the case for greater use of the practices.

At the February *CyberSeries* the earlier medical doctor who problematised information assemblages in Chapter 5 also proposed a new *association* to her earlier

concern. It involved little additional resources, used commonly available technologies but did depend on quite a lot of cooperation from the key actors involved – namely she was proposing a new *association* of actors to solve the previous problem.

To start with we have Kasapa [a mobile telephone company at the time using an analogue network] talking about free phone calls after 7pm and on Sundays too. So why don't you break a deal with Kasapa. Kasapa gives us mobile phones and then everyone else buys Kasapa phones, from 9 pm and 11 pm ring this number and you can get a doctor on the other end who can give advice.

[Patient:] I've had a stomach ache for four hours and it's getting worse,

[Doctor:] Go see a doctor.

[Patient:] I've had a stomach ache for four hours and it's getting better.

[Doctor:] We can start talking. When did the pains start? Etc.

[Patient:] I'm pregnant and I haven't felt my baby for twelve hours.

[Doctor:] Twelve hours is too long, go see a doctor.

[Patient:] I'm pregnant, I haven't felt my baby for one hour.

[Doctor:] One hour is too short, ring me back in three hours.

That kind of simple things, it will, can cut down hospital visits, it will cut down unnecessary visits, so in the end of the day we will have really sick people seeing the doctors, which is what we should do (Person H)

This solution required a new *spatial assemblage*, where mobile phones would be used to link up actors who were not in touch previously. The cost of the connection would be free, provided that both actors would already have a mobile phone SIM-card provided by Kasapa and a functional mobile phone handset. As she was basing her concept on a free promotion from the company for calls after 7pm, it did not even require any funds for users who would be using Kasapa. The doctors in this example would need to sit elsewhere either at home or at their work during the evenings when they agree to take part in the helpline, and pick up the telephone when it rings. The doctors could simply circulate the mobile phone when taking turns in answering the queries of patients. This simple spatial association involving mobile phone technology did not materialise to my knowledge.

There were several NGOs active in the ICT for Development field working with solutions that at times emerged from public debates like the ones described above. The one that I looked at more closely was GINKS. It was trying to position itself as a



key information mediator, engaged in knowledge sharing in the ICT field, and bring some of the best practices seen elsewhere closer to Ghanaian users. These NGOs were attempting to formalise the practices that were part of existing professional networks, such as the Busy Family. For instance, one seminar announced on the GINKS e-list would train 'information intermediaries' in the field of agriculture. GINKS was also organising its own programme on facilitation, with the specific intent of bringing together people who could become facilitators of on-line communities, with the specific target of development work.

The programme is targeted at members of GINKS and its partners who are desirous of the taking the first step of using the skills of facilitation for change and development. (Person T)

The intent of this particular GINKS programme was to train persons who already had some professional skills to share them more readily with others. As an NGO it was addressing the problem of hoarding and safe-keeping information, and closed information assemblages. They were engaged in training *facilitators* who in their vision of knowledge sharing are crucial in making the linkages between government agencies, NGOs, professionals and private sector actors who can solve some of the earlier information problems mentioned in the previous chapter. It was a base for social-purpose projects around ICTs, and all applicants to the service were non-commercial.

In this example, the general purpose term of facilitation was taken to mean a more specific type of a process where actors are brought together on an on-line platform which would serve as a permanent communication hub and a contact point for the actors who are engaged in a chosen topic. For instance, the earlier example of meteorological information in chapter five could have benefited from the information mediation or facilitation. Facilitation as a method of information sharing then allows a group which shares information to be built, and the Dgroups was a platform owned by International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD), where groups could have free access to mailing lists. The very existence of these programmes shows that information clearly was not available to everyone, and that knowledge sharing was a key dynamic to address some of the concerns about the hoarding of information.

Moving on to the upstairs of Busy Internet, we have the *professional space*, where ICT entrepreneurs would rent offices, chat to each other about their latest projects on the roof terrace, where the Busy Incubator and the Busy Labs were located – both projects of Busy Internet (to be discussed further in the next chapter concerning *enrolment*). The professional space of Busy Internet was also seen as a ground for creating new ICT companies, where mentoring would result in new innovations and a growing sector. This was captured by the idea of a *developmental space*, where it was hoped that Busy Internet in some ways would be able to provide a platform for new ideas to become start-up companies, and for the social aspects of Busy Internet to contribute to creating also more jobs, income and profit for the country. One of the founders of Busy Internet said: “I wouldn't have done it without the developmental space” (Person C) indicating that profits were not the only or even the key motive for starting to work on the venture. He specified his understanding of a *developmental space* as a mix of business development initiatives, charitable and community-based activities, and improving access to Internet for key beneficiaries such as the disabled, school children and journalists in particular.

Indeed, at Busy there were two key developmental spaces where specific projects could be undertaken. Having a background in small business development, the participant also saw Busy as a platform for Ghanaian small-scale businesses to find new customers, to become more professional in their business relationships, and possibly find financing for their projects as well. These *developmental spaces* were linked to the previous spatial assemblages, as they were not seen in any way as being rivals or mutually exclusive types of spaces. For Busy, the reason for including a public space as part of the business plan, and the wider project of Busy Internet, was that it was seen as complementary to the business aspects of the café. Activities could be performed through the public space of the Busy Internet, with the interaction of the professionals and the users and other actors who walked through the door.

### **6.2.2. Linux Accra User Group's Spatial Assemblages**

Participants at LAUG had a big advantage, as they had access to the resources of a government-run IT-training college, the Ghana-India Kofi Annan Centre for

Excellence - Advance Information Technology Institute (KACE-AITI) or just known as the AITI. The name itself told a lot about the history of the building. Kofi Annan being possibly the most famous Ghanaian outside his country, though since graduation from University in Kumasi he hardly ever worked in Ghana, making a career in the different branches of the UN before becoming the General Secretary on 1 January 1997. This ICT training school and a peacekeeping college in Accra are both named after him; both are projects made possible by his role as an international diplomat, and thus Ghana's most prominent 'connection man'. His name alone brings both fame and recognition to the school, and shows how especially high government-level projects such as the AITI need political connections, brokerage and negotiation to materialise in the first place. Brokerage and facilitation were seen as positive skills, building the fame and reputation of the person.

LAUG had a different take on the spatiality of the Information Society in Ghana in comparison with Busy. For them, the main task was to mobilise resources to expand the spatial reach of FOSS applications in Accra and in Ghana more widely. This *association* was considered to be of key importance in solving Ghana's dependency on foreign software, being able to modify and use software freely according to one's needs. As a message, it linked to other associations of national self-determination, self-sufficiency and an approach that focused on local development. In reality, almost every single FOSS application was developed also outside of Ghana, but Ghanaians had the right to use and modify them according to their own needs. If LAUG and the AITI were at the heart of the FOSS movement in Ghana, in the vision of the actors present there the entire country should adopt an increasing array of FOSS applications in order to reclaim the information landscape to correspond to the values and principles of FOSS more generally. The user group established a sense of proximity of persons attached to the same ideals of FOSS, and the space in which they met was its physical embodiment. AITI was FOSS for them, and they wanted more such spaces. News came in from a group being established at Cape Coast, Kumasi and Winneba university campuses and that Linux enthusiasts also met both in the harbour city of Tema occasionally under the name of the Tema LUG. I was not able to verify the existence of these groups, and messages on the Linux Accra discussion list only confirmed the existence of Cape Coast LUG, while one member of LAUG studying at

the Winneba College said he was the founder of this group, which met at the college grounds.

Accessing the AITI involved passing the security gate, stating one's purpose and signing in – much like in any government building - and in this respect it was not the public space that Busy Internet was. How members were invited to come along or otherwise gained knowledge about LAUG meetings then became one of the main early questions that I addressed during my fieldwork. Most group members had joined the group, like me, through an invitation from someone they had met at an event or a computer school, or from a friend. I was asked to come along after a *CyberSeries* event at Busy Internet. These invitations were mainly through shared educational experiences – for instance – having attended the same computer studies college, or alternatively a few members were invited through close kin relationships, as in one case two brothers came along. The group was thus primarily an interest-group affiliation, rather than a community-based organisation, or a neighbourhood club. Proximity played a part, as being able to come to meetings on Saturday afternoons depended largely on having access to transport at a reasonable price and time of commute it took to the AITI. Participation in the discussion list was based on being able to access the Internet, either with one's own laptop, desktop at a place with Internet access, or using an Internet café PC. Most participants did own either a laptop or a desktop, as being able to run FOSS applications like Linux did require hands-on practice, which one could not do with an Internet café or public access PC elsewhere.

For this to happen Linux Accra members had to go out and expand the reach of their spatial networks. This meant establishing new Linux User Groups (LUGs) across Ghana, and plans did indeed exist for ultimately to come together as Ghana LUG once the various groups had been formed and existed. There was some debate about this expansion project, as some felt that LAUG as the first LUG in Ghana had a founding role, and they should continue as the centre of the FOSS strategy making in Ghana. Most felt that the entire discussion was premature, as there were very few groups across the country at that point of time. There were also tensions of course about the role of LAUG, and its purpose. In July 2006 some were voicing concern that Linux Accra was becoming just another Internet café:

LinuxAcra meetings are not free Linux classes. If you'll remember, I do all I can to help the new guyz out at the meetings (usually have only 30 min to do my own stuff which is why I end up just loading my package markings and letting my pc do the rest while I attend to others – so to speak). (Person U, spelling as in original)

The group dynamics were indeed a major part of the discussions on the LUG list, and some of the discussions went off to analyse the past Saturday's meeting and encourage more of the key persons on the discussion list also to join in. Not all felt that the group meetings should be only about Linux matters, but that they should be a more open forum for everybody to engage and socialise in matters which were somewhat less related to the four priorities (see section 3.3.3) of LAUG. Some participants defended the open nature of the group, and the valuable work that the volunteers do in helping the new members in meetings.

So you are saying this is not really a LUG, just a back-door to free internet? No, the \*meetings\* are a front-door to the free internet. (besides I always enter AITI-KACE through the front door /wink). (Person V, spelling as original)

While the first person was showing some frustration about spending lots of time with new members to the group to get them to participate in the *association* that LAUG presented, others felt that newcomers could also be left to discover the issues of the group themselves and allow them just to use the time for recreational purposes to look at their private emails for free. Some disagreement did exist on the exact types of the solution that the FOSS would provide. The vision of the group as representing 'free Internet', as opposed to working for a social and economic vision of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS), was an on-going tension in the group. At times the group leader in meetings would tell one of the persons to focus on Linux issues at the meetings, while on other occasions he would not be as strict. In any case, the meetings were mostly coordinated and a common purpose was stated at the beginning and during the meeting for group building purposes. At a meeting in April 2005, the discussion concerned organisational aspects of the group. Some thought it should be more like a neighbourhood 'base'.

What I'm thinking is that OK, we have to have a solid base before we start building all it. Without thinking of establishing all these groups, how strong is our core base? How strong is our group? Who are the members of the group? (Person W)

While the person speaking here wished to turn LAUG into a movement rather than a space for enthusiasts, most other members and especially the group leader reacted

against the idea of having hierarchical rules for the group – also involving giving orders and paying membership fees or ‘dues’ to the group to function with its common mission. While some found that this would make LAUG actually stronger, most felt that it was not the role of LAUG to become a movement in itself. LAUG did not want to become an institution either, as it did not seek any funding for its core activities – rather wishing to keep the group open and base its activities on voluntary networking. Some group members, those who wished for a more concrete group to exist, did continue to think about establishing their own career prospects in the ICT sector, or even starting their own company. However, this type of an *association* of a closely-knit group was not favoured by the leadership of LAUG.

Most users were not that advanced in their FOSS skills, and the task of the group leaders was to try to cater for the different levels of users, to introduce them to the Linux desktop, and gradually to other FOSS applications, and finally towards getting them involved in some of the projects of the Linux Accra group.

One form of new people know nothing whatsoever, and with them, we all know nothing, even pressing the button on the computer to turn it on is a problem. With those guys all you need to do, I think, is to introduce them to the Linux desktop. Right, and when I say introduced I mean this is a computer and you can use of the type, the basic things that the computers schools do. [...] I'm saying that's one level.

The next level is they know computers already, so they need to learn how to install Linux. Then the next level is the kind of things, the basics and they need to go to the next level they can install [a Linux operating system on a PC].

Then there is the category of those who need to go and learn, to go to the next level, and come and share with the rest of us [...] (Person B)

In building a community of users, it was considered important to build the users’ skills. Newcomers were brought in with the unwritten contract that they were interested in one way or another in FOSS, and in becoming a more experienced user. LAUG’s intention was the creation of a bigger movement, which could translate the experiences of software users into much wider arenas – by involving universities, schools and companies in the FOSS movement. This variation in the knowledge of Linux among the group members led to the establishment of various levels of users – again introducing a level of hierarchy. The loose group *association* was more based on creating interesting events, projects and activities – rather than enforcing group discipline and hierarchy.

The dynamic rested on the participation of users at different levels of experience from ‘gurus’ and experienced users who would take time in mentoring newcomers or ‘newbies’. This became the key manner in which Linux Accra elaborated on its values and objectives, and how new projects were initiated. The leader of the group did not describe himself as a ‘guru’ but he rather had the linkages and contacts both in government and the private sector to be able to run the groups’ activities on Saturday afternoons and to keep contact with all of the agencies and actors who would contribute to LAUG their time and other resources. His presence was essential in securing access to AITI and in also organising the practical matters around meetings, such as opening and closing the room and ensuring that everything was left in its right place after the meetings. The group leader, however, considered that the lack of employment opportunities in Ghana in the software industry meant a major loss of talented members in the group who could help others on the learning curve.

We have about 100 members, or so, I’d say most of them are outside of the country, that’s all Ghanaians some are in Denmark, some in the States, Canada, UK. If you ask a technical question, they can help with this on the list, but they no longer are in the country. For me we have only two guys in town, we have one who happens to be Swedish, then we have one guy who is a developer. We had another guy who came back but he couldn’t make it here and he’s gone back to the US, he came back here and tried to make here. It’s how I see it, as you can see I find it very international. One of our top guys was a Cameroonian, I think I’ve told about him, everybody knows about him. [...] So we have this thing is that people develop very fast, then they go to a certain level, and then they go abroad. We’re not building a critical mass, that’s what I’d tell you.  
(Person B)

While some of the ‘gurus’ were still on the Yahoo! Groups list, many of them no longer answered emails about simple hardware problems that would allow for the group to move onwards in getting its members from an earlier stage of development as a newbie, towards guru status. When asked of job opportunities in Linux development, the responses from group members were also pessimistic:

the problem in Cameroon is that when we talk about computers you just thin about Windows. Computers in Cameroon means just word-processing. (Person X)

A member from Benin mentioned: “Benin, as always only Windows is what we have. If you want to learn Linux it’s so expensive.” (Person Y) These realities do not make it easier for Linux experts to gain employment, unless they have transferable skills towards other operating systems, or work in more high-end software development and

adaptation where Linux is used in the corporate server and service markets. Mobilising people, materials and bandwidth became a key concern of the group. The way in which he introduced the Linux operating system to new members was similar to his own experience, by demonstrating an install of Linux on a computer. In addition, each project that the group had identified (see section 3.3.3 for the four projects: localisation, wireless networking, digital libraries and LTSP low-cost computing) had a group leader. The dynamics of keeping each project alive depended on the participation of different group leaders.

So you can easily teach someone to go and install the box, [...] and then someone else [...] can lead the session where everybody has learned something and they share. But we don't have meetings with all these four people every time. We have one or two, I hope all of you get, the four of us. And then you have two new guys, what are you going to do. What do we do, we do something. We go to the basic stuff again, the file systems.

That can happen only if you have a strong group. (Person B)

The leader therefore also depended on these group leaders, and it was at times difficult to keep the group interested in the same issues. There were a few persons in the group who were considered as 'gurus', one of them was a Swedish software engineer, who lived in Accra and was a lecturer at AITI, another was an experienced ICT student who had gained a guru status by working with group members for the past two years. One 'guru' did not attend meetings, but was an experienced programmer and software developer, he rather commented on issues on the email list, and participated in both hardware and FOSS philosophy related discussion topics.

The expansion of the technological space was achieved especially with three projects of LAUG, namely long-distance wireless Internet project, Digital Libraries project and a Linux Terminal Server Project (LTSP). A young Ivorian participant in the LAUG led the long-distance Internet project. He was particularly interested in building ICT networks as he had done studies in this field at the NIIT training school across Busy Internet and was one of the core members at LAUG organising events and participating in most meetings. He was also able to enrol members from a University of California in Berkeley (UC Berkeley) computer science faculty through a common reference to work on an experimental long-distance wireless network that reached from the Korle-Bu teaching hospital near the Korle-Bu Lagoon, to the University of Ghana campus on the other side of the city in Legon – a distance of approximately twelve kilometres. The UC Berkeley students had established a similar



Linux User Group and some of their members wished to make a study-trip to Ghana on their summer holidays. The experiment consisted of a visit to the Linux Accra User Group by Berkeley students in September 2005, after my period of fieldwork, and establishing the wireless link which worked, and the group gained experiences on how to build such networks themselves. The intent was to make good use of rare and sparse Internet connections, and to create ideally a free Internet network in key places in Accra using just a single broadband connection to which they would have access. They also thought that it could be used in rural areas, where Internet connections were even rarer and where sharing a connection over several kilometres using tall antennas would be even more important for cutting down the cost of computing.

This last project consisted of a requirement to run Linux on old computers where one more powerful computer (in 2005 described as a Pentium 4 with a gigabyte of RAM) would run up to 40 less powerful computers (described as a computer with a Pentium 1 or Pentium 2 processor and less than a gigabyte of RAM memory). These less powerful computers would have no local storage hard disks, and with a minimum of RAM they would run simply as a terminal screen since all the processing would take place on the more powerful server where all data would be stored and processing would take place. It was a model for making use of recycled and old computers with limited processing power, and possibly faulty hard disks that tend to break down earlier than the motherboard or other components of a desktop PC. This use of old computers, it was argued, would significantly lower the cost of setting up a computer classroom in a school or a library, which cost less than 100 USD each, rather than spending several hundred dollars on new computers. The project linked directly with the idea of establishing digital libraries and connects with the fourth project of Linux Accra.

As a solution to the problem of the digital divide, this idea had thus already gained the level of *association* among the actors concerned with ICT in a developmental sense. As there was no equivalent in Ghana, the LAUG group tried to establish a workable pilot to showcase the technology to the Ghanaian government and schools, in order to create a more stable 'association' and be able to enlist and later enrol further actors to join this actor-network. This platform was also used in a project called the SchoolNet. LAUG members were inspired by the SchoolNet programme in Uganda

(SchoolNet Uganda, 2010), which was establishing a thin-client solution in schools and educational establishments around the country with a donor-funded programme. One of the members of Linux Accra was especially interested in digital libraries, saying that there simply were not enough books available in Ghanaian university libraries for students to do their necessary class readings. The solution he proposed was to equip universities and schools with digital libraries as repositories for e-books, which could be read on SchoolNet style projects using LTSP architecture to bring down the cost of a reading terminal. Being himself self-taught in computer science and programming, he considered that it was only through the expansion of e-books that he was ever able to learn the necessary skills to be a programmer in the first place.

The project at Linux Accra was not easy to establish, so at first they tried to gain the attention of schools the group leader had some contact with, but the prospect of having members of a voluntary association equip a computer class was not an attractive idea. Instead, when they approached a university institute the project was a bit more successful, as during the end of my fieldwork a meeting was brokered at the private Regents' University of Science and Technology in the Dansoman area of Accra. At the meeting both the group leader and one of the students presented the digital library project, using a FOSS application to describe how it could help to build a digital library of essential coursework material and readings for students at the university. The director of the university considered the programme interesting and later on, after my fieldwork period, did start a digital library project with the working group leader, who later on became employed as an entrepreneur providing these services in 2006.

The tools and devices that LAUG members used went further than simply establishing stakeholder forums or hybrid forums (Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe 2009) where experts would at times listen to the laypersons. In this case it was the laypersons who were trying to develop themselves the solutions that they needed to act in the Ghanaian information society which was being shaped at the time. While they had little influence in official policies or practices, some of the alternative mobilisations and solutions grew into viable projects, especially in the case of digital libraries and the associated LTSP project, which was a way to run digital libraries even at a lower

cost. The way in which all of the projects were established relied on a variable topology of actors who were drawn from a wide array of international contacts, linkages and resources. LAUG members found the blueprint of the LTSP in an on-line community called Sourceforge.org that shared FOSS projects among all interested persons around the world. Its adaptation to schools had already been developed by SchoolNet in Uganda. As both projects were based on FOSS principles, LAUG was free to copy, adapt and distribute the results in their own communities – whereas in the case of proprietary software such copying would infringe on copyrights. FOSS therefore was likely to create new spatial assemblages, which here were discussed as *associations* in a longer chain of translation of social value.

### **6.2.3. Spatial Assemblages at Kuapa Kokoo**

If Accra was characterised by a lack of public spaces visitors to rural Ghana often find rather the opposite as many spaces are constantly in shared use – be they school buildings that are a place for the community to hold village society and associational meetings, roadsides that become children’s playgrounds, churches that become village halls, or chief’s houses that become semi-public places of assembly. This apparent sharing of space, however, is also a demonstration of the lack of government buildings and institutions. There were few government buildings if any on the village level, as governance of the most basic functions of the state were delegated to the traditional rulers – namely chiefs, paramount chiefs and other royalty in the Central District of Ghana, who kept land registries, records and collected local taxes. There were no elected representatives on the village level, the closest electoral level being the district, where local elections took place.

The most apparent government funded infrastructure both in Nkrokro and Akwapong were water facilities, as both villages had water pumps installed by the District Assembly. Meanwhile toilet facilities were still hoped to be upgraded in the future from the one built by the village residents themselves. At Nkrokro there was a weekly market every Tuesday. The market attracted a wide variety of sellers from nearby villages and the closest town – selling fruit and vegetables, used goods and second-hand clothing – and there were hairdressers, and a stall selling miscellaneous

electrical items, from batteries to simple FM radio receivers. The arrangement gave a feeling of a public space along the roadside of the stalls, though in actual fact it was a mixed market and public space assemblage. Village markets in Ghana are on different days of the week, so that traders can travel to various markets in a given week, and they structure the spatial settings in many rural areas around distances that can be reached by foot in less than a day's journey (Hill 1966).

One of the key advantages was that village society members were able to put the available resources of the co-operative such as cocoa depots, trucks and buildings for multiple purposes when they were not in commercial use. The cocoa depots in the village would only be filled with cocoa bags during the main season from December to February, and a light-crop season from May to June. Outside these periods, the depots, trucks and other facilities remained largely empty. Kuapa members made use of these facilities between these times for their other activities, such as holding meetings of the different committees and groups that existed in both villages. The intention was to create new spaces that were not connected with religion, government or traditional rulers, being rather focused on improving livelihoods. This changed spatial topologies in the villages, as other established institutions worked through their already established hierarchies – whether traditional rulers or educational institutions to make contacts outside the village. Spatial assemblages at Kuapa demonstrate some of the practices that were necessary in order to bring together new actors together who were all interested in building stronger and more active cocoa growing villages.

There were two ways of promoting *women's spaces* within the Kuapa structures, one being the formation of women's groups that carried out income generation activities, while the other was aimed at increasing representation of women in different committees of the Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Trust. For instance, the women's committees signature was required for certain procedures – such as the loan form, as will be discussed in the next chapter (section 7.2.1). Women were also represented on the management level (Berlan 2008), both on the national and the area level. This was to balance the lesser participation of women in the membership, and thus also in many other levels of representation drawn from the village committee participants. I did not meet any female purchasing clerks during the visits, but both village societies had women in the elected posts. In Akwapong there was a female president, while in

Nkrokro the loan committee treasurer was a woman. In both cases this meant that one out of four important posts was held by female members of the co-operative, who were a minority in the overall membership according to the RDO office in Kumasi.

Nkrokro did not have a women's group, but it had a different type of solidarity among some of the women in the village already in place. One of the wealthiest farmers near the Nkrokro was a woman who lived in Kumasi, Ghana's second largest city some 200 km away from the village. Her cocoa farm had three different tenant farmers, each having a large plot of cocoa and producing a significant quantity of produce. While tenant farmers under the Abuana agreement only kept half of their produce and the owner kept the other half, the tenants still had greater revenue than many actual owners of their own plots in the same village. The wealthy woman used some of her funds to help other women in need in the village. In one instance the wealthy female landowner had helped a fellow villager to provide a zero-interest rate loan, which allowed her to pay emergency expenses.

Akwapong had a formal women's group of 12 members, with their own president, treasurer and secretary. This group was engaged in making palm oil, which was aided by a donation to the village by the Labour Party branch in the UK city of Plymouth – due to the visits organised by the Kuapa Kokoo head office at Akwapong when foreign visitors would visit Kuapa on occasions (including myself as a researcher). The village had also received some machines from the same donation, but they were in need of repair at the time of the visit. So the women's group would uncask the palm nuts by hand using a large crusher, and then in a second phase crush the palm oil out of the nuts with a hand operated press. This gave a rich palm oil, which was used for cooking.

Rearranging these spatial assemblages in ways which benefited the cocoa farming communities was a key task of the Research and Development Officer (RDO) – who followed a long tradition of community development in Ghana as described in Chapter three, where Community Development Officers (CDOs) had already existed in the 1950s (Du Sautoy 1958) during the colonial administration, while during the independence era they were known as agricultural extension services. The way Kuapa had developed this practice was to link the work to co-operative structures,

rather than working with government agencies and their priorities. In such a way, it was the farmers themselves who were able to have a greater say over the work of the RDOs as we saw in the previous chapter in facilitating the access to health cards and cocoa bonuses. Kuapa filled an important role in the respective village societies in providing such mediation, as other Licenced Buying Companies did not have such services to offer.

Kuapa Kokoo also encouraged village-based self-help strategies, similar to the Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) described in chapter four. On the village society level the facilities provided by Kuapa Kokoo differed somewhat between the villages, depending on whether the village society had built up its own facilities, and whether it was allowed to use facilities in churches and schools. Both Akwapong and Nkrokro had a Kuapa Kokoo cocoa depot, which was critical for safely storing cocoa bags at the peak of the 'main crop' season in January-February, and to a lesser extent during the 'light crop' season from June to July. Outside these main seasons, the depots (brick sheds with a corrugated iron roof) were mainly empty. The depots in the two villages were of different sizes. In Akwapong the cocoa depot was big enough for holding meetings in shelter and having lunches and sharing meals. It measured about five meters by ten, and there were a few benches inside to sit on for gatherings safe from the rain and wind.

In Nkrokro the cocoa depot was much smaller and to my knowledge was not used as a space for meetings or social gatherings. In this village, there was also an active market every Thursday, the day when I timed two of my visits as well, and it provided the space for village residents to gather also for meetings – including the meetings by KKFU village society and the KKCU village loans committee. At the Area Office, the shared space could mean holding meetings that did not necessarily have a direct link with the management of Kuapa Kokoo. In particular the veranda of the Area Office building was used for informal meetings from time to time, as it had a roof over the large area of space protecting participants from sun, rain and wind. During my time at the Area Office, the veranda of the building was used as a meeting place for a Bible study group, and I heard that other informal meetings had been held there as well. It was also often used as a waiting space by village society purchasing clerks, as well as ordinary members who came to the Area Office to discuss a loan

application, or raise concerns directly with the management, rather than wait for the RDO to visit. This waiting space allowed also informal socialising to take place, and there were chairs for people waiting there.

**Figure 12: A Tro-Tro Bus in Ashanti Region of Ghana**



Source: Picture taken by Matti Kohonen, 2005.

The sustainability of the *association* in spatial assemblages was not always a given, due to transport difficulties and the costs of buying petrol or hiring a vehicle for the day. Meanwhile village societies themselves were creating new spaces through participation in Kuapa activities, training and governance structures. Messages, rumours and market prices seemed to travel quicker to Kuapa villages as a result. The spatial assemblages at Kuapa Kokoo were addressing the problems created by relative distance, lack of market access, pricing information and proximity to government services. The solutions or the *association* that Kuapa worked with was to open up some of Kuapa Kokoo's infrastructure, staff time and facilities for mixed use beyond Kuapa Kokoo's commercial purpose, but rather subscribed to Kuapa's social purpose, defined in terms of strengthening cocoa farming communities of Ghana of helping themselves in improving their livelihoods. The spatial assemblages also had other

than informational advantages to the village residents. Kuapa Koko used its company premises and physical capital of vehicles and depots to serve multiple purposes for the benefit of the members in general – thus building on the existing resources to meet otherwise costly or unmet needs of village residents.

In the case of Kuapa, the shared space of the co-operative was addressing the problems of poor access, transport and the lack of extension and outreach activities by the government in the villages. Their remoteness was reduced when the topology of spatial assemblages was modified by the Research and Development Officers, Kuapa trucks, and spatial tools such as text messaging or simply notes passed on by the ‘tro-tro’ driver, creating thus a new association. These actors were enrolled to create new spatial assemblages, which challenged the government, private and traditional hierarchies and the remoteness of the villages in this part of Ghana.

The sense of shared space arose from a sense of shared ownership of the buildings, depots, vehicles and other assets that ultimately belonged to the co-operative members themselves. A co-operative that is fully owned by its members could also share the usage of these assets among its members when their activities did not hamper the primary activities of those same resources. In this sense Kuapa was different from both the government-owned Produce Buying Company and the privately owned cocoa buying companies. I remember, for instance, members in Nkrokro village debating how they could use a Kuapa truck or lorry to bring an aluminium-roofing sheet to the village from the nearest town, rather than paying an expensive transport charge by either the seller or a private ‘tro-tro’ bus. Kuapa’s own vehicles and material resources were used to transport large items such as fertilizers, spraying materials, farm tools and small-scale machinery travelled alongside with the cocoa beans. These extensions were achieved through the use of mobile phone communication or paper notes to other Kuapa Kokoo members, and they created a further material setting for spatial assemblages.



### 6.3. Conclusion

Spaces were discussed here in terms of providing the frame in which *associations* as the second phase of translation can be constituted. Understanding space as an assemblage allows us to move away from the usual geographies of space, which concern the boundaries of spaces between public, private, communal or family spaces – and understand each space as a potentially plural assemblage. Similarly, the values that are attached to spaces are no longer simply private or public depending on the territory in question, but rather we find out that plural values co-exist in the same spatial assemblage. This opens up a discussion of a ‘public space’ from an ethnographic perspective, in terms of the actual ways in which spaces are configured by the actors themselves in the three fieldsites.

The social enterprises studied in these fieldsites were engaged in creating new spatial assemblages which facilitated the creation of new *associations*. These associations answered to the earlier problematisations, by constituting new types of spaces. Some of these spatial assemblages were more permanent, as the *public space* of Busy Internet, while others were more short-lived as for instance the meetings and events organised by Linux Accra User Group (LAUG) at the AITI training college. Not all problematisations were able to constitute new *associations*, as for instance the medical doctor’s example of a free help line was never actually constituted though it was proposed in a public event at Busy Internet. When spatial assemblages were not adapted for the needs of ordinary computer users, some of the good ideas that were expressed earlier as *problematisations* did not make their way into new *associations*.

While many modern spaces are purified from overflows such as spending time together with friends due to commercial imperatives of consumption, or not allowing purely non-commercial activities or political organisation in spaces, social enterprises were able to reconstitute spaces for themselves for both political and non-commercial purposes. The distinction of public / private was less meaningful as such a clear-cut distinction, but we need to dig deeper in looking at what types of topologies spaces provide and how they may or may not allow for the emergence of new types of associations.

## 7.0. Enrolling Credit and Monetary Assemblages

Only through the fact that the value of things has become detached from the objects and has acquired an independent existence in a specific substance it is possible for money to develop interests, movements and norms that, on occasion, act contrary to those of the symbolised objects. (Simmel 2004: 165)

In this chapter I move to discussing *enrolment* which is the third stage of translation of social values. This stage is about the implementation of the earlier *associations*, discussed in the previous chapter, by combining them with resources. Money and credit within the three fieldsites were attached to very diverse values such as improving the lives of women in cocoa growing communities, facilitating the creation of start-up ICT enterprises with a focus on social development goals, or promoting access to computing and the Internet for ordinary Ghanaians. In such a scheme, credit and money are not ‘purified’ of other social goals and social values to serve only for purposes of making profit, since social enterprises are not driven by shareholder value. These social values were a subject of heated discussions, as this then diverted the flows of money and credit into projects or individuals who were seen as more needing of financial aid, credit or support. Which *association* should gain credit and money to become more widely *enrolled* was seen as a way to use power. The most widely agreed *associations* did not always become enrolled, but rather those that best matched the criteria or conditions of credit and donor institutions.

Considering credit and money, we also bring together social and economic values, as at this stage, we study the manner in which the translation of social values requires the investment of money, acquiring of credit, expertise of professionals, voluntary time contributions of laypersons, or some immaterial resources such as intellectual property rights. All these resources normally cost money, and that money was hard to acquire in the different fieldsites. The lack of money led Kuapa Kokoo farmers to establish their own credit union, through which they effectively created their own money through loans guaranteed to each other. At Busy Internet, they sought to gain sponsorship and aid money to create an environment where credit could be acquired through a reputable business location and an attachment to a professional

environment. Finally at LAUG no money circulated within the group, but aid and voluntary contributions were exchanged informally through the mediation of other associations or organisations such as the KACE-AITI where meetings were held, and private consultancy firms that participated in events or delivered training to LAUG members, or other donors working with the sector of ICT and development.

The chapter opens up (section 7.1) with a discussion of how both credit and money can be best viewed either as monetary and credit assemblages rather than objects or commodities. Despite the modern ‘purification’ by neo-classical economists money is by no means a neutral aspect of market-based relationships, and concepts such as ‘monetary neutrality’ or ‘quantity theory of money’ do not accurately describe credit and monetary relationships. Here I find that monies and credit constitute very diverse tools and devices that perform multiple social and economic values. Next, the social values of credit and money are considered (in section 7.2) within the three fieldsites in terms of credit union rules at Kuapa Kokoo, ‘conditionalities’ of aid money at Busy Internet, and finally types of non-monetary assemblages present at the Linux Accra User Group.

## ***7.1 Credit and Money Assemblages***

To purify monies from their social values, economists have tended to purify not only the present but also the history of monetary networks. The critique of the economists’ ‘purifications’ of monies involves the view that monies constitute a ‘neutral veil’ which does not alter the functioning of the economy in any manner as pointed out by Ryan-Collins (2010) and Ingham (1999; 2004). Economists tend to derive monies from utility-maximising behaviour, and derive the origins of money from mythical origins in barter trade which over time developed into complex monetary systems. These systems still fulfil the functions that barter had in so-called ‘pre-modern’ societies (Slater and Tonkiss 2001). This transition is mostly fictional, but serves as the basis for economists’ understanding of the origins of money (Dodd 1994; 2011). Some economists do criticise this ‘neutral veil’ which is seen as being “based upon widely discredited assumptions of perfect information and competition” (Ryan-Collins 2010: 57). It is indeed puzzling that such discredited assumptions still form

the basis for economist's concepts of the economy, rather than taking a more empirical and a realist look at actual economic life.

Meanwhile, economic anthropologists have criticised the linearity of the monetary myth from barter to contemporary monies by focusing on the diversity of monetary practices (Hart 1986; Hart 2001; Gregory 1997). Credit has been discussed much less in both fields, mostly limited to both microfinance (Rahman 1999), and mutual insurance (Bähre 2007). Anthropologists of money rather look at monetary practices and how monies act as an agent of social change, and how actors can appropriate them. Parry and Bloch explain the issue of 'taming' monies in the following manner:

Not only is it entirely legitimate to conflate money with capitalist relations and market values, but to the extent to which money or the capitalist market 'ushers in a world of moral confusion' is culturally extremely variable, and depends – as our collection repeatedly shows – on the nature of the system they confront and on the mechanisms it is able to develop for 'taming' and 'domesticating' them. (Parry and Bloch 1989: 18)

For a long time, the sociological debate concerning monies was about the ways in which something external, namely money, could be contained by social forces – not that different from Polanyi's (1957) account of the 'double movement' between social and economic forces. Economic anthropology of money has developed further into looking at monies through how it affects the lives of those who use and transact monies, rather than its origins.

[T]he fascination with whether there is something 'real' backing money's value draws attention to its semiotic, but not performative or indexical, aspects. I have argued that we should focus less on what money means, and more on what it does. (Maurer 2007: 126)

The real backing behind monies, either in commodities or actual guarantees by an issuing state or government, while theoretically underpinning monies, is not often felt in the day-to-day use of monies. In the field of economic sociology, Zelizer has in particular looked at the 'social meaning' of monies, which also abstracts from the question of actual backing or origins of money – but looks at social meanings and practices in early 20<sup>th</sup>-century US households.

[R]egardless of its sources, once money had entered the household, its allocation, calculation and uses were subject to a set of domestic rules distinct from the rules of the market (Zelizer 1989: 368)

Here she raises the issue of 'earmarking', similar to the ways in which Parry and Bloch earlier talked of 'taming' monies, meaning ways in which actors themselves can order

and establish regularity around monies. Here the domestic rules were seen as a counter movement with respect to the impersonal market, and as monies entered the household its rules also governed the circulation. For Zelizer, the allocation of money thus depends on the rules governing the institution or sphere where transactions take place. Zelizer also discussed some instances where the special rules of allocation in the household economies apply in social enterprise type forms of market-based exchange in 19<sup>th</sup> century USA.

When poor families could afford it, they often set money aside to fraternal organizations or other mutual-aid-societies, or, in the case of immigrants, earmarked certain monies to be sent to their families abroad. (Zelizer 1997: 171)

Such mutual aid societies and fraternities show similarities to the forms of microcredit that are today studied in many developing countries. For Zelizer they are exceptions where social values are present in market transactions, similar to that of the household dynamics.

Dodd (1994), summarising debates between economic anthropology and sociology, considers that monies are in fact best understood as *monetary networks*, which include a diversity of actors and institutions beyond the simple monetary device. These dynamics in turn start to articulate a more realist concept of what monies are. This shift changes the dynamics of looking at the use of money, turning to both institutions and kinship networks that define monies in a broader sense than just the household sphere. He proposes five abstract properties of money which are summed up here (Dodd 1994: xxiv-xxv):

- 1) a standardised accounting system, into which each monetary form within a network is divisible;
- 2) information from which expectations regarding the stability of money over time can be derived;
- 3) information regarding its spatial characteristics;
- 4) legalistic information, concerning the status of contractual relationships, which are fleeting and conclusive;
- 5) presupposed knowledge of the behaviour and expectations of others, vital in generating trust in money's abstract properties.

For Dodd, monies exist as networks of their users and trust between the persons who use it, and are not limited to the narrowly defined devices that are often associated with them. Money thus can also be considered a monetary assemblage – to continue with the same terminology as in previous chapters, while credit can be understood as a credit assemblage. Dodd argues that one of the key sociological notions concerning money is trust. Money achieves its position through relational valuing for what can be done with money, rather than what it is as an object.

[T]rust in money is an essential property of monetary networks, and is dependent on the substantive relationship between money and the social, political and cultural conditions in which it's transacted. In the abstract form assumed by its expressions in money, trust is an important feature of the restructuring of spatial and temporal principles of organization closely bound up with the phenomenon of globalization. (Dodd 1994: 136)

What constitutes the necessary element of trust in monetary networks is here seen as a subject of sociological inquiry<sup>20</sup>. The trust is a cultural notion, which is vested in monetary networks and has a way of reproducing them. “This fiduciary dimension is vital to the reproduction of monetary networks, to their continuity over time“ (Dodd 1994: 136). The fiduciary function leads to a consideration of a wider sense of value, identity and norms to which money is attached, which makes it possible to be used in every day exchange. Similarly, creditworthiness is a character of credit assemblages. It means that the credit institutions trust that borrowed money will be paid back, and that obligation (such as agreed usage) will also be fulfilled in return.

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<sup>20</sup> As Ingham (2004) also notes in reference to Wray (1998) that colonial rulers went much beyond creating trust in money to make their monies legal tenders in the colonies as “flogging, imprisonment and branding with red-hot coins were the penalties for not paying taxes in the money issued and accepted by the state.” The relevance of this is evident in coercive states, while even in Ghana at times of military rule market traders and street hawkers were told to either pay up or be pursued in the main Makola Market of Accra, led by the efforts of the Accra Metropolitan Authority to curb informal street vending. Many stalls after the clamp-down had a sign “to be removed by AMA” to denote the tax man’s painted signature to avoid trading in it. Repression thus seems to be as common an impetus to use money as is trust, since paying taxes in money also had an effect in increasing demand for money-based trading and wage labour.

Credit assemblages have received much less attention within economic sociology or anthropology<sup>21</sup> with the notable exception of microfinance (Karim 2001; Dichter and Harper 2007) and financial mutual societies (Bähre 2007). More has been discussed of the linkages between money and credit, as Ingham (1999) has argued that credit relationship has historically underpinned the development of capitalism, and such development is not necessarily a linear issue. Dodd (2011) refutes Ingham's point, considering that money is a form of 'socialised debt', a claim upon society that has changed over time especially during the recent expansion of financial market instruments. The view of money as debt also relates to credit, while Aglietta and Orlean (1992) see the genesis of money as at times violent enforcement of debt relationships, which relates money to state's monopoly on violence. Meanwhile, Hart (2007) criticises any simplifications of money as debt, and calls for a more personal relationship between citizens and institutions that create both money and credit.

Banking has received surprisingly little attention from those who advocate alternative or complementary currencies. Historically, active movements have called for people's control of banking systems as early as mid-19<sup>th</sup> century (North 2007: 50).

To change this unjust system, [Proudhon] argued for credit- and money-issuing power to be in the hands of the "labouring classes." [...] To facilitate this, a Bank of the People, composed of artisans, would issue democratically regulated credit on the principle of reciprocity or mutualism to meet social need, without speculation or interest (which Proudhon called usury).

Proudhon, a leading figure in the French anarchist movement, did briefly establish the Bank of the People in 1848, only to be thrown in jail the subsequent year as the dictatorial Bonaparte's regime came back in power. A more successful beginning for democratic forms of banking was the diverse co-operative and mutualist movements in Europe, for example the Reiffeisen movement in Germany, which established the first credit unions in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century as a response to poverty in the German countryside. The difference was that the objective was no longer to capture the central bank, but rather to establish democratic credit institutions using the national currency issued by the central bank. An interesting parallel history would be to study

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<sup>21</sup> The recent financial crisis is, however, changing this as anthropologists are turning towards understanding banking institutions in contemporary societies (Ho 2011; Tett 2009; Ouroussoff 2011). One telling aspect is that Tett, for instance, is a full-time journalist at the *Financial Times*.

further the spread of traditional rotating forms of credit, known as Susu in Ghana, as it also seems to have emerged with the increasing monetisation of the economy in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in West Africa (Aryeetey and Gockel 1991). Some forms of Susu were democratic, based on shared responsibility and obligation, while others were centred around strong persons, so-called Susu-men.

In the case of LAUG, members were able to participate in money and credit flows as beneficiaries or partners of aid-funded activities, in the delivering of a sponsored seminar or event. These were extensions of money or credit assemblages, rather than examples of purely voluntary work (though it was often discussed in such terms). The use of facilities and Internet connections by LAUG members at AITI all depended on the trust of the members that they would be used for promoting FOSS applications, just like in the case of credit and monetary assemblages. Additionally they relied on other resources such as voluntary labour, sponsorship and freebies, which the group itself mobilised within its membership, as well as some companies who sold FOSS applications and services. Some of these freebies had money-like qualities, such as t-shirts and other clothing apparel, which would have a market-based value as well.

## **7.2. Enrolling Credit and Money**

While the lack of money or credit at a reasonable cost was itself a problem in economic terms, the social value of money is analysed here as part of a longer chain of events. The presence or absence of money would not be the most pressing concern as Kuapa Kokoo farmers, Busy entrepreneurs and LAUG members were able to meet their basic necessities of livelihoods. Rather, the issues around credit were central in the different fieldsites. Some development experts consider that credit assemblages in the form of microcredit are the first and foremost intervention to alleviate poverty (Yunus 2007). This point is crucial, as many advocates of new forms of money and credit in developing countries argue that the problem is a quantitative issue related to expenditures or availability of credit. Instead, here I consider that money and credit are best seen as *enrolments*, which need to have prior *associations* already worked out, for money and credit to function to the benefit of the



persons who receive aid or take out loans, and money and credit can enhance and strengthen such processes. Taking an ethnographic approach allows us to analyse in more detail how money enhances certain *associations*, and how others are ignored or brushed aside as being not trustworthy of aid or creditworthy of loans.

Substantive studies of such alternative relationships between people and credit are still to come up, and are mostly linked to microcredit, which in most forms is far from being democratic or participatory. A useful distinction between different forms of microfinance within West African is provided by Djefal (2007: 12-13):

- 1) those that were based on co-operative or mutual-ownership principles;
- 2) village banks that are rotating credit associations;
- 3) direct credit.

Following this typology, much of the microfinance literature actually addresses only the opportunities and concerns with the third type of microfinance, often associated with the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh (Yunus 2007; Karim 2001), while ignoring a much older movement of rotating credit associations (Geertz 1973) and other traditional forms of credit, as well as democratic forms of credit based on co-operatives and credit unions. Microfinance as a term just signifies small loans, but takes no position to the institutions that provide them and how they are organised. This distinction, closely following that made by Djefal (2007), shows how West Africa is quite different from South Asia where direct microcredit has received far more attention – and especially the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh (Yunus 2007).

Credit practices in Ghana at the time of this study could be divided into five main groups: informal money lending, co-operative credit unions, traditional Susu-type rotating credit associations, direct microcredit, and formal rural or commercial banking. All of these innovations responded to an existing demand for credit, which in the absence of formal, co-operative or traditional forms of credit would be fulfilled by often exploitative informal money lenders who could charge interest rates as high as 50–100 per cent annually. Money-lenders were not anonymous to the village; it could be the chief in the Akwapong, or a local wealthy merchant in the Nkrokro, who would propose such loans when a need arises. In Ghana the co-operative and traditional types are much more common (Aryeetey and Gockel 1991) than direct micro-credit. The Grameen Bank model does not involve members running the

scheme themselves, and has faced criticism on many issues including instrumentalising women in repaying loans (Rahman 1999). In Ghanaian society, such an authoritarian type of credit would not work easily on the village level. As we see, the history of community development (CD) emphasises collective decision-making processes, rather than hierarchical forms of credit.

Next we will revisit the three fieldsites as in previous chapters, continuing the narrative of social value creation towards the resources that actors had at their disposal (monetary, credit, non-monetary resources such as voluntary labour) in order to *enrol* resources with the earlier *associations*. By assembling monies and credit relationships, we find out how they are both created through the process of assemblage rather than being unproblematic objects with a fixed value. The monetary and credit assemblages are traced here from the fieldsites onwards and include many of the relevant actors already encountered along the way. Of course not all actors were visible, for instance the relationships to central banking and international currency markets was not visible in the course of this fieldwork.

### **7.2.1. Creating Credit Assemblages at Kuapa Kokoo**

Kuapa Kokoo made use of both money and credit assemblages to achieve its goals of building better and stronger farming communities. The main form of income for farmers in the village societies was their revenue from cocoa sales to Kuapa Kokoo. This varied substantially from one farmer to another, depending on their farm productivity and whether they rented or owned the farm. As Kuapa Kokoo was a fairtrade producer, the Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Trust (KKFT) received fairtrade premiums from all cocoa sold as fairtrade. The distribution of fairtrade premiums was decided on the basis of a system of village society applications to the KKFT for village improvement projects. Most of these improvement projects involved water pumps and sanitation facilities (Berlan 2008). The amount of fairtrade premiums depended on the proportion of fairtrade sales as a percentage of overall sales. In 2005 this share was at approximately 2 per cent at the time, meaning that it was not a substantial additional source of funding for village projects at the time. In Akwapong there was a hand operated water pump built with the fairtrade premiums, while in

Nkrokro no projects had yet been created with the fairtrade premiums, and the village already had a well built by the district council. At the head office level, when I asked of the distribution of social development projects, I was told that much of the funds were used to bring all villages to an equal level of development. At the time, it meant investing more in villages located in the Western Region, which was a more recent cocoa growing area with less social infrastructure built in the villages.

I was struck by the diversity of credit and lending practices that existed at the village level, and in the regional city where the Area Office was located. There were the traditional commercial and rural banks, but the majority of those who had a bank account at the time were using diverse forms of co-operative credit – either Susu-style rotating credit associations or credit unions. The most traditional form of Susu was the thirty-day rotating credit, where the member of the Susu-group would make daily savings to a Susu-collector (known as the Susu-man – as this often was a male profession), and the entire sum would be given to one member at a time, rather than being deposited in a bank.

A Susu-club would ideally have 30 members, or some members might make double or triple savings and thus having a greater share of stakes in the club. The Susu-collector would keep one day of the savings as an administration fee, giving the saver back worth 29 days of savings. The person receiving the entire pot would time larger investments on this given day, or alternatively accrue temporary debt and pay off debts on that day. An alternative of this type of a club was the seven-day Susu-club. This type of credit was adapted to market stall operators, and others who had a steady cash-flow on a daily basis. As farmers' incomes were highly seasonal it was not easy for them to make daily savings, and Susu-collectors often did not venture much outside the market towns in any case. A variation of this type of credit was a Susu-bank, where instead of giving the entire sum back to the person, he or she could save it on a bank account. Barclays Bank and a rural bank that I visited in the city of the Area Office were practicing this scheme.

Kuapa Kokoo had for a longer time been interested in providing credit facilities for its members, and the first opportunity came when they were contacted by a representative of a US-based NGO called Women Vision International (WVI). This

led to the creation of the Kuapa Kokoo Women's Revolving Scheme. Initially the model of the revolving scheme was similar to that of the Grameen Bank, as women collectively took out a loan, and were responsible for it as a group. The objectives of the scheme were to encourage income-earning activities among the women, and to increase women's participation and representation within the economic activities of the co-operative.

WVI had learned about Kuapa as a result of their fairtrade status, via visiting their website, and had also found out that Kuapa had a special focus on improving the representation and economic position of women. As WVI was focused on improving the livelihoods of women in developing countries through loans schemes, they proposed to Kuapa Kokoo a joint venture. The scheme had previously had other sources of funding besides WVI, but I was told that at the time of research the WVI funding was the major source. Consequently, the danger of losing WVI funding might place the scheme in jeopardy.

The scheme was started in 1998, and it had by the time of the research been extended to 32 women's groups. The principal part of the loan was granted by WVI, and would be paid back at a preferential interest rate. Part of the interest payments would be paid to a so-called compulsory savings fund on top of their interest rate payments to service the loan. WVI also paid the salaries of two staff members who managed the evaluations of credit worthiness, were mentors to the women's groups on their decisions, and would collect payments on the loans back to the fund. The Women's Revolving Scheme loans were to be used for a period of one to three years to develop income-generating activities such as making baskets and pressing palm oil from palm nuts, dying cloth, and making other products that could be produced and sold locally.

The loans in this scheme were a specific type of *enrolment*, which addressed the needs of the previous *associations* that had constituted themselves as women's groups. This credit assemblage therefore responded to a specific type of a social form, without looking at the content of the interaction in question. The assumption was that the assemblage of a women's group was a significant *association* in itself, as women were less economically active within the co-operative, and had lower revenues as a result. While these women's groups had distinct interests beyond their

economic functions, these were not as much of interest of for the persons conducting credit worthiness assessments among women's groups. As a type of microfinance, it subscribed to what Djefal (2007) called direct microfinance, due to it involving fewer intermediaries or less local decision-making in the communities where loans were granted. Early on in the WVI programme, the debt was taken out in the name of the entire group and they shared a collective responsibility for default. Later, I was told, the programme had already moved towards individual group member responsibility as this was considered a better way to organise the loan process.

The loans approval process involved an application by the village society president directly to the head office department responsible for these loans. The application mostly bypassed the area office, as the revenues to pay back the loans were to be sourced from other than cocoa sales. The sums involved in the Women's Revolving Scheme were between 1 million cedis (USD 100) and about 60 million cedis<sup>22</sup> (USD 6000) per group per year, where groups would start with small sums and gradually build the capacity and confidence to take on bigger loans and make more income out of the larger-scale projects. The two officers in this case would assess the viability of the group and keep in constant contact with the groups to ensure that they were not falling behind in production, and help them with selling their produce once they were ready to market it. One of them commented on the scheme: "They use it for raw materials, they buy cassava, you don't normally encourage [loans for long-term projects]." (Person Z) After being asked about it, she did concede that for some activities like growing plantain the loan would be paid back in two years as it takes 18 months for a plantain seedling to develop a crop. The Women's Revolving Scheme, at the time of research was considered to possibly end in a year's or two years' time, and the future of the continuity of the lending was uncertain as the scheme was not deemed to be self-financing to cover the cost of overheads – such as two staff members, and their travel to villages. Also the loan pool would be shifted to another country in case of WVI pulling out of Ghana.

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<sup>22</sup> All currencies are in the 2005 cedi rate before the redenomination in 2007 when four zeros were cut off the cedi, making 10,000 "old" cedis into 1 Ghana cedi, divisible into 100 pesewas, bringing the new Ghana Cedi roughly in parity with the US dollar, at a time when its rate of inflation had reached a round figure with the US dollar.

The bigger credit scheme that operated in Kuapa Kokoo was the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU). It grew somewhat later in 2001, out of a decision taken in 2000 by the Annual General Assembly of the KKFT co-operative. At the time of its founding in 2002 KKCU had gained direct material and technical support from Twin Trading Ltd (a fairtrade import company in London). The need for a credit union was identified by an earlier social audit conducted in 2000 (Ronchi 2002), where the challenges linked to credit practices were more clearly identified at the different levels of the co-operative. On the village level, the key concern was the problem of high interest rates charged by money-lenders, which led to land repossessions as collateral for the debt. Since the more general objective of Kuapa is to protect the rights of the cocoa farming communities, repossessing land is clearly against the welfare of the farmers. One RDO commented on the issue:

Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union can help you redeem your farm – give them loan; so people need to be interested to come forwards; so god help[s] them who help themselves. (Person AA).

The idea of self-help is at the centre of credit union activity, and one has to follow the rules laid out by the credit union, such as selling produce to Kuapa and undertaking to save regularly, in order to qualify for loan facilities. At the time of fieldwork, members at Akwapong were attempting to mobilise a loan so that a farmer who had lost his land could repurchase it. Gaining one's farm back was presented as a major achievement, as being a caretaker farmer meant a lower status than owning one's farm. This type of restoration of dignity and justice was at the heart of the creation of the KKCU, and one of the key social values on which the credit union was built. At the time of research (in 2005) nearly half of Kuapa Kokoo Farmers' Union (KKFU) members (20,000 out of 45,000) were also members of the KKCU. It was the largest single credit union in Ghana. On the village level, the management of the KKCU was separate from the management of the village society, since not all village society members were members of the KKCU.

The credit assemblages in the two villages were quite different, as they were in different stages of institutionalisation. In Akwapong they included: the active participation of the village purchasing clerk who handled cocoa sales in the village for Kuapa Kokoo; the village loans committee which had its own governance structure of a treasurer, president and a secretary; the RDO who kept the communications links

alive between the village societies and the Area Office; and the means of transport and communication by tro-tro buses, motorcycles and shared taxis between the village and the Area Office. At the area office the Area Manager was head both of the KKFU and the KKCUC, and he explained that it worked well as loans were most in demand during the low season when very little cocoa was produced, while during the two cocoa growing seasons farmers were paying back their loans and this required much less paperwork. In the area office that I studied, there were about fifty active village societies, out of which most had active KKCUC branches as well. At the head office, there was a KKCUC president and a treasurer, who kept the finances of the credit union in order and invested the savings that had been accumulated in Ghana government bonds, which had a fixed interest rate to protect against inflation eating the funds of the credit union. They also saw to it that there were sufficient funds at all times, and would stop lending activities if a minimum threshold would be reached.

KKCUC also interacted with the national apex organisation for credit unions in Ghana, namely the Ghana Credit Union Association (CUA). Through this interaction KKCUC received technical support in the form of specially tailored software applications that allowed checks on farmer balances and assessing of risk from their reported cocoa sales. CUA also had a security fund in case of the risk of systemic default of a single member credit union. All credit unions paid membership fees to CUA based on the number of individual members in each credit union, and they also paid partly for CUA's overhead costs such as salaries, office facilities, and equipment.

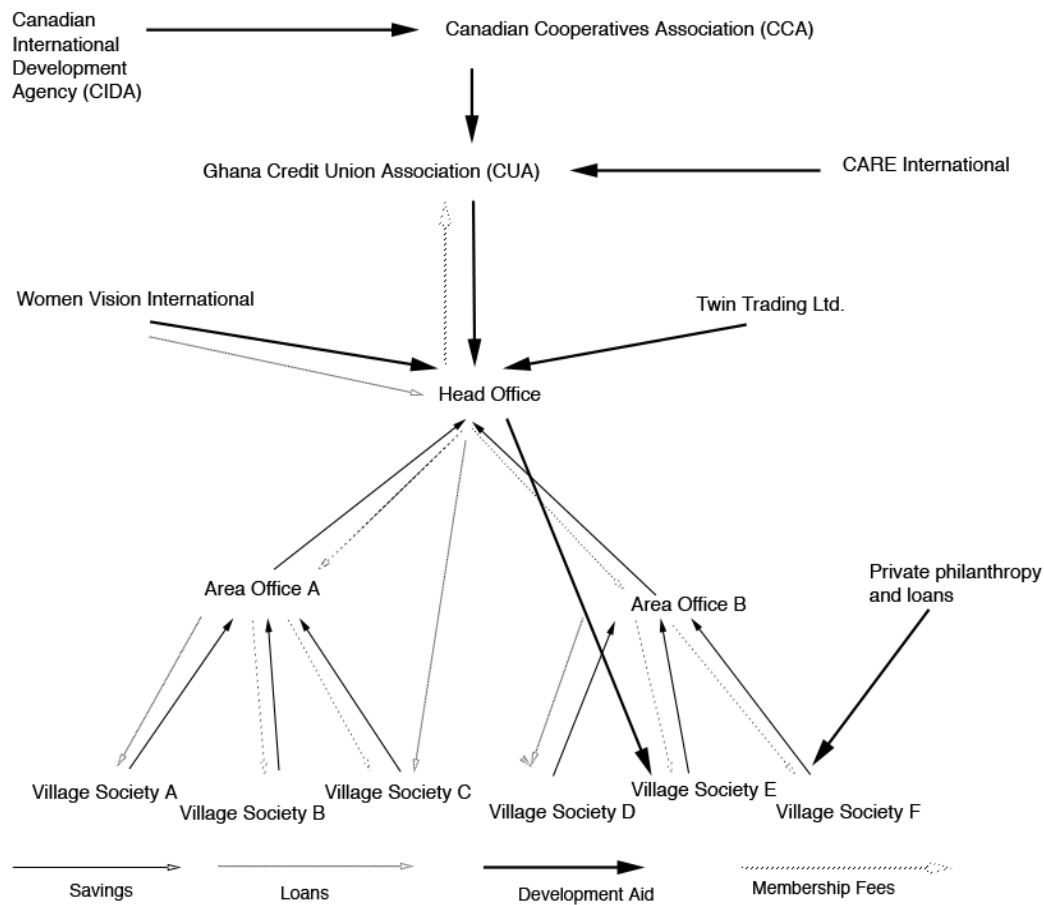
CUA also received international assistance in particular from the Canadian Cooperatives Association (CCA), which had funding from the Canadian international development funding. I was able to meet with the CCA in Ottawa on a conference trip to Canada that took place during the fieldwork period. The discussion gave me a much broader perspective on the development of the Credit Unions in Ghana. They had formed this partnership back in 1986, when CUA was in severe financial trouble due to the economic crisis of the early 1980s, and a crop failure due to drought at the same time. Not only did CCA help to bail CUA out, but it also organised a long-term "Risk Protection Programme", which helped to stabilise both the Loan Protection Insurance (LPI) funds and the Life Insurance Protection (LIP). The former fund was security against the default of any single credit union, while the latter provided the

family of a deceased credit union member with his savings plus a bonus, amounting to a minimal life insurance policy. The reason behind such a long partnership with CCA was that the development efforts in Ghana actually reinforced staff commitment to the credit unions in Canada. This was because they carried out three-month staff exchange programmes with local Canadian credit unions, which would then form the basis for a long-term mentoring relationship with a local credit union branch in Ghana. No such staff exchange was mentioned to have taken place at KKCUC, as according to CCA these exchanges focused on smaller credit unions with less capacity.

KKCUC followed the founding ethos of all credit unions across the world, in that loans should be used for “productive and provident” (Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union 2002) purposes. This clause was stipulated in the KKCUC rules, and it was a requirement to be part of CUA as it significantly reduced the risks associated with loans when consumption or festive loans were not granted. There were no strict guidelines as to what were excluded as non-productive reasons, as these decisions largely depended on local norms and customs, but I was told that a car loan, for example, would not be endorsed, as it was not related to the core activities of Kuapa Kokoo. There were borderline cases, such as whether KKCUC loans could be accessed to pay for funerals that can entail major expenses in Ghana, due to the elaborate funeral processions. The KKCUC, therefore, was in effect a part of a wider assemblage which spanned from the villages via the different Kuapa structures, to international donors and foreign credit union movements that supported Ghanaian efforts as part of a global process of increasing access to credit. Some of these actors are described below in Figure 13.



**Figure 13: Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union Money and Credit Flows**



Sources: Canadian Cooperative Association (2008); Ronchi (2002); author's fieldnotes.

The way KKCUCU built its own fiduciary dimension of trust (Dodd 1994) within the credit assemblage was by relying on a mix of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation of the individual lender. Next we will trace the pathways of a loan form as it travels through the different parts of the system, and elucidate how the credit assemblage includes diverse considerations of social values. These loan forms can be seen as *artefacts* (Latour 1991), which reveal the ways in which the assemblage functions, and the movements of the forms can be seen as signals of the ways in which social and material relations work. The loan form materialised trust and creditworthiness as an artefact where signatures, explanations and descriptions of the purpose of the loan were written.

The first part of the loan form was filled out in the village. The farmer filled in a box where he stated the purpose of the loan, after which he signed a guarantee statement

that he or she will sell his or her produce to Kuapa. In filling this out the farmer knew he was not addressing an anonymous bank employee, but rather it would be scrutinised by the village loans committee who would know if the reason for taking out the loan was genuine. Much of the trust in the credit union lies precisely in the local knowledge of the villagers themselves. “We know their strengths” (Person AB) was a saying I was told when I asked how they know who would be able to pay back their loans. Such local knowledge is evident in the explanation by a loan committee treasurer at Akwapong:

[T]hey are all living in here, if you need money to pay for their school fees, they will know that a child will have completed school, they will know it. If somebody is sick, they will definitely know, because they are all living in here (Person AB)

In the process of acquiring a loan, the requirements were quite straightforward. For the ordinary farmer and a member of the KKCUC there were three steps in order to qualify for a loan. First, they had to save at the KKCUC for a period of at least six months. Second, they were expected to sell their produce regularly to Kuapa, preferably during the previous three years. Finally, the amount they could ask for was only up to twice the current amount of savings that they had in the credit union, unless they had guarantors, who could then raise it to triple that amount or more. That guarantor was barred from accessing a loan until it was paid back. Furthermore, on the village level, two signatures of the loans committee were required for approving the loan locally, and the signature of the KKCUC president gave the authority of the whole Kuapa village society loans committee.<sup>23</sup> Finally, there had to be two witnesses, required for any legal document in Ghana.

As an *enrolment* this second type of a credit assemblage focused uniquely on the content of the loan and its purpose, which was based on the previous *association* of co-operation and shared space within the village society. The internationally

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<sup>23</sup> Tracing the loan form was a considerable task in itself, requiring a series of interviews with the villagers and all the way up to Kuapa’s head office, and asking everyone involved in the loan process to describe their roles, and the possible situations that arise when dealing with the loan form. Despite this description, during the four weeks that I was doing the village interviews, on and off, I was unable to witness the full trajectory of a loan form, so the description given here is put together from pieces such as piles of loan forms at the head office, seeing loan forms at the Area Office, and talking about the process mostly with the RDO, and also the purchasing clerks.

recognised standard of “productive and provident purposes” was adapted to local needs, and lines of demarcation were drawn through practices, to make sure what could be included and what was to be excluded from this definition. The creditworthiness was established in a very different way, by knowing the person’s character and the justification of the intended purpose of the loan that was applied on the loan form. This type of a check of creditworthiness was much more personal, as some purposes would relate to medical expenses or school fees. The village society administrators in this case, along with the guarantors would have the knowledge of these personal conditions as a basis for giving out the loan. The loans process relied thus on interpersonal trust, and knowledge of each other’s well-being and welfare in the village society.

In the year prior to fieldwork six loans were given out in Akwapong. The sums were between 200,000 and 4 million cedis (between USD 20 and USD 400), used for medical bills, school fees and farm improvements (roofing in one case). In Nkrokro there had not been any loans by the time of this research, as the society was only established in 2002 and they had had problems in getting it running. Only five members of this village had started saving with the credit union, hoping that they could soon get access to loans. The interest rate was 30 per cent payable annually, and the loan period was up to a year (with an emergency loan, this period was sometimes variable, based on the next growing season when loans could be paid back directly from the sale of cocoa produce). Commercial banks charged a rate of 24 per cent, but if you add their minimum deposit requirements, costs associated with formal banking such as having a postal box in the nearby city, and time to travel to the nearest branch, the KKFU interest rate was competitive. This rate was seen as being high, but then again, it was relative to the potential gains, for instance from spraying one’s crop against the black pod disease, or the increased yields from using fertiliser. Also as inflation was around 15 per cent annually, real interest rate to the farmers of course depended on the goods they were accessing with the money they earned from cocoa sales.

At the KKFU area office level, there was an area committee all members of which have to sign the loan form. Their concerns included the welfare of the members in the entire region, improving productivity and promoting female members within the

membership. The committee had five members: the purchasing clerks' representative, the area women's representative, the local KKFU representative, Area Manager and RDO. Both the women's and the union representatives were chosen from existing village society board members. All these had to sign the form before it passes to the next level, so loans forms are normally dealt with at the meetings of the KKFU area representatives. The form was taken to the area office either by the purchasing clerk from the village, or by the farmer. In the former case this gave a chance for the applicant to challenge or supplement any of the statements made in the loan form, and to be noted down by an officer at the area office.

Finally, the credit union had three officers at its head office, where either the KKCU accountant or the KKCU president had to make a decision on the loan. When I talked to the Head Office about the loans, their considerations were mostly technical. Apart from the member's cocoa sales and whether the person was already guaranteeing loans beyond his or her means, the main issue raised at the head office level was the overall stability of the credit union. The signatures must have been required not only for reasons of trust (e.g. not giving loans to close kin on false premises), but also to construct strong information. Had anybody tried to apply a loan for something else than the intended purpose mentioned in the loan form (e.g. that it was not to be used for a wedding or funeral) then the chances were that one of the 12-13 signatories would know about it.

It was these signatures that created a liability on the balance sheet of the KKCU and a simultaneous credit in the loan book of the farmer, which then materialised either in the form of cash or cancelling a previous loan. Money was not needed for paying back the loan, for instance, if it was paid directly from cocoa sales. As KKCU was able to create twice the amount of money that what its members had in saving, it had a very prudential minimum deposit requirement. Repayment did not reduce the amount of money, as it still remained in circulation afterwards. Which loans were put forwards reflected the social values of the KKCU, as there was a preference for loans that worked towards farm improvement, or acute health needs, while loans for paying costly funerals or buying consumption items such as motorcycles or cars were not supported. The kind of support that KKCU gave to its lenders also reflected the wider values of increasing cocoa production within the region, and being able to

redistribute money in the form of credit guarantees towards those who were at that time making less income from cocoa sales. The guarantee system in Akwapong in particular seemed to promote equity between farmers, who were willing to help the plight of somebody who had lost his land. Mutual guarantees in particular helped farmers who might not have had access to loans due to low numbers of cocoa sales, but could access through a more informal type of creditworthiness based on trust among neighbours.

The creation of new money circulating in the villages was consequently a result of *enrolment* that responded to the earlier *association* which was agreed to form a basis for further engagement. Due to the restrictions in creating new credits, assemblages were closely connected with the person and his or her character, and these personified the loans process further. The loan application process required revealing much more information than was the case in more impersonal loan applications in rural or commercial banks. Also the traditional Susu-collectors did not ask about the purpose of the persons saving in the scheme, as long as they kept up with their daily or weekly payments. Kuapa Kokoo's personalisation of credit meant that members were able to reverse a trend of 'purified' forms of credit, which in any case was not available to them via the rural or commercial banks. The institutionalisation of these rules in credit unions allowed gaining further resources from overseas development aid, to support credit unions in Ghana. Credit among KKCUs was not something impersonal or 'purified'; it was quite a plural process that was entangled with both local knowledge and wider social values.

### **7.2.2. Aid Money at the Busy Incubator**

At Busy Internet, I observed how monetary assemblages were *enrolled* among the participants at the Internet café and especially within the Busy Incubator programme. Gaining monetary and other resources in Accra was fully dependent on trust as most loans were informal rather than being mediated by formal banking institutions. Even banking institutions required personal recommendations, as in the case of Barclays Bank branch in the central district of Osu, where a letter of recommendation was required from an existing customer in the bank to open an account. Similarly at Busy

Internet, they were keen to introduce the participants of the Busy Incubator programme to banking and financial institutions, including the World Bank. It was here that Busy Internet's efforts were important for the Busy Incubator programme. The programme according to Busy staff was a logical continuation of the informal mentoring and networking that was already taking place at Busy Family, as discussed earlier (section 6.1) concerning the network of professionals who spent time and created projects around Busy Internet. This link to the earlier *association* of a professional space was considered as being the foundation of Busy Incubator's purpose.

The plans for incubation and social development were considered from the outset, but the incubation aspect proved much harder to establish, as it required a concentrated and full-time effort towards new start-up companies. Busy could not provide such an amount of funds from its own operations, and thus it had sought for international aid. As one founding member of Busy Internet mentions on a promotional video, incubation had taken place prior to the programme at Busy:

We really have developed two forms of incubation – broad, shallow incubation the social environment, the hardware and facilities that we provide. But we have also been curious to explore a more traditional form of incubation which I call narrow and deep. (InfoDev 2010)

Here we have a distinction between what goes on in the public space and public lectures that are organised at Busy (the broad and shallow incubation) and how this is contrasted with the face-to-face incubation, the kind of support taking place upstairs at Busy, involving the narrow and deep incubation with the companies that rent offices at Busy, and a constant interaction with the wider Busy Family. The continuity from the *association* of public space was to *enrol* informal connections and voluntary mentoring from the Busy Family and other networks or NGOs such as GINKS. In the case of the professional space, they considered that a formal programme required a different kind of an *enrolment*, namely that of the Busy Incubator. A total of 25 companies had rented offices by 2005 for different periods of time, including the four incubatees at that time. While these practices were developed between 2001 and 2005, a new stage was beginning with the Busy Incubator programme, through experimenting with the narrow type of incubation.

Busy Incubator already had its own culture of incubation pre-established before applying to be part of the InfoDev programme that created the Busy Incubator. The types of resources that were enrolled in both shallow versus deep incubation were distinctively different – as in the shallow version it was voluntary guidance and mentoring, or organising events with a voluntary ethos – while in the deeper incubation it involved paying consultants, teachers, employing staff and engaging in longer-term relationships with the different constituencies. As incubation moved to this more formal level, it also tended to exclude some of the earlier forms such as allowing anybody to participate who could give some time. These two types of incubation did live side-by-side, as demonstrated by the continuation of the informal mentoring by the Busy Family even after the Busy Incubator was already created.

However, there was a contradiction in how the Busy Incubator programme was created and how it *enrolled* funding. The creation of the Busy Incubator depended on enrolling external resources from the World Bank InfoDev programme, which gave a definite and generic frame for the use of these funds. Busy Internet had to adapt the ‘intersement’ designed by experts at the InfoDev programme, but it was not exactly the kind of solution that the incubatees had expected. InfoDev provided the funds for the Busy Incubator, and it had a fairly strict set of guidelines on how the grant of USD 300,000 was to be used to fund the offices, PCs, learning materials, pay the consultants and hire extra staff to mentor the incubatees, as the four resident companies at the Incubator were known. The period of study, from January to August 2005 coincided with the very beginning of the programme, and thus the difficulties discussed here may have been more pronounced. Busy Incubator was the only ICT incubator in West Africa taking part in the InfoDev programme, and the only project within a private enterprise (all the others were at government institutes or universities).

The economic conditions at Busy Incubator very different from other such incubator programmes in other countries, and thus the aid conditions may not have been suitable for Busy. For each sub-section of the incubation services there was a sum of money to be spent. If money was not spent, it was to be returned to the donor, not spent on anything else. This was ensured with a separate accounting procedure for the aid project, as mixing business and aid money was not allowed. These devices that

separated aid money from business income could be called ‘earmarks’ (Zelizer 1997), as they involved different accounting procedures, and also *evaluation* along separate lines, as we will discuss in the next chapter (section 8.2). Aid money and business money at Busy thus circulated in different channels, and on separate balance sheets. This started to create some problems within Busy, as previously the social development projects were funded from the general basket or paid in kind by way of giving out a conference room free of charge for an association or other non-commercial purpose. Now Busy had to start making clearer distinctions between what exactly were Busy Incubator costs, and what constituted daily business costs.

The aid project paid one full-time worker, the Incubator Manager, who did not participate in other aspects of the work of Busy Internet in any manner – though in many ways she could have also participated in organising a much wider social development programme at Busy including lectures, meet-ups, and professional development events to be sold for a small fee – but aid money had to be used only for the designated purpose and services had to be free of charge as designated in the terms of reference. In the case of many consultants, what had previously taken place in an informal and purely voluntary space was now becoming a paid consultancy contract. For some, this was degrading the original ethos of the mentor-student relationship, for others the professionalisation was welcomed as part of the development of the ICT sector as a whole. Some incubatees raised concerns over the way in which consultancy contracts were handed out, as the money paid to consultants could have been more effectively used to directly fund their business directly rather than participate in weekly business counselling sessions when what one needed was a simple software or some piracy-protected CD-ROMs. The discrepancy was felt as well-paid consultants were hired to mentor start-up entrepreneurs who had little or no resources.

The incubatees thought that start-up money would be available to the winning candidates. “[M]ost of us thought that it was going to be something, like, they are going to give us money to start up our business” (Person AC). He considered that free pilots and trial runs of accounting packages that would otherwise cost around 1000 USD should be provided for the incubatees.



[W]hile we are learning, the incubator programme should fund the skeleton [accounting] package that allows us to experiment. But therefore it should also be something that serves the needs, maybe something like one licence which allows multiple users. Something like that, because the four companies have completely different needs. (Person AD)

The lack of suitable accounting software and therefore the poor development of business accounting practices were commonly recognised problems. As a consequence there was difficulty in documenting the companies' sales, incomes and profits for potential investors, as business accounts, especially those of small-scale entrepreneurs, were often fused with personal accounts. This issue was covered in the training sessions that the incubatees attended as part of an educational programme, but as material costs were not covered, some wondered how this training could be applied. The only direct monetary benefit was that the incubatees' office rents were heavily subsidised by the programme. However, in the absence of a cash flow, subsidised rents did not help much, as for most of the companies there was nothing going out nor was there much coming in beyond their previous lines of business that had been started earlier in other (and much less prestigious) premises. The irony of the Busy Incubator was that while a lot of consultants were paid to assist, train and mentor – little money or material resources were made available for the incubatees themselves.

In many cases the monetary assemblage of aid money was felt to be insufficient towards achieving the very goals that it was supposed to fulfil, as aid was not enough nor was it well targeted for the purposes of developing these young entrepreneurs. This disappointment did not mean that the incubatees would stop trying to gain start-up money from the project in other ways – in terms of sponsorship, free materials for their business, or in the form of cheap loans for necessary inputs. Financing came from family and friends, and through hard work in building a business gradually through small margins. None of the incubatees received bank or venture capital financing in the first nine months of the Busy Incubator programme – the period during which I was able to observe the project.

One avenue was a World Bank organised contest called Development Marketplace, which was supported by many of the donor agencies and businesses as sponsors for the prize awarded to an exemplary business start-up. The contest was organised

precisely to fill the gap between a small enterprise credit, which was more than microcredit, but below the amount that venture capital firms would expect to fund. Prizes ranged from 100 to 200 million cedis (USD 10,000 to USD 20,000) enough to buy hardware equipment for product design and launch purposes. One of the incubatees won a business-plan competition at the Ghana Development Marketplace in mid-2005. Aid money in these schemes went towards some of the uses that the incubatees had wished for, namely promoting direct business investments, and supporting entrepreneurial initiatives. The prize won by one of the incubatees, of USD 20,000, was used among other things to buy blank CDs from an Israeli manufacturer of copy-protection encrypted CDs to fight against software piracy, identified early on as a major business risk. In Ghana and Nigeria, the cinema industry has been hard-hit by piracy, which was seen as a major obstacle to growth.

Other incubatees had to scale down their business plans. One had to reject large-volume contracts due to lack of capital and materials that needed to be bought in bulk. As a consequence the entrepreneur started developing personal relationships with both suppliers and customers to build trust, in order to obtain credit. Busy Incubator had both group and individual company mentoring sessions and made available business consultants who would introduce the incubatees to other players in the Accra ICT-sector, and it was these introductions that eventually led to the growth of one company towards a bigger market in providing business-to-business services. For most incubatees the lack of interest from formal financial institutions meant turning towards financial relations based on kinship ties of family and friends. In this sense, the market with all of its institutions had failed them.

By May, five months into the programme, the incubatees had rebelled and started demanding the money to which they felt entitled as the beneficiaries of the project. Other avenues had been exhausted, and at that point not a single entrepreneur was able to provide capital to run their business. They wanted to write a letter to the donors asking them to change the conditions of the aid programme, but a meeting was never organised face-to-face between the incubatees and the World Bank country office in Ghana. As a result, Busy Internet finally wrote a letter on behalf of the incubatees and the response was posted on the Incubator noticeboard. The answer was clear: there was to be no change of terms to the programme during its 18-month

course. The response was neither satisfying nor welcome, but it is the reality of many aid projects where local conditions or beneficiary priorities are ill adjusted to the global reach of the donors' programmes. InfoDev operated in a number of developing countries, and it had 60 incubator programmes to manage.

Towards the end of the summer one incubatee was threatening to leave the programme, while others expressed their wish for all the incubatees to stick together for the duration of the programme, so that one person's grievances would not ruin the chances of everyone else by creating an image of failure. The incubatees became more like a peer-support group by half-way through the project, and oddly enough, the rebellion proved to have brought them together, and reinforcing the training and mentoring sessions. The programme overall suffered from a lack of participation from the ICT community and the wider stakeholders in defining the objectives and methods of incubation, allowing a foreign agency like InfoDev to define the content of the programme. Busy Incubator learned its lesson and had to go back to its own constituency to search for a better future model of incubation which would in some way or another include financial support to the incubatees. In this way, the failure to *enrol* in a satisfactory manner may bring the translation process backwards – and also the need to analyse the previous *associations* in more detail. The discussions dealt with how incubation could take place through an on-line facility, or via some educational channel without involving any physical rented offices, which Busy Internet could not provide without external financial support. Also the subsequent CyberSeries lectures addressed these issues, and through them the previous *associations* were clarified further.

The aid money at Busy was both poorly negotiated, and inadequate for the needs of the beneficiaries in question. The alternatives to aid would be to raise the capital through mobilising private capital in Ghana or abroad to address the business needs. Solutions to business incubation were discussed at various CyberSeries events during the year. The problem of space was linked to a problem of financing at the 4th March *CyberSeries* event on business incubation.

Your address alone, when the bank is talking to you, they know that you are settled, in a good environment and when they come they will find you. But if you are located [in an undesirable premises], it becomes a problem even though you may be doing good business. And all of that makes it

necessary for us to [seek for approval] and I'm looking at occasions where we are replicating what Busy Internet is doing. (Person AE)

So location matters for businesses beyond just a convenient location for customers to find you. One key feature of Busy was being able to provide the business with a good address in Accra, which by its reputation would already attract potential customers or people who could invest in the businesses. Here it was felt that Busy Internet was successful, as the incubatees did receive additional customers as a result of both curiosity and accessibility of the site on one of the main roads of Accra.

However, concerns were raised about the role of banks in Ghana, and whether they would even invest in Ghanaian companies – let alone start-ups. The 7 July CyberSeries event discussed this same topic again under the banner of “Money for your business”. The Ghanaian founder of a large software company in Accra summed up the story of getting credit for his business venture.

[W]e talked about borrowing from the banks, and very rapidly [it became clear that] that was not the solution, at least not at that time; first of all they asked for collateral, they wanted a house, they wanted a bit of your leg, parts of your body that I don't want to talk about. It was tough. Then [...] we started looking around, this was in 1999, and one of the issues that came up was getting venture capital and then getting capital. We finally settled for Fidelity [a venture capital firm], I'll tell you why we finally settled [on] Fidelity, we wanted to extend the market to the rest of Africa; Nigeria was a very interesting market for us, it was a very aggressive market and it needed loads [of] money to get in there. (Person AF)

The banking structures in Ghana were not adapted to start-ups, as banks would normally only lend to companies who could produce three years of accounts, and prove that it was therefore a viable company. Microloans as discussed above did not apply to medium-sized enterprises, and many micro-credit providers were reluctant to invest in the ICT sector. For instance ProCredit, a subsidiary of Deutsche Bank from Germany, provided credit for SMEs in Ghana but for some reason it did not consider loans from ICT companies. The scale of enterprises that needed financing above 10,000 USD but below 500,000 USD was missing, and this is sometimes called the ‘missing middle’ (Birdsall 2007), as it is enormously difficult to develop formal credit relations in Ghana at this level of the market.

In the April CyberSeries Busy's strategies in terms of further development of the concept of Incubation were discussed. The participant quoted here was one of the founders of Busy Internet, and he thought that one of the obstacles towards greater growth of ICT businesses was a lack of trust between an investor and a start-up, and therefore monitoring a business could be the task of an incubator.

So there is a problem, there's a model that needs to be developed and we don't have an answer. But I don't think that we have to develop an answer. What I think that an answer is - is that a programme of incubating can be a proxy for investors. They can take on some of the responsibility so that the business is spending the money on computers or it's spending the money on its staff. You know, if they find that a business person is off in the Bahamas for six weeks, there is some low level of management that a virtual incubator or a physical incubator can say to the investor that, look, don't you worry about looking after this business all the time, we'll monitor them. We'll make sure that they get the legal advice, that they do their reports, that they file their taxes... so I think that an incubator in this context may be much more exciting - maybe more exciting than in the context of California where I was incubated six years ago. Much more relevant because it is a much smaller business that is growing in this context. (Person C)

The speaker proposed an alternative *association* in comparison with Busy Incubator, which would not work on the basis of InfoDev's model, but a more home-grown model based on micro-venture capital. The proposal would still need to attract either aid grants or government funding as it would not be sustainable on its own with private sector funding alone. Meeting the more specific demands that ICT entrepreneurs faced in Accra, Busy Internet or another intermediary would provide a management and follow-up service to start-up companies that were funded via a venture fund. There was discussion of establishing a virtual incubator, which would not require physical office space. Busy Internet did not pursue the alternative model proposed by this speaker during the time of research.

The *enrolment* of the Busy Incubator was only a partial solution, but as some aspects were left open to negotiation it was the informal linkages that made it work to the extent that it eventually benefited the incubatees as beneficiaries. Formally, the programme only provided for training and partly funded office rents, informally it was an exercise in introducing new start-ups into the life of the Busy Family and its projects, which existed prior to the programme. Had Busy Incubator written some of the informal conditions for success into their original plan for incubation, the

programme might have worked somewhat better. The partial failure of the programme half-way required some of the leaders at Busy Internet to modify the concept of incubation by going back to the public space of the Internet café to consult and discuss with stakeholders what kind of model might work better. This public method was considered important to brainstorm, to gain community support from the Busy Family. This shows that the process of translation is by no means linear, and at times it is rather an iterative process of needing to take two steps backwards in order to take one step forwards.

### **7.2.3. Extending Monetary Assemblages at the Linux Accra User Group**

As Linux Accra User Group (LAUG) was a voluntary organisation, it did not directly *enrol* either aid money or loans. LAUG rather accessed non-monetary resources such as voluntary work contributions, and in kind of material donations. It also acted as a final beneficiary of aid-funded activities or participating as a partner in bids by other agencies and institutions. In such a way, they became part of aid money assemblages. The search of resources to fulfil a social objective at LAUG is a demonstration of social entrepreneurship within the members of the group. LAUG had to find both private and public sector support for its four distinct projects (see section 3.3.3): localisation, wireless Internet, digital libraries, and low-cost computing using thin-client servers.

The way in which LAUG dealt with the lack of money was to start up projects involving Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) with partners such as the KACE-AITI training college, but also private universities, donors and companies. They would then look for organisations that could stage free-of-charge events with outside support, sponsorship, free samples of Linux software, or freebies like t-shirts and badges that can be distributed at special events. In all these cases, no money was ever handled by LAUG, as it was not a registered organisation and had no intention of becoming one. Nor did it want to become an enterprise of any sort, as this would entail losing its status as a civil society organisation, allowing it to seek free-of-charge facilities, hardware and other goods.

LAUG contacted many institutions to expand the territorial and spatial reach of their activities and were somewhat successful in doing so towards public sector bodies in particular. The group also engaged in lobbying the government to adopt more Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) applications in diverse parts of the government, and organised seminars at the Advanced Information Technology Institute (AITI) to further these objectives. It collaborated with private sector enterprises such as Objis Consulting who they met at the World Summit on Information Technology (WSIS) Africa Conference held in Accra in January 2005, a preparatory conference for the WSIS global conference held in the same year in Tunisia, in November. I observed Objis Consulting during these events, and understand thus some of the international linkages of LAUG. It was through such promotional events that Linux Accra was able to *enrol* resources from other agencies, who were keen to propose their associations to LAUG. The marketing manager of Objis Consulting, a French-Cameroonian ICT expert, visited Ghana for the first time during the World Summit on Information Technology Africa Regional Summit held in Accra in January 2005. The entire company, which I met later in Lyon in September 2005, consisted almost exclusively of French citizens of African origin, from the Comoros to Tunisia.

Objis Consulting encouraged actors to *enrol* in their platforms and adopt the *associations* which they had created together with LAUG. At the time of the conference the manager met with one of the senior members of LAUG, who had a stall at the summit showcasing the Linux Terminal Server Project (LTSP) solution to low-cost computing. The organisation of commercial training courses, costing 1000 USD for a three-day course, included all teaching materials and a laptop installed with all the applicable course software. Their approach in other countries was not to charge the participants a fee, but rather ask for governments and donor agencies to sponsor places on such courses. They needed LAUG to promote this solution to their own government and private sector, and made an experiment with Linux Accra to market their approach, to attract interest from the Ghanaian government and the AITI, but with little success. The company provided funds for community ICT projects in developing countries, and the Linux Accra User Group fitted this profile, while the funds were actually administered by Objis Consulting who organised the session. This *association* proposed by Objis consulting did not successfully lead to an

*enrolment* among LAUG actors, as there was no funding available from external sources to finance it. Rather LAUG asked Objis to provide more courses for free, if they were able to finance their cost through other means. This was not possible for a second time, and the partnership did not go much further.

At another seminar titled “The Business case for Linux”, LAUG also made efforts towards engaging with private sector actors who discussed the reasons why FOSS applications on the whole were either difficult to use or poorly adapted for the private sector. The participants concluded that there are both attitudes and real customer support issues hindering the adaptation, while some 'killer applications' – meaning applications that would be so desirable due to their usability or applicability to solve common problems that they would bring new users to the Linux operating system. Some of the group members considered that free-of-charge accounting software and spreadsheets would be such must-have software for business use of Linux – something allowing managing a small business. The participants identified four areas of work including:

- Making it easier to access FOSS applications;
- Increasing support for FOSS applications;
- Building in-house capabilities for SMEs to install and operate FOSS applications;
- Changing attitudes so that something that is free isn't rejected as being poor quality.

The final point was considered an issue of public awareness-raising, but, as an entrepreneur, the speaker acknowledged that business applications also crucial. The strategy of expanding the technological space of FOSS and *enrol* more businesses who would invest in it and use it further. The ethos of FOSS is not based on reciprocity, but on contributing towards a common movement and a goal, entailing the ethos circulation of software between people, organisations and countries on an equal and free basis.

There was no obligation to contribute towards the software before using it, making it an economy of free circulation rather than one of reciprocity. The only obligation, and an important one, was to keep the software circulating by making any possible modifications also licensed under the same FOSS licence – free of charge, with open



source code and modifiable by anybody. FOSS in a sense is a system of perpetual circulation, and if somebody tries to trademark or close it with property rights, then you break the rules of the community behind it, and the trust associated with using the software. At the first glance, many of the resources that make up the LAUG can be used free of charge, such as the FOSS applications themselves – especially the Linux operating system and the Open Office package. However, to download or acquire a CD-ROM copy of this software you have to have a functioning Internet connection, or spare CDs to burn them – not to mention a desktop or laptop PC to install and run them. Increasingly the popular distribution packages were requiring constant updates to run properly, so having access to free-of-charge Internet was becoming important. This is where weekly meetings became important. The technology itself was dependent on an Internet connection, which then became the focus around which they constructed the weekly meetings, where other issues were also discussed.

Most of the projects that Linux Accra had started required some money, but in this case the group relied on material donations (computers, cables, Wi-Fi cards, etc.), rather than on money that they would then need to decide how to spend and account for. On one occasion, as the group was experimenting with networking various PCs together, I donated a few USB-cable extensions, a USB-port attached Wi-Fi card, and other small goods, which were used by the group in subsequent meetings. They were kept in a safe place by the group leader or, in some cases, the project leader of each sub-activity of the group. Other visitors to the group also donated hardware such as wireless routers and antennas. The group had no permanent storage space, so this complicated matters when obtaining more equipment. Donations of cash were a more complex matter than material donations, as they would have required a common bank account, which would need signatories, making it necessary to form an association with elected officials. LAUG preferred donations of hardware, free facilities and training; or, where money was involved, to have some other organisation such as the KACE-AITI handle such a transaction.

On the hardware side, the group leader of Linux Accra participated in and tapped into several global networks that could potentially help them to achieve their objectives of providing low-cost computing solutions in Ghana based on FOSS applications. In one email exchange copied on the Linux Accra mailing-list, the group leader was

corresponding with a member from an organisation called FreeGeeks, based in Portland, Oregon.

Building 200 computers and palletizing them all for shipping will reasonably take about four to six months. The reason for this is that everyone involved in this already has a full time job and does this work a few days per month. Things move slowly when done by volunteers. If we had three dedicated people working full time on this, it could happen in two weeks, but we don't have that many people. The two biggest challenges I've seen so far are: 1. Gathering the money for the shipping and 2. Finding storage space for 200 computers until the shipment is ready. I'll try to deal with the storage space if you can work on the shipping costs and customs. (Person B)

The group leader estimated the shipping cost of bringing a full container of computers over from Oregon to Accra at around 5000 USD. This would bring the cost of computers down to 25 USD each, assuming that the container would contain 200 functioning computers. Using these computers for the LTSP application meant that not all of them needed to have workable hard drives as they would be connected through a data-cable directly to the server where all the data would be stored. The hard disk was often the first part that broke down. Based on his calculations, recycled computers in Accra usually cost around 100 to 200 USD per functioning unit with a P2 processor, which at the time could run most MS Windows-based applications. Using the Linux solution with recycled computers would bring the cost of a computer down to one-quarter or one-tenth of a commercially available hardware solution. Something that was still free of charge in Portland, in the USA, would actually cost 100 USD once shipped to Accra.

There were, however, several hurdles in the process. First of all, import taxes had to be paid on all computer imports, and they were calculated on the Free on Board (FOB) value, which included the cost of transportation and the retail cost, thus entailing a much higher cost than the economic value of 25 USD per unit. In addition, taxes could easily double the cost of the computer unit. To benefit from a tax break, the computers would need to be used for educational purposes, as these were exempted from import taxes. For this reason, the group leader was looking for an educational institution to pay for the transport cost and agree to use the computers in building a classroom with FOSS applications along with the LTSP model of one server with the latest technology, running up to 40 thin-clients that did not need to have any expensive hardware configurations. He considered LAUG therefore as part

of the wider assemblage of bringing low-cost computing solutions to Ghana, but he did not want to turn it into an NGO, which would need to do the fundraising, and administrative or other associated work.

The leader of LAUG approached diverse institutions and individuals who could support FOSS-related programmes. Despite several attempts to convince the KACE-AITI and the Ministry of Education to make a pilot project out of establishing a digital library using the thin-clients solution, the Ministry of Education decided to go ahead with its own *association* for which it sought to *enrol* diverse resources. This involved building Community Media Centres (CMCs) which followed a UNESCO-type model of Community Information Centres (CICs), where a toolkit was developed by UNESCO staff based on experiences across different developing countries. The announcement of the CMCs in Ghana was made by the Ministry of Education during the time of the fieldwork in May 2005, and it included the construction of district-level community media centres around the country, closely linked to the existing offices of the District Chief Executive (DCE) and district assemblies. None of these initiatives bore fruit, as the government had already chosen its model for CMCs based on UNESCO's model of rural telecentres. The *association* which LAUG proposed did not stick with the government in this case, and thus resources could not be *enrolled* due to lack of participation in the earlier stage.

What LAUG did, was to promote its association more widely, by building an alliance with a private individual who *enrolled* funds for a short-lived community centre that was fully run on FOSS applications. Several members of LAUG participated in this effort, including one of the group leaders for digital libraries. LAUG adopted a common model among Linux User Groups (LUGs) called Linux Install Festivals, and so the Accra Linux Install Festival was organised on 9th April at the Free and Open Source Software Resource Centre (FOSSREC), located in Kokomlemle, near Busy Internet. The centre was a privately owned house, owned by a Ghanaian computer scientist who was working and living in Switzerland. He had opened the centre in order to showcase Linux applications and hoped to open a training school and an Internet café, using FOSS applications. He had paid for the shipping of recycled computers from Switzerland to Accra, which must have cost between USD 3000 to USD 5000.

**Figure 14: Assembling 'Boxes' at the Accra Linux Install Festival**



Source: Picture by Matti Kohonen, April 2005.

Linux Accra members were then invited to come and install Linux and other FOSS applications on the computers, combine workable hardware, and eliminate unusable hard disks, sound cards or other faulty appliances. In some cases one had to pull out hard disks from one computer to make another work, or combine RAM memory units, so all in all about 70 PCs were functioning for the public event. This was all done in the three days before the opening of the Linux Install Festival, held at the weekend event. LAUG members contributed their time voluntarily, and many were happy to have an opportunity to install Linux operating systems and very diverse hardware specifications, and troubleshooting on diverse old hardware configurations, which required downloading special drives for sound cards, graphic cards, RAM and modems. A temporary Internet connection was also established with a wireless antenna, rented for the duration of the weekend from one of the Internet Service Providers (ISP) located not far from the FOSSREC. The antenna was installed on the roof of the building, again to facilitate installing updates on Linux and other FOSS applications, installing drivers and other updates. Running Linux without an Internet

connection would mean downloading diverse drivers from nearby Internet cafés, saving them on a memory-stick and installing them manually.

**Figure 15: Setting Up Wireless Internet Radio at Accra Linux Install Festival**



Source: Picture by Matti Kohonen, April 2005.

The event itself was a public occasion for three days, including workshops on installing and using FOSS applications, starting from the very basic level of just familiarising oneself with the Linux desktop, then introducing localisation issues, and wireless internet issues as well. The Linux Install Festival attracted some 50 participants, during three days in May 2005. It introduced newcomers to the Linux Desktop, while experienced members had new machines, installing Linux with different hardware configurations.

What LAUG got out of the festival was to introduce the Linux desktop and other applications to newcomers, hoping to gain new members, and to widen support for its vision of FOSS applications being used in constructing Ghana's information society. The Ghanaian entrepreneur had the free work effort of LAUG members, and he hoped to hire some of them later to run a training school, or Internet café, which would run

uniquely on FOSS applications. The event resulted in a number of assembled PCs, memory cards, hard disks, and also an Internet connection with the members of LAUG who provided helpful voluntary work contributions to the owner of the computers in installing the latest FOSS applications on them. The members were able to learn hands-on skills, while the owner of FOSSREC had the computers sorted out for future use in the centre. In this way LAUG work was also a contribution to the wider FOSS community.

The second bigger event during the year was the Software Freedom Day (SFD), which was another good example of how to mobilise voluntary participants from LAUG. In this case, there was no single sponsor for the event; rather, LAUG sought support from the AITI centre in terms of free spaces, banners, and promotional material to be printed on its premises, in order to distribute flyers around Accra in key ICT training schools like the NIIT and APTEC, Busy Internet and a few Internet cafés, the University of Ghana at Legon, and some other locations. The idea behind the event was that of a global day of promoting the concept and use of FOSS, and experiences of SFD teams were exchanged on dedicated websites. The Mark Shuttleworth Foundation, based in South Africa, which supported the popular Ubuntu distribution of Linux for educational uses, sponsored also the distribution of Ubuntu CDs and t-shirts for the event. In addition, another foundation in the USA was specially supporting the SFD.

The organisation of the SFD was done largely by volunteers, and the only perks were t-shirts, CDs, and balloons for promotional work. The following message from the organisers of the SFD in the USA was forwarded to the Linux Accra mailing-list:

We don't yet have the final figures, but we will also be providing a limited number of free SFD T-shirts, SFD balloons (you'll need your own helium) and SFD temporary tattoos for the first teams to request materials. (Person AG)

Linux Accra members found that this promotional material of different 'freebies' and 'gifts' was an interesting perk for organising a successful event. They created a sense of a shared identity by means of common banners, balloons and CDs. One response on the list clearly expressed excitement about the prospect of the 'freebies' in mobilising for the SFD event.

Hi [name of group leader] and the LAUG guys we should quickly register to the software development day because we have a lot of t-shirts and CD to get for free and many more please guys don't want you want any of these nice Linux t-shirt and CD's. Tomorrow should be for the final decision. (Person AG, spelling as in original message)

Others were interested in the promotional possibilities that the event presented, so a Linux Accra SFD team was assembled to work out a programme for demonstrating the different FOSS applications, including word processing, multimedia, Internet usage, and utilities. Free access to Internet, free CDs or t-shirts on one hand provided motivation for LAUG members, while those who owned the resources gained voluntary labour contributions, marketing and promotional efforts.

The way in which LAUG was able to *enrol* non-monetary resources proved to be somewhat successful in organising events, but there was no similar project comparable to Busy Incubator which could showcase models for solutions that were created through more informal means. This was due to the lack of willingness of any of the other host organisations to give too much visibility to LAUG, as rather the organisation that sponsored, or handled the logistics was at a more important position than LAUG. This position also suited the group, as it did not want to become an institution or a formally constituted NGO in any manner, but preferred to remain a network of enthusiasts and spin its projects in different institutions that were willing to continue the creation of a technological space around FOSS applications. The number of actors who could contribute to FOSS interventions was also limited, as most international aid donor agencies focused on access to the Internet, rather than its localised and open-source content.

### **7.3. Conclusions**

The assemblage of credit and monies was carried out by diverse actors, with reference to credit union rules and practices, and interest rates set by international donors and central banks. It included ordinary actors such as laypersons and ordinary market people, who participated in defining the qualities of monies and credit. Both credit assemblages and monetary assemblages were created through the central notions of trust and accountability. While the control over the use of these assemblages was not

certain, the village societies who created them through credit unions were keen to gain access to these monies to develop the village on the whole. Meanwhile, monetary assemblages were here found to be similar in many ways through the attachment of social criteria and objectives to loan schemes as well as development aid programmes.

Credit and money assemblages had vastly different roles in the three different fieldsites. For Kuapa, the lack of money was a temporal lack that occurred outside the main growing seasons, as well as a general lack linked to low incomes for farmers. Incomes, it should be said, were quite variable. These income differences were accentuated by other income-earning activities, such as market trading, growing other crops (both for food and for sale), and engaging in mostly informal paid work. The *enrolment* of the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU) was the main way to enhance farmers' prior *associations* such as shared projects, women's spaces and well-being of the village and its individual members. At Busy Internet, although the incubator provided the facilities, training and coaching for four ICT start-up enterprises, it lacked any direct grant funding to the incubatees, which created doubts about the uses of aid funding. Finally, Linux Accra gained indirect aid funding for events such as the Software Freedom Day (SFD), along with other sponsors and partners who provided for freebies and free software samples. It was at times the beneficiary of aid projects, while at other times it initiated them through the group leader's own goals and contacts.

Monetary and credits assemblages therefore were constituted through their capacity to *enrol* and attract resources to prior *associations*. When a different solution was imposed by a donor agency as in the case of the Busy Incubator, or in the case Objis Consulting training package at LAUG, actors tended to try to appropriate them and asserted their own understandings of the potential *association* that could solve the underlying problematisations. How monies and credit were *enrolled* and how they were put together affected the ways in which actors conducted themselves, as even bank accounts needed introductions, let alone the processes needed to get a loan. Such practices depended on the existence of prior social values, such as trust and respect of others. In this chapter, money and credit were seen through a pluralistic light. They constituted a way to enhance prior social value processes, by providing economic resources and rationales for considering of processes of social value.



## 8.0. Evaluating Social Values

If accounting is made and re-made in the margins, there is no essence or core to accounting. Accounting is instead a form of *bricolage*, an activity whose tools are largely improvised and adapted to the tasks and materials at hand. There are no general principles by which one might be able to arbitrate as to what should be inside and what outside accounting. For what is outside accounting today can be a central and taken-for-granted part of accounting within as little as a decade. (Miller 1998: 190, emphasis in original)

In this chapter, I discuss *evaluation* as the next stage of a process of translation of social value. They are often also the beginning for fresh *problematizations*, or allow revisiting any other phase of the process of translation. Once the previous stages of translation are done, social enterprises face the need to report on their social impact or social mission account for either the funds or loans acquired in the previous stage of *enrolment*. They need to respond to stakeholders, customers and ordinary participants concerning the results of any new *associations* that were identified. Evaluation is a dual process whereby actors look back over what has been done, to review their own activities, and assemble an account and narratives to be presented to a wider audience demonstrating the positive impact or the challenges they faced.

Not all associations or enrolments were evaluated, and thus the accounts that were generated were partial and fragmented – presenting the public an image rather than a complete picture (if such a picture ever is possible) of the social values that were present within the social enterprises or processes of social entrepreneurship. This is why social values often emerged as a combination of official measuring exercises, as well as unofficial and informal ways of reflecting backwards at the processes that had taken place. As Miller (1998) notes in the quote above, accounting methods are adaptive and they contribute to social change through measuring and evaluating concerns and values.

I will start by looking at how social enterprises are evaluating their social value translations (section 8.1), and make comparisons between four commonly used ways of evaluating social value and how similar practices are expressed or used in the three fieldsites. Following this discussion I consider (in section 8.2) the question of conducting different types of *evaluations* internally and externally, and how social enterprises negotiate such evaluation practices with regard to the relevant stakeholders, who are asking for the accounts. The evaluation events often did not take place during the fieldwork period, occurring annually or even less frequently, at the end of a programme period, a special event or at times as an annex in conjunction with annual reports that report the company's financial operations. Finally (in section 8.3), I study the difference between *evaluation* and the resulting *social values* which are created at each stage of the ongoing process of *translation* as overarching and guiding principles.

### **8.1. Evaluation in ANT**

Within ANT the focus has been on new metrologies (Callon 1998b) and measuring devices (Callon and Muniesa 2005). The distinction between measuring (as immediate valuing of an object, service or other commodity), and evaluation (creating the social values, norms and rules under which valuation works), is much more recent (Vatin 2009). Social enterprises make use of new types of measuring and evaluation to create market actors who rely on social accounting, constituting actors that include stakeholders who are interested in the social value creation of the enterprises in question (Barry and Slater 2002). While Callon (1998b; 1999) talks of measuring rather than evaluation, we should be focusing also on evaluation, which makes calculation possible in the first place. Evaluation also has a relationship with the very possibility of economic valuation.

The market does not maintain itself by the force of its own mechanism that is to say by logical coherence. It is immersed in a vast and shimmering universe of social values in permanent construction and discursion. [...] Economics of conventions show that before being able to exchange in an economic sense (*valuing* goods in a market), one must agree on the common measures or evaluations. We must *evaluate* before *valuing*. Vatin (2009: 17, translated from French)

Here Vatin relies strongly on the economics of conventions (Aglietta and Orleans 1992) in stating that social values are always at the basis of market trading – a statement not that different from what Granovetter (1985; 1990) made regarding the embeddedness of the economy in social networks. The difference is that evaluation as a term does not separate society from economy; it does not ‘purify’ the economy away from society and reproduce such boundaries. Evaluation, similar to measuring, is up for the actors themselves to determine; with the difference that evaluation takes more time and is a result of longer chains of translation. Where Vatin (2009) and Granovetter (1985) do converge is seeing social value as an auxiliary to economic value creation – where social values such as trust and professional ethics are seen as grounding for the creation for economic values. This view is also echoed by Callon (1998b) as he states that framing and entanglement of markets are the key dynamic in which markets become possible. The interest that ANT has placed on ethnomethodology (Garfinkel 1984) and on symbolic interactionism (Goffman 1975) has led it concentrating on long processes of value translation, but rather on more immediate dynamics of valuation through framing and entanglements. Here, I pick up some of the earlier distinctions in Chapter 2 concerning social value, and discuss the dynamics of evaluation in terms of ANT (Callon and Law 1982).

The importance of evaluation is clear for social enterprises, who claim to be driven primarily by goals concerning their social impact and benefit rather than creation of economic value. While social enterprises also present profit and loss accounts, and do often report profits, these economic values are only a means to achieve social value ends. As social enterprises are distinctively both presented and discussed in relation to their social impact, some accounts or ways of measuring it become necessary (Paton 2003; Nicholls 2009). It is these social and economic ‘margins’ that they indeed need to calculate, and many social enterprises produce some measures of social values to their customers, employees or other stakeholders who are considered as beneficiaries or members of the local community. Social enterprises are also working against a process of ‘purification’ of different measuring and evaluation techniques.

‘Science’ and ‘objectivity’ had become the battle cry for accountants and managers. [...] Personal judgement would henceforth be based, or so it was hoped, on the claimed neutrality and objectivity of a ‘scientific’ evaluation of investment opportunities. (Miller 1998: 184)

By making social audits, and other measures of social ‘margins’, layperson actors engaged in measuring activities are changing the manner in which an enterprise is constituted and how it functions. It is often these very same stakeholders who ask for social value measures to be presented in the first place. They wish to know how well the company has fulfilled their promises of building local sanitation facilities or water infrastructure, in providing new ways for students and entrepreneurs to engage with ICTs or create a greater ownership of ICTs and software in Ghana – to cite a few examples.

Evaluation, therefore, introduces an element of time into the process of translation – looking both forwards and backwards as is the case with most evaluation methods. As Miller (1998: 183) notes, accounting has long since treated the future also as an object of calculation with innovations in discounting and cost accounting. The value of time was also noted by Munn (1986) in considering that certain processes are valued with the passing of time as ‘socio-temporal transformations’, and the elements that time entails (growing food garden, allowing inter-island travel, changing seasons, etc.).

Different measuring devices allow for social enterprises and social entrepreneurs to focus on one or another aspect, to communicate to a selected set of stakeholders, or choose the aspect which they wish to highlight. In such a way, evaluation is also a strategic choice as Nicholls (2009: 756) points out: “[T]hese emergent reporting practices constitute a spectrum of disclosure logics that social entrepreneurs exploit strategically [...]”. Implicit in this understanding is also an idea that accounts or audits are also addressed to somebody. Evaluation is used to manage expectations and relationships as much as attempting to provide objective ‘facts’ concerning social and economic outcomes. Evaluations are also often highly specific to a specific donor or a specific stakeholder group. Accounting, far from being a scientific or a neutral matter, becomes more an aspect of negotiation of different types of values implicit in what is being measured and how.

## **8.2. Evaluation of Social Enterprises**

Many of the requirements for evaluation within social enterprises come from external agencies, such as donors and governments, who want to know about the performance of social enterprises with regard to their social objectives. In this respect, one of the first terms to emerge in the social enterprise literature in France, borrowing the term of ‘social utility’ (Gadrey 2004) from public administrations. Another is ‘social audit’ (Nicholls 2009), developed in the sector of non-governmental organisations. Social utility emerged as a term for charitable organisations in France when they applied for a tax-exempt status from the Value-Added Tax (VAT) and a reduction in other professional taxes that enterprises pay. In other countries, there is no such term in use, but in the United Kingdom, Community Interest Companies (CICs) as one type of a social enterprise need to comply with the definition of social criteria to benefit from the CIC status.

These definitions for social enterprises originate from the outlines of how they differ from profit making enterprises with regard to their legal requirements<sup>24</sup>. A debate took place in France in the 1980s regarding how social enterprises could also apply these criteria to gain tax breaks, and a court ruling was reached on three types of criteria (Gadrey 2004: 121, translation from French, paraphrasing):

- reduction of social and economic inequalities, including the affirmation of new rights;
- solidarity (on national, international, or local levels: a social link due to proximity) and further towards sociability;
- improvement of collective conditions and sustainable human development.

These criteria take the view that social enterprises are complementary to market-based services rather competing for services offered on the market. The first two of the criteria are very specific, relating to inequalities and solidarity while the third criterion is more concerned with value, thus allowing also other kinds of social enterprises to fit into the criteria more easily.

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<sup>24</sup> For instance, the CIC status in the UK gives preferential access to government procurement contracts, and may qualify for specialist social finance. In Italy, companies registered under the Social Co-operative status need to comply with set criteria that define their social purpose, to qualify for government grants. In Ghana, there was no such special status for social enterprises.

In Ghana, such external measures of ‘social utility’ can be found in donor documentation outlining criteria for making grants. In these cases, the requirement to give accounts arises from external rather than internal needs. The Ghana NGO commission also is quite strict about what types of organisations can have a tax-exempt status under the NGO regulations, fulfilling a list of public interest criteria. As a result, social enterprises in Ghana tend to follow reporting models that are imposed to them rather than models that they come up with themselves, as exemplified by the Busy Incubator programme who followed World Bank’s evaluation and measuring models.

External constraints had a small presence in the three fieldsites. For example, Busy Incubator showed that only certain types of transactions could be performed under the terms of reference of the grant, while some others were not considered to meet the grant criteria. Even though the incubatees ‘rebelled’ against such measuring devices and terms of reference, there was no way of renegotiating them in this case. An alternative way of measuring and evaluating the success of Busy Incubator was provided by such criteria as nurturing further informal ties with banking institutions and mentoring relationships and public lectures that provided an alternative way of measuring and evaluating the success of Busy Incubator within the community of the Busy Family, and allowed for some lessons to be learned.

At LAUG, the group members were keen to emphasise that the weekly meetings were indeed for the purpose of FOSS activities, while some came in just to use the free of charge Internet connection or do non-LAUG related activities. Evaluation was, however, quite informal, with the group leader discussing the activities of the group with the management of KACE-AITI, and making informal narrative accounts. There was a strong interest for the college to keep LAUG active and demonstrate continuity. For instance, the group leader told the members that missing meetings might put the access to KACE-AITI at risk at a future point in time. Accountability at such an informal level served to reinforce the message that continuity was essential for KACE-AITI to consider that LAUG would produce results. This was demonstrated by the events that LAUG staged both inside and outside of the college, discussed in Chapters six and seven.

At Kuapa, their primary beneficiaries were the members themselves, and little external justification was needed apart from compliance with government regulations to keep their licensed buying company status in the Ghanaian cocoa market. However, this status did not have any social criteria attached to it, but rather required meeting a certain volume and coverage of their activities in different cocoa growing regions. One part of Kuapa Kokoo, namely the Kuapa Kokoo Farmer's Trust (KKFT) was constituted as a charitable arm of the group, and it produced annual reports on the use of the funds according to their approved mission – which complied both with the international fairtrade rules, as well as with Ghanaian rules for non-governmental organisations – which allowed KKFT to receive charitable donations. The redistribution of fairtrade premiums was administered via the KKFT, and it thus required producing accounts of its social impact both in Ghana and outside of the country to non-state fairtrade regulating bodies.

As in other cases, the main lines of accountability at Kuapa Kokoo was carried out forming a management structure consisting of members of the co-operative, who were ultimately accountable to the representatives of different village societies at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and to the board in a more continuous manner. I also observed the work of the Research and Development Officer (RDO) to explain any aspect of Kuapa Kokoo's work to members on an ad hoc basis. When farmers wanted to raise further questions, they could also seek advice from the Area Manager, or different committees on the regional level, through their representatives.

Another set of evaluation practices are aimed at internal evaluations of social enterprises. The most common (and also most comprehensive) one is that of the social audit, which seeks to understand social value creation as a process of stakeholder engagement through their experiences. The proponents of social audits are interestingly explicit about the performative (Callon 1998b) functions that social audits have, in shaping the very actor who is being measured (Barry and Slater 2002). However, the language they use is about accountability to stakeholders.

Thus, in the context of social accounting, it seems that in the PCP [polyvocal citizenship perspective] 'social auditing' process three things are happening simultaneously:

- (1) stakeholders are being encouraged to voice the terms of the accountability relationship, both as they see it currently and how they would wish it to be. That is, the stakeholders are defining the terms of accountability;
- (2) stakeholders are active in defining the accounting entity itself;
- (3) voices of the stakeholders provide an essential element of the basis for the social account of the organization. (Grey et al. 1997: 337)

The voice emerges from the evaluation process is therefore either direct or mediated through measuring devices (questionnaires, focus group interviews). The construction of an accounting entity and establishment of its boundaries also has a representative and a democratic function, often lost in the 'purification' of accounting and economic agency.

There are probably as many ways of conducting social audits as there are social auditors. These measures are becoming more common, and an entire profession is growing around 'social audit' practices in the Social Accounting Network (SAN), and Institute for Social and Ethical Accounting (ISEA) have pioneered practices. These measures are now being proposed also in the so-called SIMPLE<sup>25</sup> model by Social Enterprise London (Social Enterprise London 2011), which as the name itself indicates is a shorter process than the long-term social accounting framework relying on qualitative interviews rather than long-term measuring systems. As the profession grows, the practices become more codified and articulated by professional bodies like those established for accounting financial value.

The model of social audit used by Kuapa Kokoo is discussed at length below (section 8.3.1.), as it involved not only considering the value created by Kuapa Kokoo, but also proposed new types of solutions such as the creation of the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union. New needs are often identified through such process, but it requires the prior definition of responsibility to who the social enterprise or the social entrepreneur is accountable. Busy Internet or LAUG did not conduct such large surveys of their accountability, as they relied on informal accounts and narrative stories of their value – both textual and visual methods of presenting their social impact.

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<sup>25</sup> SIMPLE stands for "scope it, map it, track it, tell it and embed it", and it includes all the stages in the impact measurement process that Social Enterprise London proposes to be used and adopted by its members and other organisations measuring social value creation.



Another mainly internal evaluation involved comparisons between social and economic value that include the monetisation of social value. The central term of Social Returns on Investment (SROI) emerged more recently as social enterprises were increasingly compared to private sector organisations. SROI is defined as “monetised social value is then consolidated with the economic value created by the same social purpose enterprises.” (Roberts Enterprise Development Fund 2000: 7) The process constitutes a very different type of a *translation* involving six stages, as it converts social value into a monetised equivalent, which then becomes comparable to prices in a market place. This makes some actors uncomfortable because social value among many practitioners should precisely not be monetised, as by doing so it may lose its uniqueness (Jordan 2008).

There are many different types of SROI measurements, but they also start often from the definition of beneficiaries (Nicholls, 2009), which sets the boundaries to the described agency (as not all connections should be accounted for). Then one proceeds to drawing an ‘impact map’, which is filled according to indicators, and finally the indexes become monetised and a numerical value is achieved. The model has been since also adopted by the New Economics Foundation (NEF) in the UK, which proposes its use for understanding the social and environmental ‘externalities’ which are converted to social values. They provide the following example of positive externalities, which are here discussed in terms of social value, as they no longer are marginal to the decision-making process.

Hospital cleaners [...] also contribute towards wider health outcomes. The importance of these cleaners is often underestimated and undervalued in the way they are paid and treated. *We estimated, however, that for every £1 they are paid, over £10 in social value is generated.* (New Economics Foundation 2009: 4, emphasis in original)

Another example is given of negative social value, where the market value of a process, good or services is not commensurate with the negative social value that it creates. It is aimed at instances that are not ‘framed’ or considered within the process as a stakeholders.

Determining the right amount of tax payable is a specialist skill and often requires professional support. However, some highly paid tax accountants’ sole purpose is to help rich individuals and companies to pay less tax. [...] In our model we looked at how this lost revenue could have been better spent. *For a salary of between £75,000 and £200,000 tax*

*accountants destroy £47 of value for every pound in value they generate.”*  
(New Economics Foundation 2009: 4, emphasis in original)

These two examples are able to bring otherwise immeasurable events into comparison with another event, but the usefulness of SROI ends there, as it is hard to see how one can remedy the problem apart from paying the accountants less and giving it to the hospital cleaners. The problem of comparability of monetary and non-monetary values becomes evident in these cases. NEF proposes to build these values into salaries and prices to correct the distortions produced by the intended or unintended consequences of one's activities upon others. The solution most likely lies elsewhere, in stopping the negative behaviour by creating overriding social values which criminalise or otherwise heavily penalise the culture of tax dodging – which itself is the root cause of the problem described above.

SROI was not actively used in any of the fieldsites, but aspects related to it were discussed at some length at Busy, as one of the founders would have liked to know whether the public space or the developmental space had actually put any more money in the pockets of ordinary Ghanaian customers of the Internet café. As this was nearly impossible to measure, the idea was never developed much further. Similarly at Kuapa Kokoo, the focus on the fairtrade premium was a calculable monetary equivalent and has gained a lot of attention in the international press and publications. At times, social value of fairtrade is reduced to the existence or non-existence of the translation of social value in terms of money – of the diverse new relationships of accountability and representation finally materialising into greater amounts of fairtrade premiums. Kuapa Kokoo recognised this weakness, and discussed this limitation in their social evaluation. At LAUG, there were different types of debates concerning monetary conversions, relating to ways in which Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) could be used to make money. Whether such conversions were ethical or not was a point of debate on the Linux Accra discussion group list. The commercial viability of Linux and other FOSS applications was also discussed at the weekly meetings.

As a result of the discussion concerning SROI, the question arises whether financial and social values are mutually complementary, and compatible or exclusive – and

under which conditions. This question is known as either Blended Value Proposal (BVP), or the Social Value Proposal (SVP). While social values and economic values are not easily comparable, they can be studied qualitatively within the same organisation to better understand whether social and economic values are compatible, complementary or rivalry.

It is not a question of either/or, but rather both/and. We need new metrics, new conceptions of the fundamental value proposition that are not simply a “quid pro quo” trade off between two seemingly competing goals perceived to be locked in a zero-sum battle. (Emerson 2006: 38)

The need of creating new methods starts from these initial statements, and breaking some of the preconceptions about social values which may still exist among social enterprises as well as business enterprises that want to engage also in the creation of social value along their social responsibility or corporate citizenship programmes. These management methods are then developed to help to guide social entrepreneurs and managers of social enterprises into making decisions concerning resource allocation.

To deliver effectively on the SVP [Social Value Proposal], the social entrepreneur must achieve a state of alignment both externally and internally among the key components of the framework, the opportunity, people, capital, and context. (Mair and Martí 2006: 17)

Values therefore need to be aligned, according to Mair and Marti, both inside and outside of the boundaries of the enterprise, making thus the boundaries less pronounced, and creating a much wider assemblage as an actor who is valuing and defining the criteria for the goods and services.

These considerations were present in each fieldsite, for instance when the staff at Busy Internet were debating whether or not to allow the use of a conference room for an NGO without a fee, or to rent it out for a commercial purpose. At times, the consideration was not as simple as a matter of either or, but about having some returns in increased Internet café attendance as a result of an NGO event, or bringing key persons in the Accra ICT community to Busy, which would enhance the work of the informal professional community of the Busy Family and keep them located at Busy for some time to come. Having interesting events at Busy also made the working and entertainment environment, the professional and public spaces, more attractive.

At LAUG, there were few considerations of monetary profits, but the group leader did consider that Linux was a cost effective solution, and he had to ‘sell’ the solution based both on economic and social criteria. Commercial considerations, such as driving down the cost of accessing the Internet with wireless networking, or accessing more processing power by the LTSP thin-client solution of using recycled PCs as terminal screens, were also based on economic thinking as the main selling point. These points, however, were underpinned by the philosophy of FOSS which promoted access to the platform and localisation, and made the platform open for modifications by the users.

### **8.3. Evaluation within the Three Fieldsites**

Evaluation is here understood in the broadest sense, including the common methods described above, but also informal types of evaluation based on face-to-face interaction, as well as evaluation through reputation and trust, and through maintenance of other social values. One of the most important results of evaluation is building a reputation – as being a leader in a field, and thus consolidating the social values such as reputation, trust or respect for one’s work. This aspect of evaluation has often been overlooked among social enterprise authors, but it’s worth noticing as either a complement or alternative to formal evaluation. In discussing practices of evaluation in the three fieldsites I distinguish between internal and external evaluations – and also consider the differences between formal and informal types of evaluation.

The final stage of *evaluation* in the formal manner was not required in most cases, and thus informal evaluation became the norm. Only once did I participate in an evaluation event when GINKS was evaluated in detail by one of their funding partners. Other events touched on aspects of evaluation, such as an occasion when I participated in an informal evaluation where one planning meeting of the CyberSeries events had a ‘stock-taking’ session on the past years events. At Kuapa Kokoo, I had access to an earlier social audit evaluation (Ronchi 2002), which was made public by both Kuapa Kokoo and their partner Twin Trading Ltd. At LAUG there was no formal evaluation taking place, but some of the programmes in which LAUG

members participated did require evaluation for the funds used. I was able to discuss evaluation with the partners, though I did not have access to the actual evaluation reports.

### **8.3.1. Evaluation at Kuapa Kokoo**

Kuapa Kokoo had the most developed *evaluation* framework among the three fieldsites, involving both informal and formal types of evaluation that responded to the needs of different stakeholders. One instance of informal evaluation at Kuapa Kokoo involved the work of the Research and Development Officer (RDO) at the Area Office studied. In his view, a strong village was one where the different branches and schemes of Kuapa Kokoo were all well developed and underway including the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union, as well as the Revolving Loan Scheme for women's groups. A strong village would also participate in the governance structures of Kuapa, by sending delegates to the area and standing for elections for national level delegates. By doing so, the village society increases its contacts with actors outside of the village, and this helps indirectly the work of defending the rights of the farmers to government services. A strong village would also produce a higher amount of cocoa, and thus contribute to the economic well-being of the village, which is the basis on which social value creation also rests. These criteria, loosely defined by the RDO, were evaluated informally during the monthly visits he made to each village. He would both listen to the concerns of the village residents, and specific stakeholders, as well as the purchasing clerk as the sole employee of Kuapa Kokoo in the village, and the village society president as the representative of the co-operative structure.

While the informal evaluation concerned the ways in which farmers appreciated Kuapa Kokoo's services, which in turn kept them loyal to selling their produce to Kuapa Kokoo rather than other companies who offered different types of perks and deals such as rubber boots and other consumer durables, and loyalty schemes (Ryan 2011). Giving such benefits to farmers was also key to Kuapa's survival in the cocoa business. Kuapa's key benefits were the provision of loans and its representative structure. Informal evaluations created an understanding of the strengths of a village, and its relative position within the Kuapa Kokoo structure in comparison with other

villages. Ideally, all villages would be strong when they have women's groups, a functioning credit union, and on-going advocacy work to defend the rights of village residents.

The social value creation often at Kuapa went alongside with the economic value, when by performing well one was not excluding the other. In terms of economic value creation, Kuapa Kokoo formally evaluated the amount of fairtrade premiums that the co-operative received from worldwide fairtrade sales and the amount of loans that was given out by the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU). The accumulation and use of the fairtrade premium has been covered elsewhere with regard to Kuapa Kokoo (Berlan 2008). However, it did not provide significant additional revenue to Kuapa farmers at the time of research, due to the proportion of fairtrade market demand being as little as 2 per cent of total sales, while of course all of Kuapa's produce was fairtrade certified. The demand of fairtrade cocoa was smaller than Kuapa's annual production. Indeed, in Kuapa's own evaluation framework, this issue of non-monetary benefits is well known:

practitioners of M&E [Measuring and Evaluation] for Fairtrade must be aware of the overemphasis the 'fair price' has received in the literature regarding Fairtrade up to this point (Ronchi 2002: 9, emphasis removed).

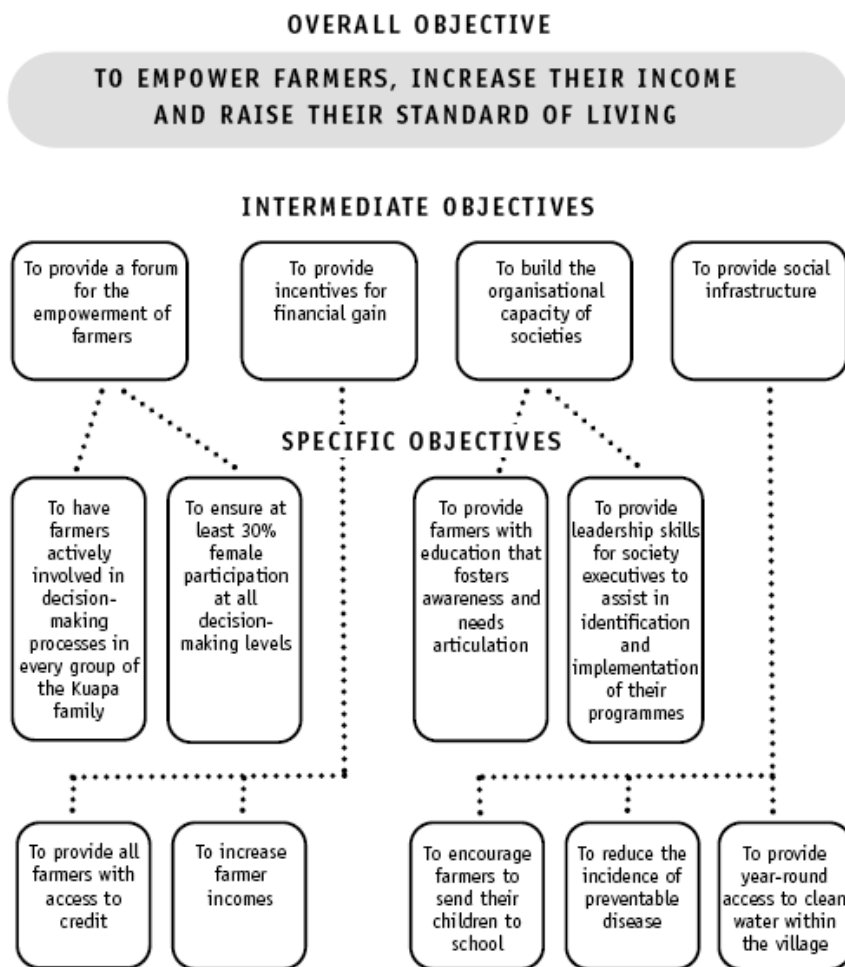
While it was felt that customers and outsiders were interested mainly in the fairtrade premium and its direct economic benefits and the ownership shares of Divine Chocolate Company Ltd. (Berlan 2008), internally the focus was more concretely on improving the processes of membership representation and livelihoods of the cocoa farmers in diverse manners. For the village residents, Kuapa's advocacy work and other social values may actually have carried an equal or even a greater significance at the time of research, even though it was not recognised as part of the fairtrade measuring and evaluation framework or the fairtrade advertising and communication materials, which were meant for consumers and other stakeholders who were involved in the fairtrade value chain.

Gender equity was one of Kuapa Kokoo's core values, and it was implemented on all levels from the head office's efforts for greater representation of women, down to the village society levels with specific women's groups being formed in Akwapong. The gender dimension in Kuapa Kokoo's work included promoting women in all positions

of the co-operative, and enhancing the participation of women in income generating activities. These included formal rules, as quotas for women to participate more effectively in management, as well as informal manners in which women were promoted. There was also a women's executive committee on the regional level to look over gender-specific issues, including the executive, regional and local village levels in the relevant committees. The special initiative of the Women's Revolving Scheme, funded by Women Vision International at the time of research, was there to promote women's income generating opportunities by giving group loans to women's groups that were constituted within participating villages, selling cocoa to Kuapa.

The formal framework was developed in partnership with the international partners who were also keen to report on some aspects of the social values of Kuapa to the wide constituencies of fairtrade consumers mostly in Europe and North America. What I focused on during my fieldwork were some of the methods that Kuapa had developed which led to the creation of the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU), and how Kuapa more broadly evaluated its own performance against the goals it had established earlier. Kuapa Kokoo was also the only fieldsite where a social audit had been carried out, as explained in Figure 16 below.

Figure 16: Kuapa Kokoo Social Impact Measuring Model



Source: Ronchi (2002: 17)

The exercise involved the company’s own Research and Development Officers (RDOs), engaged in society support and development work, in the measuring and evaluation processes, and revisiting the organisational objectives that guide the social impact efforts.

The newly formed team of nine SDOs [Society Development Officers, later renamed as Research and Development Officers] therefore had the opportunity of working together as a team for the first time in reviewing the objectives and designing the M&E. Workshops were organised with Kuapa, involving not only SDOs, but members of the Union [Kuapa Kokoo Farmers Union] and the company management as well. (Ronchi 2002: 16)

While the establishment of objectives in Kuapa Kokoo followed an internal procedure, it also considered the impact it was having on the communities where it operated. Many members of KKFU had affiliations to local schools, health facilities and other interest groups, so it could be argued that the exercise also included outside



interests within the framework of Kuapa's social impact. While measuring the fairtrade impact mainly focused on the impacts of the premiums, the internal M&E exercise also talked about three further areas, including 'organisational capacity' and 'empowerment'.

This exercise focused on the key objectives of Kuapa Kokoo, which they list on their website (Kuapa Kokoo 2012) as well as in many of their promotional materials from confectionary wrappers to dedicated websites concerning fairtrade. Having established the objectives, the M&E exercise focused on the specific goals, which then were defined in terms of measurable objectives. It was actually through this M&E exercise that Kuapa also discovered the need to establish the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union (KKCU), as some of the problems that farmers faced were related to money lenders, and in particular to loss of property in the form of land. Many debts could be acquired at a time of financial distress, or personal strife, especially at times when medical expenses or loss of cocoa fields due to fallen trees or other farming-related issues emerged. Being able to organise, mobilise and defend the interests of farmers became a major part of Kuapa Kokoo's visible social value.

Social audits aim to provide a way of demonstrating value creation in socially progressive companies such as the Body Shop and fairtrade companies like Traidcraft (Paton 2003: 56), who published their first social audit in 1992 (Traidcraft 1992). What the M&E exercise overlooked were some of the informal evaluations made by the RDOs and other staff members as part of their village society strengthening programmes. It was still harder to measure something intangible such as better access to health or rights of cocoa farmers in gaining their cocoa bonuses. The differences between informal and local evaluation on one hand, and the formal and international evaluation on the other hand, gave a different, but also a more multi-faceted picture of the social value of Kuapa Kokoo's activities.

### **8.3.2. Evaluation at Busy Internet**

Busy Internet relied both on informal evaluations where they gave accounts of their social values via visual, experiential, and narrative means; and formal evaluations

where they presented their project evaluations to donor agencies. A higher importance was placed on informal evaluations since its main investors were both located in Accra, and sat on the company board where they could evaluate the activities of Busy on a monthly basis. Only a few aspects of Busy Internet required formal evaluation; these were the Busy Incubator, funded by the World Bank, and the Busy Labs, funded by one founder of Busy and aid programmes via US AID. I did not have the opportunity to participate in evaluation work of any aspect of Busy Internet's work, but I was fortunate enough to attend one event where Busy Internet was invited to participate in an evaluation of the Ghana Information Network for Knowledge Sharing (GINKS). This opportunity gave me a first-hand insight into the dynamics of evaluation, and also the politics of evaluation.

The event where the activities of GINKS were evaluated was titled a Network Performance Review. The evaluation had a framework that was decided by external donors, and the participants in the room were asked neither to validate nor approve the measuring devices being mobilised in the conference room. The evaluation focused on a theory of knowledge sharing and knowledge systems, and thus it took interest in the ways in which the group approached these topics, especially regarding the extent to which GINKS was able to make linkages between different stakeholders (for example, experts versus local people), or how well GINKS was promoting a culture of open knowledge sharing through its CyberSeries public events hosted together with Busy Internet.

The review event was held at the Coconut Grove Hotel in Accra and started with the introduction by the Dutch consultant who had been invited to conduct the evaluation, laying out the devices such as PowerPoint presentation, and the terminology in an initial presentation. She had sent a questionnaire to the members prior to the event, administered by the GINKS co-ordinator to a selected group of members who were willing to express their views. This then established the remit of the *evaluation* effort, by outlining who are the persons that GINKS is accountable to, and the aspects of its relationship with these respondents. The questionnaire, however, was sent to a small group of persons who could be called experts or spokespersons, and not to the widest number of beneficiaries who may not even be literate to fill in a questionnaire. The review was based on an expert review model.

Present at the evaluation were mostly GINKS board members. The meeting started a bit late, as participants were calling by phone a few latecomers so they also could join in the review process. The first difficulty of making an *evaluation* was to actually get the crowd assembled in a single room; the accountable entity was brought together. The main participants around the table were the chairperson of GINKS, the current co-ordinator at GINKS (who had started just a few months before), and a representative of the donor agency called International Institute for Communication and Development (IICD). The consultant opened the event, and presented findings of the prior questionnaire to the participants, suggesting that GINKS would have two strategic options. It could either become more a professional network, or emphasise on local level events like the CyberSeries, by taking such events to different towns and constituencies in Ghana. Both options were based on the paradigm of knowledge management, which she presented theoretically, saying that knowledge sharing was vital to many aspects of daily activities.

The consultant mentioned that knowledge management works when people have incentives to share knowledge, and here she pointed out that this was indeed a problem in Ghana. The statement of the problem focused the review on the *evaluation* of this problematisation, in which the GINKS events and activities constituted an *association*, and the resources from the donor agencies the *enrolment*.

The evaluation proceeded with a discussion around the basic premise, the statement of the facts as they were. The participants of the evaluation mentioned that GINKS members were keen to share knowledge, and did not act in the common Ghanaian knowledge paradigm whereby knowledge was hoarded or kept secret from others. The chairperson of the board summed up the views of the discussion, and said that GINKS has both functions of being a meaningful place for its members and engaging in activities in local communities. The GINKS board lacked local level actors who could have been seen as the beneficiaries of the activities on the local level, as the board consisted of experts in the field of information and communication technologies.

The lack of local level actors probably created a bias in the organisation towards preferring the first option, that of being primarily a professional network of passing information within their own network, rather than actually engaging so much with the grass-roots level work. Who is allowed to evaluate the actions, is also allowed to sum up and present an authoritative account of the events. The co-ordinator of GINKS was mostly worried throughout the evaluation of his own position within GINKS, whether the institution would continue and have a job for him to carry on working as the co-ordinator. While the evaluation of GINKS was not meant to evaluate the work of the co-ordinator, who was relatively new to the job, he did feel that the exercise was potentially jeopardising his employment as the co-ordinator. He was hired to *enrol* the agenda of GINKS, and his position depended on donor funding more than on any contributions from the ultimate beneficiaries of the activities. The results were thus mixed, and there was a conflict in the mission statement of GINKS as to whether it should be a professional network or whether it should serve mainly for linking professionals with non-professionals to achieve a greater social impact. The second model was by far preferred by the donors, while the first one was preferred by the GINKS board – which created a conflict. The conflict was largely resolved by the institutional survival of GINKS, which was brought up by the co-ordinator of the group, and thus a greater focus on non-professionals was agreed as the consensus view. The *evaluation* ended, and the results were shared on the GINKS board and key members at a later stage, but not on the wider public dissemination list.

*Evaluation* at Busy Internet consisted mainly of informal personal feedback and narrative accounts given to customers, investors and other stakeholders upon request. Such accounts took place through meetings, informal encounters and other opportunities. I was able to assist one meeting where evaluation of the CyberSeries events was discussed on March 9 2005 at a meeting that had the objective to discuss the programme of CyberSeries lectures for the year. Present at the meeting were also a leadership coach who hosted many of the CyberSeries events, the managing director of Busy Internet, and the chair and co-ordinator of GINKS. The participants went straight into dividing the slots for the following year. First the managing director of Busy Internet acknowledged that the topics that GINKS had agreed with their donors and members should be acknowledged. This she proposed would take place by

slotting in one GINKS priority issue per term, proposing that agriculture be included in the next term, as the February CyberSeries was already about ICT and Health.

The *evaluation* rather took place in private after the meeting, when I asked one of the founders of Busy Internet about the choice of topics. He mentioned that he was not happy at all about the topics chosen in the meeting. He would have preferred to discuss issues which really mattered for the ordinary café users at Busy Internet, such as “making money with the Internet”, “finding a scholarship online” or “finding love on the Internet” (Person C), and have lively discussions based on the participants’ experiences and the difficulties that they faced when they were confronted with problems in their everyday pursuits while using the Internet, or other ICTs. What he mentioned of the GINKS’s donor policies was that they were largely focused on the usual development goals, rather than seeing development as a more personal and grass-roots process, where the person’s motivations, interests and life pursuits in the broadest sense should also be considered. He was somewhat pessimistic of the development goals established by the donor agencies. This informal evaluation only at the meeting, by the founder of Busy Internet, created an institutional position at Busy over time to seek alternative ways to bring such topics to the foreground, either in future debates, or in other forums, which they could organise. During the period of my fieldwork, no public discussions on Internet dating, or Internet-based job or scholarship searching were organised at Busy.

Busy never engaged in formally evaluating its social priorities and their achievement. They rather relied on self-evaluation and for everyone to form their own view of the benefits of the café to wider community. One of the founders mentioned that the best way to discover the value of Busy was to walk through the door on a given day and to experience it oneself.

I want to see the social impact out of it. That is [...] one of the subjects I'm preparing as a documentary. It's all about this, the impact, not particularly on Busy, but [on] lots of IT stories in town, people who have gone [out] on their own, some kind of interesting things. (Person D)

This founder of Busy clearly was motivated himself by the social values that went beyond just providing a great Internet service with some fast food served along-side with it. Instead of starting to look for social impact measures, he decided to produce a documentary which he though would be much more appealing. The documentary

project, which he hoped to also cover other interesting stories from the ICT field in Accra, would be shown both abroad and screened in Ghana, to spread the word about the wider importance of ICTs in Ghana. While visual accounts were the interest of the first founding member, a second founding member talked more about how the social aspects of Busy were facilitating actors within the ICT sector to make more money for their business. He was keen to evaluate how social values could be translated into monetary values.

You know, sneaking around the rows downstairs and watching what people do and so forth [...] I think [...] we definitely are having an impact. I get frustrated that we haven't had a more measurable impact, that we can't say that [...] we caused 20 people to be USD 10,000 richer. I mean it's silly, but it would be nice to have numbers to say, you know, we might really have changed [something], we might really have put this person's kids through school because of something that they found at Busy Internet. I'm sure lots of opportunities have been generated here – we generally don't know [what they are]. (Person C)

According to this founder, Busy was facilitating the creation of new companies, and making especially young persons more knowledgeable of the opportunities that new technologies presented to them. He was keen to know if they could somehow be measured, and to know how much richer Busy might be helping its users and other persons just to work their time there on their own computers. Such conversions were not readily observable, as they would happen individually through so many different avenues, for instance by finding a scholarship or making new friends or dating relationships online; but the translation had still taken place nonetheless. For him, impact was not easy to take into account if it was not translated into monetary benefit. Concluding on his words, the SROI model probably serves best those who are accustomed to numbers, and who need them for various reasons in decision-making processes.

### **8.3.3. Evaluation at LAUG**

As LAUG was a voluntary association, there was no need for formal evaluation of its activities due to it not *enrolling* any monetary resources under its own name. The lack of such formal relationships was the way LAUG members also wanted to keep the group, giving it more flexibility to engage in activities without having to think

about formal accountability, managing finances, electing representatives, convening a board or indeed other formal accountability issues. *Evaluation* at LAUG aimed at establishing LAUG's position within first the Ghanaian Free and Open Sources Software (FOSS) community, and secondly in the wider African community, through members participating in African FOSS mailing lists, and in events outside of Ghana such as those organised by the Free and Open Source Software for West Africa (FOSSWA) and the Free and Open Source Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA), and indeed on international forums as well when possible. The main reference point for LAUG was, however, the African context where they tried to gain a greater reputation among other African free and open source software enthusiasts and users.

One concrete way in which reputation was built up was the organising of the Software Freedom Day (SFD), which took place every year in September. I was able to participate in the preparatory work of the event, and then follow up the pictures and the reports on the LAUG email list on Yahoo! Groups, and the SFD website where the group had registered its participation within a dedicated webpage. The pictures that I was able to see from a distance showed the lively events that took place inside the KACE-AITI College. The Software Freedom Day for some LAUG members was a way to demonstrate their skills within the wider FOSS community in Accra, gaining valuable recognition and fame as leading voices in the Linux scene in Ghana. Such recognition would have tangible benefits later on in finding a mentor to teach a young programmer more about the tricks of the trade, or to gain valuable contacts in government or business, which would not otherwise be available to the persons concerned as they were either too young, or lacking in experience. In this way, there was some fame to be gained for the group, but also individual members would compete for recognition within the Ghanaian FOSS community as it could help them in gaining a foothold towards further educational or employment opportunities.

Other events organised by LAUG did not have such a diverse constituency as the SDF and they attracted much less participants. For instance, the seminar titled "Business Case for Linux" was mainly attended by LAUG members themselves, who had an opportunity to interact with an executive of a software company at the event. The main benefit of the event was that it made LAUG as a group better known in the software sector in Accra, which was a fairly small group of people in the first place.

The entire sector could be counted as a group of 10 companies engaged in software development, adaptation and maintenance, and then another somewhat larger group who had separate software maintenance personnel within their companies to service their in-house servers and data centres. These also often did use Linux-based software for their server applications, but many of them did not interact with LAUG. The second motive for LAUG members was to gain employment as back-office support staff, but this objective was not met either, as no Linux Accra member gained even a job interview as a result of the networking events.

Linux Accra also wanted to be recognised as the first Linux user group in Ghana, and thus gain credit and fame for the founding of a Linux movement in the country. The objective of LAUG was to inspire the formation of new Linux User Groups (LUGs) across the country. From February to September 2005, there were messages of LUGs being formed in Ghana's second city of Kumasi, the university city of Winneba, the port city of Tema, the coastal city of Cape Coast, and one in the Accra suburbs. These LUGs did not communicate between themselves on the LAUG list, but did at least mention their initiatives and formation to the Linux Accra list, which had the position of being Ghana's main FOSS discussion list. While most of these LUGs did not survive for very long, according to accounts by LAUG members and lack of subsequent posts on the Linux Accra list, their formation and beginning showed that FOSS applications were of interest to Ghanaian software students and enthusiasts. During the time of research, there was no coming together of the different LUGs apart from some Winneba LUG members attending the Software Freedom Day event.

One of the most successful projects that Linux Accra started was the project concerning digital libraries. The concrete efforts were concentrated at just two events, the Software Freedom Day and a presentation discussed earlier in Chapter six at the Regents University of Science and Technology. There the group gained an important partner, as the university agreed to implementing a digital library platform to solve the problem of the high cost of shipping books to the university library from US-based publishers. Having a digital library meant that students could read books on terminals



at the university library, or on their own personal computers provided that they had an Internet connection available to download the books in the first place<sup>26</sup>.

What was interesting, was how associating with LAUG built up the reputation of the partners of the group. For instance, the KACE-AITI College, where the group held its physical meetings, was able to post the assistance it gave to LAUG as part of its social outreach mission (KACE-AITI 2012). For companies like Objis consulting, working with community groups such as LAUG was essential for meeting their grant and donor requirements, so they certainly needed to report the training activities they did with LAUG to their donors and investors. For other NGOs like the Free and Open Source Software Foundation for Africa (FOSSFA), being able to demonstrate that they represent wider interest groups was important, and thus participating in LAUG events such as the Software Freedom Day was of importance to them. The reputation of LAUG increased as others posted about their events and issues, showing that the group has a leading role in promoting FOSS in Ghana. This type of relational appreciation and evaluation played an important role in the absence of formal and written evaluation.

#### **8.4. Evaluation versus Social Value**

As was discussed in this chapter, the translation of social values in fact was not entirely a cyclic process that would have ended at the *evaluation* of the entire process, but rather was an ongoing process where such evaluations gave rise to new *problematisations*. At times, some stages were skipped or replaced by expert interventions, as in the case of the ‘interessement’ by GINKS experts who defined the purpose of the NGO in terms of their professional views, rather than the views of the beneficiaries – or when Busy Internet sourced funding from the World Bank InfoDev programme and had to comply with their programme design, budget lines and subsequent monitoring frameworks. In some cases, evaluation went somewhat

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<sup>26</sup> The person subsequently founded his own software company in 2007 adopting digital library and digital learning platforms for Ghanaian educational institutions.

deeper, as in the case of Kuapa Kokoo also looking at how different members and stakeholders could be better empowered, and thus reflected on the initial problematisations of the village society members. This cyclic process, in all of its diverse forms and replacement of some stages with a more 'factual' or 'scientific' process as described by Callon (1986), or addition of new interventions and actors with different measuring and evaluation frameworks, was indeed a dynamic process both in space and in time.

I argued above that social values are not simply the end result of a linear process from problematisation ending up being evaluated and publicised. Social values are rather created and maintained in a fluid way, at times also moving backwards also in the translation chain, with broken pathways or outside influences in how to deal with new problematisations without asking the participants themselves about their views. Social value is not something visible in an instant of exchange, much like economic values are considered to exist through the establishment of equivalence (Cantó Milà 2005; Simmel 2004), rather social value could be seen in light of a teleological series, where causality is recognised between elements in a process of objectification in fluidity rather than linearity. The teleological series serves as an analogy for the creation of social value, through use of tools as Simmel describes, which complicates and enhances the series and makes it more complicated with the development of culture.

These are not simply exchanges of social value (ultimately 'sacred' value); they actually create this value. In this sense they are *productive* activities, in which the parties cooperate to bring this value into being, before distributing it among them. (Jordan 2008: 132)

The production of social value, borrowing a term from Jordan, is then a process in which participants actively create and enhance values – both positive and negative – in a continuous process of valuation rather than that of exchange of pre-existing values. Negative values included notions of *shame* at Kuapa Kokoo related to losing one's land, or *proprietary* software at LAUG, and *hoarding of information* at Busy Internet were seen as negative social values which were often counter acted with positive values to some extent.

Here is how economic and social values also differ, as there cannot be a simple monetary or quantifiable equivalent of social value which would be realised in a

moment of exchange, rather one moves through a process of *translation* and establishes new values according to the possibilities at one's disposal. Here was to see how economic values are actually auxiliary and subordinate to social valuation processes. Indeed, Frisby analyses of how Simmel also discussed negative social values linked to money.

The breaking up of teleological series in the circulatory process has a number of psychological consequences, amongst which Simmel here merely mentions greed and avarice, extravagance and pleasure in possession of as many things as possible. Where money becomes an end in itself, we forget 'the merely relational character of money'. (Frisby 2004: 559)

The relationship between social value and economic value would merit more discussion, but it was not the objective of this thesis to explore this relationship more in depth. However, the mention that money itself has a relational character means that ultimately money can be also located within the production of social values, which arise from relational exchange and interaction processes as discussed above in terms of the process of *translation*.

The production of social values in this thesis reached its final stage with the stage of *evaluation*, which established a relationship of certain accountability to the participants who had earlier been involved in the processes of *problematization* and *association*. However, the most important relationship in the process of evaluation was often to the previous stage of *enrolment*, to simply account for the money, other funds, and non-monetary resources obtained to perform a specific programme or task. Due to the diverse practices of social accounting, measuring and evaluation, in the end very different results were obtained and the results of the *translation* process. These different processes contributed towards understandings of social value as a concept that transcends the individual stages, as overarching principles and moral statements that are created and reinforced by the circular process of translation.

Social values such as the *pride* of the cocoa farmers, or the *professionalism* at Busy Internet, and *localisation* and *ownership* of software at LAUG were much wider social values that emerged as a result of such cycles of translation. They may emerge at any given stage, but most importantly they are maintained throughout by each stage giving a better picture and more flavour to these social values. The translation process, and its final stage of evaluation could only reaffirm or rearticulate the social

values which were often laid down by the founding members or in original mission statements of the social enterprises and social entrepreneurs studied.

Some social values at Busy Internet were linked promoting its business solutions with a social development focus. The specific social values of a *professionalism* and *social development* were present among the members of the Busy Family. These values were enacted and entangled in the events and activities in which they participated, particularly in the GINKS association and also the Busy Incubator. In contrast, the social values attached to *public space* were more visible at the stage of *association* in which the participants used such spaces to innovate new models and ways of resolving matters of concern. Some social values, such as the one linked to mentoring and informal networking were not communicated in any promotional materials or talked about in public, they were more internal and not publicly presented or evaluated about. In the case of Busy Internet, they did not have a statement of corporate values or principles, but they rather enacted the ideas of the founding members and investors.

At Kuapa Kokoo, the process of translation of social values actually consisted of several different processes, being much wider in terms of the formal social audit that established social values such as *farmer's rights* and *democratic participation* as a co-operative from outside institutions. Other separate and more informal processes of local evaluation of Kuapa Kokoo's social impact at the Area Office level on a continuous basis establishing social values of *fair price* and *labour practices* these public value statements were complementary to the more private statements *land ownership*, and *autonomy* of farmers with respect to diverse institutions that they were entangled. These institutions included the private sector, the state and other social enterprises and third sector organisations. The fairtrade accountability process was the most publicised and it relied on more local forms of accountability and evaluation. It was mainly aimed at communicating the social values of fairtrade chocolates and other confectionary produce to the consumers, establishing values of *fair price* and *development*. These values were linked to the formal evaluation method, whereby the use of the fairtrade premium and other types of contractual, labour practice, and environmental standards were being met. In addition, Kuapa Kokoo had a set of 'core values' on its website (Kuapa Kokoo 2012). These core values were very similar to

the co-operative values mentioned in Chapter four (section 4.2.2.) as developed by the International Co-operative Alliance (1995). These social values were then enacted in different programmes and provided a basis for engaging with the co-operative on diverse issues that were considered within the remit of the co-operative and its concerns.

At LAUG, the core statement of values was its attachment to the international movement for Free and Open Source Software (FOSS). The social values were linked to the overarching principles of *ownership* of software and other digital information, linked to other values such as *localisation* and *low-cost* of computing achieved through using recycled hardware and sharing Internet connections through long-distance Wi-Fi solutions. LAUG's group leader considered that these were the key elements of the user group's focus, and he steered away from commercial objectives within the group and even from membership payments which after one attempt to establish them were not actually collected. While these values were never formally evaluated, most participants after some time got to learn the core values and objectives through references to the founding persons of either the Free Software Foundation, or the Linux Foundation, which had slightly diverging views of what constituted FOSS and what were its objectives. The local interpretation of such aims and objectives in Ghana were concentrated on increasing autonomy with regard to owning technology, and creating a national software industry.

The social values in the end were also somewhat surprising, as for instance, I would have thought that values closely linked to the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) would be discussed more closely at public lectures. Instead, vastly different values linked to assemblage and ownership of information emerged as the initial problematisation, instead of focusing on absolute measures of poverty, health or education prevalent in the development literature. Had I chosen to study a mining community in the gold mining areas of Obuasi, or a pastoral community in the Northern Region, I would have most likely found quite different problematisations, which could then have been translated. They may have discussed problematisations around the thorny issues of land ownership and unclear land registries, labour and work practices in mining communities, ethnic favouritism in public administration and businesses, or lack of employment for young people. Most

likely, the end result of social values would have been different, as each fieldsite provides a different translation both in the content of the stages, possibly their order and naming of stages according to actual processes. The theory of translation provides a flexible way of studying different processes, and adapting the stages and stages to the particular conditions.

This lesson of the heterogeneity and relationality of social values is possibly one of the key lessons in this thesis, but such concerns should not scare us off from studying them. On the contrary, this heterogeneity should be fully embraced and seen as an opportunity rather than as a source of confusion or inexplicable disarray. The more we show the intrigue towards something as non-modern and seemingly irrational as social value, which becomes the entire focus of social agency. As Latour (1993b) said that we have never been modern in the sense that our knowledge has never been limited to 'pure' scientific facts and 'irrational' cultural values; while Guyer (2007) answering to modern sociologists that Africa indeed has never ever been 'traditional' in any sense of mechanic solidarity, or path-dependent forms of agency. The Western illusion of moving from tradition to modernity is just at best an illusion sustained by modern scientific epistemology (Latour 1993b; Latour 2004). Rather, as Simmel (2004) notes, a better foundation to sociology is found by seeing contemporary society and culture use different types of tools that have been introduced to manage the social world. Similarly ANT talks of sociology in terms of the 'devices' (Callon, Mollo and Muniesa 2007) that allow us to assemble society. Understanding of sociology in such a way links closely with the issues discussed more recently in different terms by actor-network theory considering metrology that defines the subjects of research in a reflexive manner. Based on both perspectives, social enterprises show that actors also have never been 'rational' in the sense of being utilitarian and singular actors (Fine 1998), but have different ways to measure and evaluate events using their own yardsticks without recourse to a state of 'virtualism' where no evaluation or measuring takes place at all (Fine 1998; 2003).

## **8.5. Conclusions**

Evaluation as a broader concept was here discussed in relation to economic valuation connected with recent debates within actor-network theory (Vatin, 2009), in a similar fashion to what Simmel (2004) discussed concerning the relationship between general values and economic values in particular. Instead of seeing social values as auxiliary or subordinate to economic values, social enterprises placed them at a greater importance within their organisations and in every-day transactions. In turn, this placed a greater importance to practices of *evaluation* as it constituted the main way in which social enterprises legitimated their actions with respect to other actors in society, who asked about their social audit, social impact or social returns on investment to distinct stakeholders. Evaluation was key to the success of social enterprises, as well as to their continued funding from both aid funds and some types of credit which were related to demonstrating a measurable social impact.

I reviewed the different types of formal *evaluations* in the three fieldsites on the level of entire organisations that had their own organisational or institutional valuation processes, as well as informal *evaluations* that took place at times outside the institutional frame. Out of the different field experiences, it was only Kuapa Kokoo that had an internal measuring and evaluation framework, following the social audit method, to measure its designated impact in the areas of its key goals. Busy Internet relied on informal accounts of its *evaluation*, which was carried out by visual and narrative means, often using information and communications technologies such as YouTube clips, documentaries or photography to explain the evaluations of social value translations. It was only the Busy Incubator that had a formal evaluation framework in place, but I was not able to actually experience this type of evaluation, as it only took place after the programme had finished, which was after my period of fieldwork. Finally, LAUG had no specific formal evaluation in place, but rather relied on building a solid reputation for the group as the leading actor in Ghana's FOSS community, and more widely within Africa, in participating in discussion forums, posting pictures and accounts of events on websites such as the Software Freedom Day, and being part of a wider African FOSS community. LAUG's partners, meanwhile, had to participate in *evaluations* in cases where they had received funding for events where LAUG was a partner or its members were designated beneficiaries, and the group was mentioned on the website of the AITI college where they held their meetings.

It was through *evaluation* that identified social values emerged, but they were not the same thing. Social values were not the result of the evaluation; they were what was underlying the entire process of translation and what kept it going. Social values were motivational, in a sense they that if they lost the drive for social value they would also lose their purpose and legitimacy for their continued existence. In most cases, participants would not even need a formal statement of social values, as they were so obvious to everyone through the activities and the whole atmosphere of the social enterprises or social entrepreneurs. In all cases, key social values of the organisation (Kuapa Kokoo 2012; Busy Internet 2012; Linux Accra User Group 2012) were clearly sign-posted for public viewing. Social values were repeated through rituals, such as training schemes at Kuapa Kokoo or staff training at Busy Internet. In other cases, there were core texts or reference points, such as the FOSS founders' comments and classifications of the essential freedoms with respect to software.



## 9.0. Conclusions

In opening the black box of scientific facts, we knew we would be opening Pandora's box. There was no way to avoid it. [...] Now that it has been opened, with plagues and curses, sins and ills whirling around, there is only one thing to do, and that is to go even deeper, all the way down into the almost-empty box, in order to retrieve what, according to the venerable legend, has been left at the bottom – yes, *hope*. (Latour 1999a: 23)

The thesis has explored the translations of social value within the three fieldsites studied as social enterprises and examples of social entrepreneurship. The comparative outlook between the different sites provided the basis for looking more generally at the process of translation within them as it moved from initial problematisations to associations, enrolments and finally evaluations. Many translations remained partial, for instance, and some processes were hijacked by unworkable 'intersements' which were promoted by donor agencies and came with ready-made *enrolments* of grant funding attached to them. Other translations never got beyond *problematisations* at the beginning of the process.

The translation process was discussed in terms of the key dynamics involved with each stage: *problematisation* was discussed in terms of information assemblage in each fieldsite due to its strong presence in all the sites; *association* was considered in terms of spatial assemblages due to the practical aspect of new ideas and solutions being articulated within spatial settings; *enrolment* was seen primarily as credit and monetary assemblages, while also recognising non-monetary contributions of voluntary work; and finally *evaluation* examined the different evaluation methods that were practiced either formally or informally in the fieldsites. The translation process was never-ending, and social values were established as a result of translations on the level of overarching principles and core values that guided the translation process. The process was somewhat stylised, as each fieldsite constituted its own specific translation. The comparison between the three fieldsites, however, provided a way of considering the commonalities in the wider process of creating social value.

This process of translation worked against a much wider process of ‘purification’ of economic markets in processes such as privatisation, deregulation and structural adjustment, in which social values have gradually become less relevant in decision-making processes. Linked to this narrative, social enterprises in the three fieldsites emerged in a different light from the narratives often cited in Europe (Defourny 2001) where continuities from the co-operative movement are important, or in Latin America (Singer 2000) where their emergence is linked to the democratisation of society after military rule. In Ghana, social enterprises date back to a longer dynamic of establishing greater autonomy and self-determination. They can be contrasted to models of development which had little to do with the realities of the ordinary citizens, who could define their own type of economy as a result of participating in social enterprises. The foundations of social enterprises existed in community development efforts, as evident in traditional *Nnoboa* labour practices and Susu-style rotating credit associations.

The use of the actor-network theory (ANT) proved to be problematic when applied to the fieldsites studied in Ghana, as previous studies of ANT have tended to follow technological networks, or have primarily taken place in industrialised countries where the role of technologies may be more reified from the necessary assemblages that constitute the very objects that are studied. ANT does have the benefit of not making too many assumptions or having preconceptions of the size, shape or scope of actors. Using ANT to study social value in particular proved to be a difficult task, as there was little methodological guidance for how to operationalise the study of such indeterminate translations which exist outside the more common technological networks, and the translations of natural scientific or economic experts studied by ANT scholars previously. Some methodological clarifications were made in Chapter three, distinguishing, in particular, distinguishing between a fieldsite as an entry point in studying the actors, and an assemblage as the actor that exists and extends beyond the initial fieldsite of study and needs to be traced as a result.

In this chapter, (section 9.1), I revisit the notion of the ‘purification’ of markets, which has been overcome by social enterprises that have focused on creating social value. The results of the discussion of translation are then summarised (in section 9.2), and through this summary I arrive at looking at the lessons learned in terms of

the limitations of the concept of translation in particular and actor-network theory more generally. In this chapter I also discuss notions of historical translations (9.2.1), translation of power (9.2.2.) and differences between human and non-human actors (9.2.3). Finally, the thesis presents some concluding remarks (in section 9.3) regarding the potential of using the theory of social value theory more widely.

## **9.1. Revisiting Latour's Notion of Purification**

Much of the contemporary economic and social analysis, as discussed by Latour (1993b), suffers from a dual dichotomy of purification into nature and culture, and a subsequent translation of hybrid networks into events located in these two spheres. The problem presented by Latour was the proliferation of agencies that produce and reproduce such dichotomies. Latour (2004: 10, emphasis removed) called the epistemology of the modern 'purification' using the notion of a political coup.

I am going to define Science as the politicization of the sciences through epistemology in order to render ordinary political life impotent through the threat of an incontestable nature.

While Latour talked about natural scientists as being 'anti-political' (Barry 2002), Callon (1998c) discussed the same dynamic as including also the work of professional economists who shaped society through their economic models based on idealised conceptions of human 'nature' in a much similar way. The term of 'performativity' was used (Callon 1998b) to describe the work of neo-classical economists, who produce economic relationships rather than study them. What struck me in these criticisms was the small amount of constructive discussion towards overcoming such a 'purification' and 'performativity'. Meanwhile, earlier theories of translation seemed to me to provide precisely the potential (Callon and Latour 1981; Callon and Law 1982; Callon 1986).

In Latour's words, science in its current form constitutes a coup d'état that renders ordinary political life impotent. It allows actors to claim back the political space lost to scientists, economists or other experts who only rarely work with laypersons on an equal footing. While Latour (1993b) proposes concepts such as a 'parliament of things' to define more democratically the objects and events that surround us, or combinations of both fact and value in new translations (Latour 2004), he provides

few concrete examples of such processes. Even when laypersons are discussed in relation to experts, their role is seen as marginal and lacking meaningful power (Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe 2009). Meanwhile, non-conformist actors such as co-operatives and community-based organisations have existed for a long time in Ghana alongside with the increasing power of development economists, bankers, lawyers, international aid consultants and agencies, and accountants who tend to 'purify' any linkages to democratic or autonomous movements within economies. The power struggles and quarrels between expert-led intersements and laypersons' own associations demonstrate the differences between purification and more plural notions of economies. It is more concrete than the different 'regimes of worth' proposed by Boltanski and Thévenot (2006). Framing the issue in terms of a modernist epistemology adds a new perspective to such earlier debates, and indeed a more ethnographic and empirical flavour to real-world struggles than discussing issues at a very abstract level.

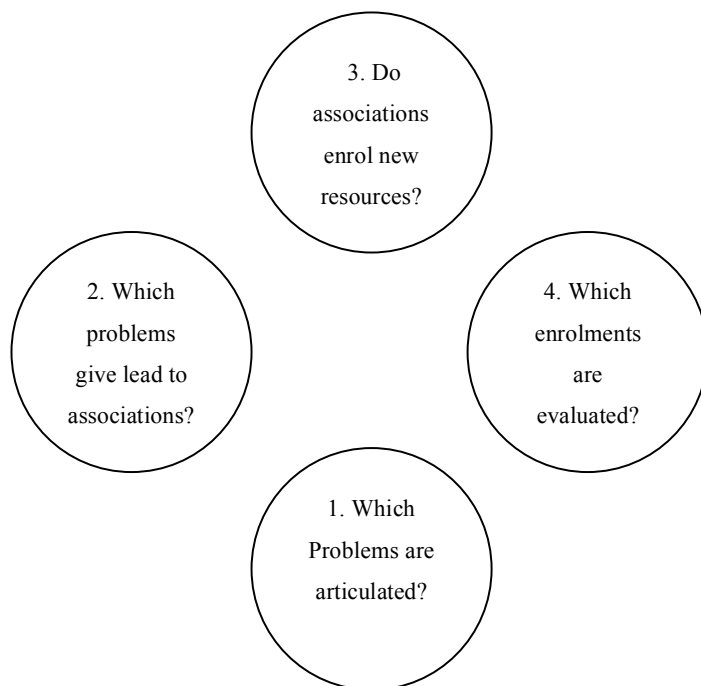
ANT, however, still needs to go closer to the actors who have been working on concepts such as social enterprise and social value, struggling on the practical level how they can overcome the power of scientists, economists and other experts who only rarely listen to them. These experts have the modern scientific institutions and political systems constructed around them on their side, while laypersons have only themselves and their social enterprises and community networks. In fact, looking at democratic foundations of political power, and disentangling modern science from modern political power, really gives the laypersons' associations a chance to survive and grow further. ANT considers the role of a scientist as a 'spokesperson', whether for scallops that are dying out (Callon 1986) or for microbes (Latour, 1991). This concept could also be extended to many other domains in democratising the capacities of laypersons for being better represented in scientific works and publications that create both 'fact' and 'value'. Latour's (1993b) proposition of a 'parliament of things' argues in this direction, as well as the proposals for further involvement of laypersons in *Acting in an Uncertain World* (Callon, Lascoumes and Barthe 2009).

In order to create a theory that is useful for the actual actors on the ground, and for it to serve as a platform for a better articulation of their ongoing concerns, I argue that theory should be as precise as possible concerning the lives of laypersons. It should

also be able to represent their work in the broadest way within a social scientific debate, necessarily relating it to other theories and perspectives previously discussed in the relevant literature.

The concept of social value was examined in this study as a process of translation in which actors did not attempt to reproduce separate categories of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, instead laypersons had a significant role in problematising, associating, enrolling and evaluating. The process in its simplified form consists of four stages where ends joined up to create a process involving distinct stages one after another. In reality, as we saw, the sequence, progression and direction from one stage to another was neither given nor straight-forward. This is summarised in Figure 17 below.

**Figure 17: Process of Translation Initiated by Laypersons**



Each stage above is described by a practical question. However, the progress from one stage to another is by no means obvious as multiple problematisations may crop up, and only few are actually able to become *association* of actors. These associations are only partially able to *enrol* further resources and become recognised by donor agencies, businesses or bureaucracies who may have granted funding, credit or sponsorship for projects based on previous *associations*. Finally, once funding or

credit is received, an evaluation of the successes or failures of the programme often takes place – which then becomes a source for yet further problematisations, as the evaluation itself often asks more question than it provides answers. The evaluation is, therefore, a source of new *problematisations*, may start a new cycle of translation. None of the steps necessarily leads to the next, as the process of translation can break down at any stage. This model of translation is very broad, and more specific translations could be discussed in terms of each fieldsite. The process of translation also creates far more problematisations, associations and enrolments than are ever followed up in further stages of the process.

For example, participants and panellists at CyberSeries events raised many *problematisations*. In the example of the health professional who problematised the difficulty in finding the right medication for a diabetic patient, an *association* was brought up involving telemedicine and a helpline using an offer of free evening calls from one of the mobile phone operators. Many other problematisations were left at that stage, as for instance the case of meteorological information; there was no obvious *association* available, as the actors did not know where to find the meteorological office in the first place. In this case, the actors questioned the duties and responsibilities of both media professionals and government officials in not providing the meteorological information for free. The interest of the public was also questioned, in wanting to know about the weather in the first place.

At Kuapa Kokoo, the village society members also had very diverse problematisations ranging from access to health services and cocoa bonuses to knowing market prices for palm oil and other produce. While the RDO was able to link up these concerns with the Area Office and the Head Office, only some of the concerns were eventually solved – for instance, the issue of how to provide stable market prices to the village society members was something that the RDO was not able to handle on his monthly visits. Kuapa Kokoo's women's groups and the sharing of infrastructure at both the village society and Area Offices also facilitated the creation of new spatial assemblages.

The *problematisation* concerning ownership of information at LAUG featured many ideas towards solving them, but not many of them actually became *associations* of

actors. Much of the work of LAUG consisted in making new associations for actors such as making a business case for Linux, or attracting interest from government officials or educational establishments as well as other actors in the ICT sector. The creation of technological space for FOSS applications was also a major concern: how to have a sufficiently large number of actors who were attached to an alternative FOSS space. The conditions for the creation of a technological space included public sector education facilities such as KACE-AITI, involving private sector actors such as Objis Consulting, which provided training for FOSS students, users and individuals.

The next stage involved moving from *association* to *enrolment*. Enrolling an *association* at LAUG required the help of outsiders and other agents, and often also indirect monetary resources through sponsorship, third-party fundraising, or gaining free access to space and working with donations or receiving freebies. At Kuapa Kokoo, the enrolment of resources was more straightforward, as the two credit schemes provided financing for some of the earlier *associations* such as women's groups, buying fertilizer or preventing the loss of land to moneylenders. At Busy Internet, this shift was best seen in the construction of the Busy Incubator project, which was based on an earlier association of a developmental space for assisting new enterprises and entrepreneurs, and a professional space for linkages among ICT professionals. However, as aid funding came with certain strings attached to it, only four companies were included. The Busy Incubator project was not free to allocate funding according to prior informal *associations*, but rather had to comply with the *interesement* agreed in the terms of reference with the World Bank InfoDev programme.

The shift from *enrolment* to *evaluation* was the hardest to trace in this study, as not every enrolled resource was actually evaluated. At Busy Internet, only the Busy Incubator programme would eventually be evaluated in a formal manner according to a model of evaluation agreed upon with the World Bank. I was also able to observe one particular evaluation of GINKS, which served to *evaluate* the social impact of funds received in the *enrolment* stage from the donor agency. In the evaluation the donor agency was mainly interested in seeing that GINKS was following its own mission statement that was in compliance with the donor priorities. So the event was much more about *monitoring* than about *evaluation* of the actual impact of the

funding given to GINKS. At LAUG *evaluation* was often related to making the group better known within Ghana and more widely within the African FOSS community, which they saw as their primary reference group. This reputation building was informed by their past events and gave further ideas on how to improve their work through learning from other groups and their prior similar events. Specific interest became visible in the Software Freedom Day website, as well as establishing the Linux Accra list as the main discussion list for FOSS topics in Ghana.

The process of translation was in most cases a broken circle, with few instances of a continuous circle when the actors had measuring and evaluation systems in place. In the case of Kuapa Kokoo, the first translation actually involved moving from *evaluation* to *problematization* as it was the social audit at Kuapa Kokoo that had initially identified the dependence of Kuapa farmers on informal types of credit, and their subsequent loss of land to moneylenders. It was partly this social audit that led to the creation of the Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union. The evaluation also touched on issues such as gender equity, empowerment of farmers and opportunities for farmers to improve their livelihoods. At the other fieldsites I did not find examples of a shift from *evaluation* to *problematization*.

The translation cycle studied involved observing and engaging in conversations with the actors whom I met during the fieldwork period. The process description consists of the events, objects and ideas that I encountered during the fieldwork period. The nine-month fieldwork period set limitations as to the types of issues and events that I was able to describe, with only few events in which I could participate outside of Ghana; these included in the fieldwork catalogue (section 3.3). Therefore, the translation process itself was limited to the types of interactions that I could observe during the fieldwork period or with the follow-up methods via email or personal communications after the end of the fieldwork phase. However, it was not the purpose of the study to conduct a homogenous process or achieve a sense of closure. Next I move to discuss some of the limitations that this process of translation had, and how I addressed such difficulties within this thesis.

The language and method of ANT seems fitting to the purpose as it also follows a similar ethos. The process establishes continuities without fencing off boundaries or



pretending to establish a rock-solid causality either. Translation also successfully traces the connectedness between economic and social values, while still considering them as two separate types of values and recognising overlaps – both in terms of actors as well as being measurable entities. These values were integrated at the crucial stage of *enrolment*. This is similar to the formation of economic values through ‘economisation’ (Callon 1998b; Çalışkan and Callon 2009), whereby the notion of the indeterminate social value is mixed into the formation of economic values. As Vatin (2009) noted, one must evaluate social value before valuing economic profits. With regard to social value, it seems that the opposite is also true: one must have some economic means to engage in the process of translating social value.

## **9.2. Limitations with the Theory of Translation**

The translation of social value has limitations, which must also be recognised. Translation is first and foremost a theory of the creation of social value, as it focuses on the stabilisation and creation of values rather than their historical continuities. It would be interesting to compare social value resulting from translation with theories that look more at the maintenance and persistence of values and worth (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006), and see what kind of dialogue can be established between the two theories when the latter focuses uniquely on ‘regimes of worth’ without discussing the genesis of such regimes on the level of actors’ interactions.

Furthermore, as such regimes of worth are often derived from written documents and act similar to discourses, they should not in any sense be considered ‘universal’ or applicable across countries that are vastly different in their history, economy and social values. The proposition of Boltanski and Thévenot would need to be studied in relation to actual ethnographies of value, and modified on the basis on the findings. For instance, they have no mention of the kinship networks in Ghana, which are vastly different from the European idea of a ‘household’ (Hill 1966), nor do they mention the position of faith and spirituality in such regimes of worth, despite its significant impact on Ghanaian society in legitimising agency. Further, the derivation of such regimes of worth from textual evidence assumes that societies rely more on

text than on the spoken word, a statement that does not hold true in the fieldsites I studied, which relied largely on informal assessments and evaluations of social value.

Next I will briefly review such limitations here. The process of social value creation and maintenance does not adequately take into consideration the following aspects: historical perspectives of translations, questions of power and domination, and difference between humans and non-humans. These are all problems occur more frequently with actor-network theory (ANT) than, for instance, in the social anthropology of Geertz. This has to do with the history of ANT, as it was developed primarily as a way to describe in detail the processes of science and technology, to demystify some of its claims for objectivity and rationalism. At no point did ANT aim at being a general theory of agency, and thus it should not be read as such, but rather as a theory of the emergence and transformation of indeterminate actors as networks. In the following section review some of the key criticisms of ANT and how I have considered these limitations in this thesis.

### **9.2.1. Historical Translations**

History was mainly studied through the detailed description of the present, which included historical objects and assemblages. History can be inscribed in any agency studied at a given moment, depending on the extent to which historical records of past activities can be retrieved from participants' memories, archives or documents. Thus, an agency that was assembled in such an object may now be decades, if not centuries old. Ethnographers, as Latour (1991) pointed out, can also become historians of their fieldsites by going through past publications and, archival material and looking into past 'articulations' which may reveal something about the different stages of translation that were not visible during the fieldwork period. At Kuapa Kokoo, I made use of a previously published measuring and evaluation documents (Ronchi 2002), which clarified the historical events and origins that led to the creation of KKCUC. It was also interesting to find out about the linkages between the work of Kuapa Kokoo's Research and Development Officers (RDO) and the practices in the earlier 'community development' agenda (Du Sautoy 1958), where Community Development Officers (CDOs) had had a key part in process of community building.

The purpose of the historical overview (Chapter four) was to look into such linkages and refer to them in the subsequent chapters, which focused entirely on the ethnographic findings. Historical archival research in relation to ANT has become a common practise of analysing associations. This is evident, for instance, in the emergence of the UK life insurance sector (McFall 2009a), or in Latour's (1993b) use of archival material when he studied the impact of Louis Pasteur on the French scientific establishment. In some cases (Latour 1987; Latour 1994; Latour 2004) both documentation and ethnography are used simultaneously, but he tends to mix the two together in a single narrative – thus making it harder to trace the findings to the original sources.

Separating historical analysis from ethnography makes it easier for the reader to understand how claims are made, and what material they are based on. I believe this is a better way to represent material, provided that some backwards and forwards linkages are made between the historical and ethnographic material. Some linkages were made in this study within the ethnographic data, while historical references were presented when linkages could be made; in most cases, however, the two narratives were kept separate in their scope and methods of inquiry. Combining the two types of data more systematically would be an interesting methodological task for further research.

### **9.2.2. Translating Power**

One of the main criticisms of actor-network theory (Fine 2003) is that it does not consider power relations, i.e. it has no theory of power included within the theory of agency and in the theory of an actor. Instead, power in ANT is located in actual events and situations where it is exercised or where a lack of power is felt. Power comes out in a much more detailed and descriptive form, especially when agency is translated into tools, technology and instruments (Law 1991). Power is also evident in the descriptive analysis of the actors, whereby far-reaching consequences and linkages can be studied in an indeterminate way that reveals new types of power in the course of the inquiry. In ANT one cannot take structural or etymological

shortcuts to understand power relations, such as proposing that a ‘global commodity chain’ (Nichols and Opal 2005) would exist or that capitalism would impose certain translations of power due to its ‘nature’. One can compare findings with such structural theories, but tracing assemblages in ANT takes primacy over taking a shortcut via a structural explanation (Latour 2005).

The way in which power is included in ethnography becomes evident when one tries to establish detailed distinctions between actors and their capacities and causal chains, to see who has a dominant role in the assemblage studied. In this study, power was looked at from the perspective of how different stages of translation were discussed, which actors were able to *problematise* and which issues were taken up by a wider group of actors assembled together to form new solutions as *associations*. Only some associations were able to *enrol* resources, and these enrolments were only partially *evaluated*. In this case power was not about the domination of one group over another, but about how actors create new forms of agency to respond to the situations in which they find themselves, whether with respect to institutional structures such as the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), or relationships between donor agencies and beneficiaries. Power is then located in the relational space created through the continuous interaction and exchange with actors outside of it. As a result, inequality and lack of power are also relational relationships.

Within the translations, some interesting issues came up. For instance, the position of Kofi Annan as Ghana’s most prominent power broker was likely to facilitate the grant that brought about the KACE-AITI centre where LAUG held its meetings, and he also presided over the United Nations during the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) framework. The MDGs introduced the framework for measuring and evaluation for all developing country governments which were instituted in the World Bank and IMF Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP), known in Ghana as the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS). As a result of the MDGs, development took a ‘metrological turn’ and brought together new actors who produced the underlying data, institutions consulted them on the measuring or target setting, and evaluations were made on the success in diverse ways. Some targets were also introduced in the licencing contracts for private sector operators in the ICT sector, such as mobile and land-line operator licensing and privatisation. As an

exercise of power, ‘metrological’ devices (Power 1997) have still received too little attention in the poverty reduction programmes of developing countries. It would be interesting to look at the use of such devices in Ghana in more detail.

### **9.2.3. Human and Non-Human Translations**

A further criticism of ANT has been that it places human and non-human actors on an equal footing, thus giving material artefacts, objects and spaces a similar agency as to humans. As ANT has been developed through science and technology studies (STS), human agency is seen in terms of the proliferation of new devices that mix the human and the non-human, such as the ‘cyborg’ (Haraway 1990), who argues that we hardly have ‘pure’ human agency any longer if it actually ever existed. In this study I consider that the combinations of human and non-human agency take place through the processes of translation, through which social-material assemblages were ultimately constructed. When looking at distinct translations in which no specific primacy was placed on either human or non-human agency, the process showed that problematisation expressed by humans at CyberSeries required spatial settings such as a conference room, electricity for lights, air conditioning and microphones, not to mention *enrolling* money from donors, who in some ways established the parameters of the topics to be discussed in the first place.

The way in which materiality has been discussed more commonly in economic anthropology has been related to material commodities. Examples of this are single commodities such as cattle (Ferguson 1985) or a combination of commodities with institutions that shape markets around them (Benediktsson 2002). Others have discussed value-chains (Nicholls and Opal 2005) or indeed the different spaces of circulation of commodities (Appadurai 1986). Actor-network theory is distinctively different here. While I could have analysed the pathways of cocoa beans, Internet messages or code in FOSS applications, actors themselves did not necessarily place primacy on the commodity itself as a source and representation of value. I considered that such commodity or absolute views of value were insufficient in understanding social values, and so I discussed them in terms of Simmel’s work (Simmel 2004; Cantó Milà 2005) as emerging through relational ties between persons. Using actor-

network theory, we also add the interactions between non-human actors, and include them in the relational ties that shape social values. This process was finally described in terms of a translation, where a good or a commodity was just one part of the wider process.

### **9.3. Further Research**

This thesis has tested the theory of *social value* translations within three fieldsites, thus contributing to the growing literature on the subject. The ‘test’ was limited to the three fieldsites and the commonalities in the process of translation that were discovered in these locations. It would be interesting to look at similar processes of *translations* of social value in other fieldsites, not being limited to social enterprises – looking more widely among any actors from public administrations and, ordinary citizens interacting with them, as has been already done in the case of the health sector (Jordan 2008). There is no reason to limit the study of social values to areas of health, well-being and social enterprises. Indeed, all areas of social and economic agency can be studied in terms of social value translation.

Social values are not only a ‘glue’ to facilitate economic exchange, they are also important for maintaining social forms and, norms, recreating new objects to which we attach as if they had always been there to act as a source of inspiration. The major finding here is that social values require an element of economic value creation in order to enhance and maintain such social values, as was seen in the stage of *enrolment* of money and credit assemblages that supported prior *associations* worked up by laypersons. In such a way, we move beyond a dichotomy of ‘nature’ and ‘culture’, seeing society, rather, as an indeterminate field of agency.

Social value appeared so interesting in this thesis precisely because it was considered as having a primary role in the fieldsites studied. While Jordan (2008: 171) saw social values as a fragmented and incoherent field of actors defending them, I see in Ghana in the three fieldsites the opposite: social values are at the heart of large social enterprises and associative networks that have the capacity to change the ways in which markets work in Ghana. Busy Internet was the largest privately held internet

café in Ghana, Kuapa Kokoo among the five biggest cocoa licenced buying companies, and Linux Accra among the best known associations in the ICT field. In doing so, they were able to overcome questions related to dominance of a singular market logic oriented at making profit, consisting of atomised actors driven by utility, and other modern ‘purified’ myths (Slater and Tonkiss 2001; Latour 1993b).

The social value approach is different from the notion of ‘social capital’ (Putnam et al. 1993), which is mainly seen as a resource for creating physical and economic capital out of social networks. It also differs from the communitarian movement that championed the social capital approach in renewing society and democratic governance (Etzioni 1988). Due to the size of these social enterprises in Ghana, we can say that a significant part of the economy was indeed controlled by organisations that had a primary focus on social value creation rather than profit-making, which was seen as secondary and an auxiliary to social values. Social enterprises also interacted with international aid and created new linkages between consumers and producers as well as between enthusiasts of computer software across the world. Thus Ghanaian social enterprises in many ways ‘overflowed’ (Callon 1998b) the boundaries of the national state, constituting heterogeneous actors which knew no natural boundaries. A further study of such overflows would be an interesting task, to understand the institutional, monetary and relational ties in which the events and activities of social enterprises are entangled.

The research also provides an avenue to pursue ethnographic and theoretical work with regard to actor-network theory. While terms like performativity (Callon 1998a), calculation and framing are currently often used in actor-network theory, more work would need to be done to address the issue of *translation* as a much wider process of social transformation, moving beyond scientific and technological domains. ANT has also been used in recent times to discuss issues such as ‘performativity’ (Callon 1998b; Callon, Millo and Muniesa 2007) by economists or agencement of insurance professionals within an economy (McFall 2010). However, I find that more research is still necessary on what constitutes translation and how actors engage with such processes. I have proposed a process of translation that is very different from performativity, starting from laypersons’ concerns as problematisations, and ending with an evaluation of the social impact that results from the activity. This translation

was specific to the fieldsites of social enterprises in Ghana, and if we were to look at another site, different stages and shifts would no doubt emerge.

The translation process in this study consisted of the four stages of *problematization*, *association*, *enrolment* and *evaluation* involving distinct dynamics. Each dynamic also related to a specific topic, emerging from the three fieldsites. Problems faced by ordinary Ghanaians were discussed often in terms of issues around information. The first substantive chapter adopted the theme of information assemblages which was described then in terms of ANT scholarship. The ethnographic research challenges the notion of more universal values, or even commonly agreed ‘economies of worth’ (Boltanski and Thévenot 2006). Theories of social value present value as something always emergent, thoroughly relational and being at diverse stages of creation and re-creation. In such a sense, it reaffirms the way in which Simmel (2004) considered social value as emerging from the relational ties between actors. No determinist or functionalist theory so far has been able to describe such forces in society, despite the fact that they are so fundamental to social life. The strength of the indeterminacy of ANT lies here: it analyses social and economic life as something rather more similar than being fundamentally separate.

The methodology advanced in the thesis was a departure from conventional ethnographic studies focusing largely on ‘place’ rather than ‘spaces’ that actors create as spheres of their own agency (Riles 2000). Following the actors was operationalised by making a distinction between the fieldsite of study as an entry point and the assemblages as actors who were described in more detail. The distinction worked to the extent that I was able to discuss dynamics without being limited or contained by institutions or specific commodities or technologies – but rather focusing on the processes of social value translations. The distinction helps to use actor-network theory in an ethnographic sense, by articulating more clearly how it differs from the more traditional ethnographies and what new possibilities it can offer to researchers in a methodological sense. As methodologies concerning ANT are still in constant development, the use of this distinction in a new fieldsite from the very beginning would provide an interesting way to develop and ‘test’ it further.



The historical discussion focused on looking at how social enterprises emerged as a counter-force to an ever increasing ‘purification’, which has slowly led to markets being increasingly detached and separated from the rest of society and its goals. The discussion of the five different movements within the Ghanaian economy that follow the criteria of social enterprise provides a historical perspective – a set of linkages and continuities rather than a background or a context. Having a large informal economy would also need to be discussed further and researched more broadly in terms of linkages to social enterprises and the process of creating social value. The interesting continuities were the focus on community-development since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and its relationship to newer movements such as fairtrade and social entrepreneurship. This historical discussion would merit a comparison with the emergence and forms of social enterprise in other African countries, and indeed elsewhere in the world.

Social enterprises show that there is an alternative to profit-oriented enterprises, whereby actors are able to problematise, associate, enrol and evaluate on their own the processes in which they engage. As a result, the potential for new types of markets arises out of social enterprise experiments being joined up and linked up together. Social change is possibly no longer situated where many think it was in ‘new’ or ‘old’ social movements and political parties; it is shifting onto actors themselves who claim markets for purposes of social values. The future of social enterprise, however, will depend most likely on how successfully they are able to connect with previous movements as outlined briefly in the historical chapter – in order to challenge the wider ‘purification’ of society and economy to fit the utilitarian theories of society. In this sense, social enterprises indeed are pioneers of new social forms, constituting novel ways of creating social value with much broader significance than their own spheres of activities. The village societies at Kuapa Kokoo, the incubatees at Busy Incubator and the events organised by Linux Accra – the participants in all of these felt to be doing something important and exiting, something that could change their country for the better. This thesis is recognition and an acknowledgement of their ingenuity and resourcefulness.

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## **List of Persons Referenced:**

Person A – Elderly male NGO staff member

Person B – Elderly male Linux Accra co-ordinator

Person C – Middle-aged male Busy Internet founder 1

Person D – Middle-aged male Busy Internet founder 2

Person E – Middle-aged female Busy Internet staff member

Person F – Young male Linux Accra User Group participant

Person G – Middle-aged female Diving Chocolate Company staff member

Person H – Middle-aged female CyberSeries speaker

Person I – Young male CyberSeries participant

Person J – Elderly male CyberSeries participant

Person K – Middle-aged female CyberSeries host

Person L – Elderly male CyberSeries participant

Person M – Young male CyberSeries participant

Person N – Elderly male CyberSeries participant

Person O – Young male Linux Accra participant on email list

Person P – Middle-aged male Linux Accra participant on email list

Person Q – Young male Linux Accra participant on email list

Person R – Middle-aged male Linux Accra participant on email list

Person S – Middle-aged male GINKS participant on email list

Person T – Middle-aged female GINKS participant on email list

Person U – Young male Linux Accra participant on email list  
Person V – Young male Linux Accra participant on email list  
Person W – Young male Linux Accra participant at a meeting  
Person X – Young male Linux Accra participant at a meeting  
Person Y – Young male Linux Accra participant at a meeting  
Person Z – Middle-aged female Women’s Revolving Scheme staff member  
Person AA – Middle-aged male Research and Development Office staff member  
Person AB – Elderly female Kuapa Kokoo Credit Union village committee treasurer  
Person AC – Young male Busy Incubator participating entrepreneur 1  
Person AD – Middle-aged female Busy Incubator participating entrepreneur 2  
Person AE – Middle-aged female Busy Incubator participant entrepreneur 3  
Person AF – Middle-aged male CyberSeries speaker  
Person AG – Young male Linux Accra participant